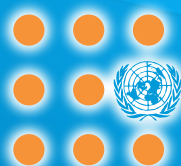




Ministry of Sports, Culture, and Youth Affairs

SWAZILAND STATE OF THE YOUTH REPORT 2015



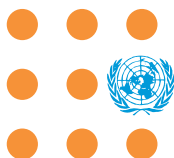
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SWAZILAND STATE OF THE YOUTH REPORT 2015



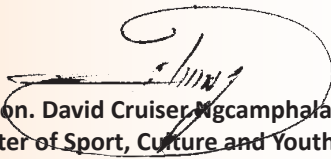
PREFACE

The Youth being the cornerstone of development and economic growth in Swaziland is evident in the high population of young people which stands at 79%; however this cannot be realized if they are subjected to a number of relentless challenges. Dominant to these are the issues of Unemployment, Access to all health services especially sexual reproductive health services, Access to Education including remaining in school and eventually accessing tertiary education to name a few.

With the youth population so high it means they are the ones most affected by social ills such as crime, drug and substance abuse and fall victim to being incarcerated in the countries prisons.

This report therefore gives insight on the areas that need attention from the Government, development partners and other relevant stakeholders. As a Ministry we hope this report will assist in programme engineering and implementation for Swazi youth, thus increasing the impact of programmes put in place for the young population.

It would have not been possible to produce such an informative and accurate report without the unequalled assistance of the UNFPA who have been a formidable partner for the Ministry in advancing the Youth Development agenda. We would also like to appreciate the assistance we received from Government Stakeholders, Development Partners and Civil Society.




The Hon. David Cruiser Ngcamphalala
Minister of Sport, Culture and Youth Affairs

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We are so indebted to the technical core team for the technical guidance and support in the whole process of the development of the State of the Youth Report, without whom the document could not have been finalized. The leadership of the Ministry of Sport, Culture and Youth Affairs is highly appreciated.

SNYC is acknowledged for the continuous commitment and stewardship in pioneering approaches in as far youth programming is concerned.



Prince Mlayeto
Principal Secretary
Ministry of Sport Culture and Youth Affairs

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ACRONYMS

ASRH	Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CPWA	Child Protection and Welfare Act
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
EFA	Education for All
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HCW	Health Care Worker
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
IMC	Inter-Ministerial Committee
LSE	Life Skills Education
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOSCYA	Ministry of Sports, Culture, and Youth Affairs
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
NDS	National Development Strategy
NERCHA	National Emergency Response Council for HIV and AIDS
NYP	National Youth Policy
NYC	NGO Youth Consortium
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PYPC	Parliamentary Youth Portfolio Committee

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PRSAP	Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan
RA	Regional Administrator
RC	Regional Council
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SWAGAA	Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse
SDHS	Swaziland Demographic and Health Survey
SHIMS	Swaziland HIV Incidence Measurement Survey
SNYC	Swaziland National Youth Council
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Social and Cultural Organization
WHO	World Health Organization

DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMINOLOGY

Age-Specific Fertility Rate	The number of births occurring during a given year or reference period per 1,000 women of reproductive age classified in single- or five-year age groups
Bucopho	Constituency development officers elected at the level of chiefdoms
Constitutional Monarchy	A form of government in which a King or Queen is head of state, but the power to create or enact legislation lies with Parliament.
Demographic Dividend	A period when fertility rates fall due to significant reductions in child and infant mortality rates, often accompanied by an extension in average life expectancy, that increases the portion of the population in the working age-group and can cut spending on dependents and spur economic growth
Disability	A long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment which in interaction with various barriers may hinder full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others
Discouraged Worker	A person of legal employment age who is not actively seeking employment or who does not find employment after long-term unemployment, usually because an individual has given up looking or has had no success in finding a job
Economically Active Population	The proportion of the population that is either employed or actively seeking employment
Economically Inactive Population	The proportion of the population that is neither employed nor unemployed, often due to school enrolment, duties at home, or long-term illness
Gender Based Violence	Any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will, and that is based on socially ascribed differences between males and females
Gender Parity Index	A measure of the relative access to education for males and females
Gross Enrolment Rate	The number of children who are enrolled at a given level in school, regardless of age, divided by the total population of the appropriate age for that level
Poverty Gap Ratio	Estimates the depth of poverty by considering how far, on the average, the poor are from the defined poverty line

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Labour Force Participation Rate	The share of the population either employed or seeking work, in the strict definition; a relaxed definition also includes discouraged workers
Net Enrolment Rate	The number of children of appropriate age or age group for a given school level, who are enrolled at that school level, divided by the total population of that age or age group
Net Migration Rate	The difference of immigrants and emigrants of an area in a given period of time; a positive value represents more people entering the country than leaving it, while a negative value means more people leaving than entering it
Sexual and Reproductive Health	A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being in all matters relating to the reproductive system
Sexual Violence	Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work
Swazi Nation Land	Land that is held in trust by the King and allocated by tribal chiefs according to traditional arrangements.
Inkhundla (pl: Tinkhundla)	An administrative subdivision smaller than a region but larger than a chiefdom, or umphakatsi.
Total Fertility Rate	The average number of children that would be born to a woman over her lifetime if she was to experience the current age-specific fertility rates throughout her lifetime and to survive to the end of her reproductive life
Umphakatsi	An administrative region smaller than an Inkhundla
Underemployed	A person who is employed but whose employment is insufficient, relative to a standard – for example an employed person who is still living below the poverty line
Unemployed	An individual who is without work but is actively seeking work
Youth Development Index	A measure of the status of 15-29 year-olds in 170 countries according to five key domains: Education, Health and Well-being, Employment, Civic Participation and Political Participation; YDI scores range from 0-1, 0 being the lowest youth development and 1 the highest

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Youth are the future, and investing in the youth of today means a brighter future for the entire country tomorrow. Nowhere is this more true than in Africa, where changing demographics are creating a unique opportunity to harness the potential of young people to accelerate development.

Swaziland, with a large and growing youth population and a declining birthrate, is on the cusp of a critical demographic transition. As fewer dependents are born and more of the population can participate in the workforce, the potential demographic dividend the nation can reap will require significant investment in youth, beginning immediately.

Today's Swazi youth are facing a variety of challenges, which will require a comprehensive, coordinated, and multi-sectoral response. High rates of poverty, a decline in the strength of family structures, challenges with access to education, low employment, HIV/AIDS, access to family planning and youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services, drug and alcohol use, gender inequality, violence, and crime are all issues that pose challenges to the full and health development of Swaziland's young people. None of these situations are occurring in a silo, and outcomes for each sector depend heavily on each other.

In order to harness the potential demographic dividend, the country urgently needs to focus investments into the development of young people: their health, education, and social protection. Swaziland will also need to focus on encouraging a labour market that can absorb a growing, young, working-age population, and that young people are appropriately trained for the needs of that market.

The State of the Youth Report provides a comprehensive overview of the current status of young people across a variety of sectors, and the conclusions and recommendations contained in this report can serve as a roadmap for investing in the youth population. With the right focus on key areas in the near term, Swaziland can create an enabling environment in the long term to reap the benefits of the changing demographic structure of the country and accelerate development for the entire nation.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Swaziland is a very small country, with an area of 17,364 square kilometres and a total population of just over 1 million (1). The Kingdom of Swaziland is governed by Constitutional Monarchy and the current ruler is King Mswati III. Under the King, the public administration of Swaziland is defined by the *Tinkhundla* system. Within the 4 administrative regions of Hhohho, Manzini, Lubombo, and Shiselweni, there are additional sub-divisions called *Inkhundla*. Each *Inkhundla* (*pl: Tinkhundla*) is composed of a grouping of chiefdoms, called *Umphakatsi* (2). Each chiefdom is composed of several smaller communities.



Swaziland is largely homogenous, with a great deal of linguistic and cultural unity (3). The majority of the population are ethnic Swazi (84.3%) and the official languages are SiSwati and English (4). Most of the population identify as Christians (82.7%), within which various protestant and indigenous African churches make up the majority (4). Non-Christian religions are practiced to a much smaller degree, and roughly 21% of the population also practice traditional beliefs (4).

The population of the country is fairly evenly distributed across the countries 4 administrative regions, though a majority of Swazis reside in rural areas. Women make up a slightly higher proportion of the population (1), but culturally, Swaziland is a patriarchal society, with men’s authority recognized as heads of households and decision-makers (3).

In Swaziland, as in much of sub-Saharan Africa, youth¹ represent the most significant share of the population. Close to 4 out of 5 Swazis are younger than 35 years old, and over 1 in 3 are between the ages of 15 and 35. Due to the declining number of births per woman, the working age population (15-64) is expected to grow significantly in the near future and will exceed the share of the dependant population. With the right investment and policies in place, targeting young people in education, health, and employment, Swaziland stands a chance to harness a benefit from this changing population structure, known as the demographic dividend. Therefore, the dependence of the future of the country on outcomes for the current youth population is startlingly clear.

From a policy perspective, the country has made positive moves in youth development. Swaziland's 'Vision 2022', guided by the National Development Strategy (NDS) serves as the country's roadmap to reaching a level of development that would ensure that "by the Year 2022, the Kingdom of Swaziland will be in the top 10% of the medium human development group of countries founded on sustainable economic development, social justice and political stability" (5). The NDS places emphasis on a variety of youth development initiatives to achieve this goal, and many other policies and programmes in Swaziland are focused on youth as well.

The first iteration of the National Youth Policy (NYP) was adopted in 2002 and the revised 2009 Policy still stands. The NYP provides a framework for youth development across the country and guidelines for the implementation of youth-related programmes. It is also meant to ensure sufficient investment by the government and other stakeholders in youth-related matters. There are also a large variety of sector-specific policies addressing issues of concern for youth development, that will be examined in subsequent chapters of this report.

The NYP embraces the principles of gender inclusive development, the redress of imbalances, youth empowerment, youth participation, sustainable development, rural emphasis, transparency, and accessibility, and 'envisions a Swaziland Youth who are equal, healthy (spiritually, mentally, physically, and sexually), educated, skilled, and productively contributing to all spheres of national development by 2022 (6).' The NYP is organized around several issue pillars, each addressing areas of critical concern to the development of the policies vision.

¹The Swaziland National Youth Policy defines 'Youth' as persons 15-35 years. Other definitions referenced throughout include 'Adolescents' at 10-29 and 'Young People' at 10-24.

Table 1.1.1 Pillars and Objectives of the National Youth Policy

HIV/AIDS	Ensure awareness of the consequences of HIV/AIDS and also to ensure counselling, rehabilitation and care for HIV/AIDS infected youths and youth orphans whose parents were victims of HIV/AIDS as well as to mitigate the forces that drive the rapid increase in HIV infections amongst youth.
Education, Training, and Skills Development	Accords priority to the provision of relevant and affordable quality education that engenders a sense of civic-mindedness and fosters the skills that are necessary to participate effectively in the economic development of the country and for the youth's self-sustenance.
Participation, Partnership, & Leadership	Stimulate youth and their integration in the socio-economic and political development of the nation through popular participation in decision-making processes, programmes, and activities.
Poverty & Unemployment	Place emphasis on projects that employ young people's skills in productive activities as well as enhance skills toward self-employment.
Drug & Substance Abuse	Support the application of increased measures aimed at reducing the increase of drug and substance abuse among young people and the provision of youth-friendly psychiatric facilities which will assume prominence in efforts aimed at mitigating and reducing drug and substance use among the youth.
Gender Equity, Equality, and Gender-Based Violence	Empower young women and young men to access equal opportunities and to protect them from any form of abuse given gender differences.
Arts, Media, Sports & Culture	Provide diverse leisure options to all young people to have access to as well as maximize their participation in activities that promote school-to-work transition in all its forms, including access to ICT.
Peace, Security, & Law Enforcement	Ensure that criminal justice institutions provide increased access to justice for the youth so as to reinforce a sense for all, thus preventing the dislocation of sustainable livelihoods as well as the interruption and termination of promising careers.

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Environment & Sustainable Development	Increase the capacity and awareness of youth to implement sustainable development frameworks for the management and utilization of environmental resources for the greater benefit of future generations.
Sexual and Reproductive Health	Improve access to high quality and youth friendly sexual and reproductive health services provided to reduce the risks of sexually transmitted infections, high teenage pregnancy, and early sexual debut.

Source: National Youth Policy 2009

As evidenced by the NYP objectives, youth policies are multi-sectoral, cross-cutting, and wide-ranging. To ensure effective integration of youth development strategies and coordinated implementation of programmes, the NYP also identifies several key players involved the oversight, coordination, and implementation of Youth activities in the country and assigns them specific responsibilities regarding youth development and the implementation of the NYP:

Swaziland National Youth Council (SNYC) was established in 2002 to coordinate all youth activities and to implement the NYP. As an independent and semi-autonomous body, SNYC works under a Memorandum of Agreement with MOSCYA as an umbrella body for youth associations and the voice of young people. SNYC is responsible for coordinating youth affairs at the local and national level, engaging with the government to advocate for youth, implementing youth programmes through delegation to member associations and implementing partners, and building the capacity of partner institutions.

The Interministerial Committee (IMC) is comprised of senior representatives of key ministries involved in the planning, funding, and implementation of youth development programmes, such as Under Secretaries or Principal Secretaries. The Committee is coordinated by the Directors office of MOSCYA, and monitors the implementation of the NYP, including the performance of SNYC.

Regional Councils (RCs) set regional policy on social and economic development issues, which are key for youth development. RCs are representative of each administrative area, or Inkhundla, within a region, and advise the Regional Administrator on the incorporation of youth development issues into regional plans and inform policy relevant to youth development.

Regional Administrators (RAs) serve as the lead administrator for each region, and as officials, hold the same status as deputy minister. They are responsible for ensuring that accurate information pertaining to youth development is included in regional plans and shared with the Parliamentary Youth Portfolio Committee and the IMC. RAs also monitor the progress of any plans implemented at Inkhundla level.

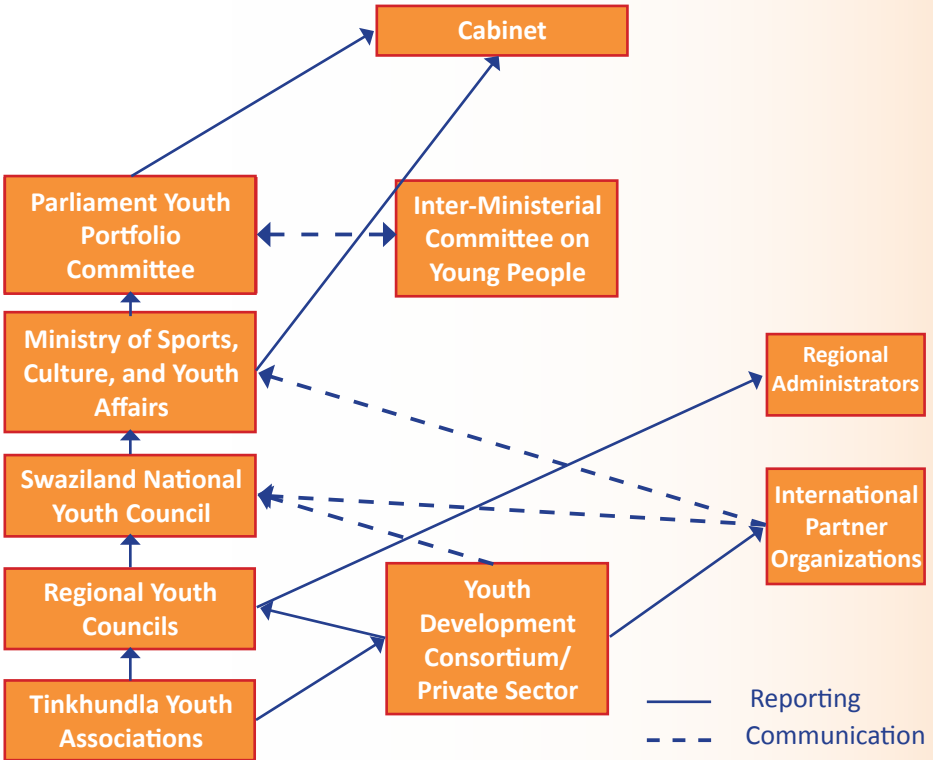
The Parliamentary Youth Portfolio Committee (PYPC) is a specialist body of Ministers of Parliament, working together in smaller groups to inform legislation and policy development, and to hold the executive accountable for implementation. The PYPC accepts submissions from members of the public, makes recommendations relating to youth legislation, budgeting, restructuring, functioning, and policy formulation, and oversees the work of different government departments regarding youth matters.

International Partner Organizations (IPOs) and Private Sector actors can be valuable providers of key programmes and services for youth, including providing funding for programmes and activities, empowering youth through access to finance and credit, developing business models with and for enterprises driven by youth, implementing development programmes, conducting vocational training and development, and hosting internship programmes.

The NGO Youth Consortium (NYC) is made up of NGOs affiliated to the Coordinating Assembly of NGOs (CANGO) involved specifically in youth development issues. Their role is primarily as a think tank and includes providing input on national youth programmes based on best practices and lessons learnt, identifying constraints in the implementation of youth activities as recommended by the NYP, advocacy and lobbying for youth participation at all levels, and quarterly review meetings with SNYC to assist with annual plan review.

The communication and reporting channels for the various bodies are outlined in the Action Plan and M&E Framework that accompanies the NYP, which was developed in 2012.

Figure 1.1.1 Organizational Chart for Implementation and Oversight of the National Youth Policy



Source: National Youth Policy Action Plan and M&E Framework 2013-2016

The IMC has been reported by key informants to have faced severe constraints with membership and attendance, and has not been as strong a coordinating or oversight body for youth issues as was envisioned. This may be due in part to the fact that the status of the Youth portfolio is not placed in a strategic position to allow for the effective assembly of necessary ministerial bodies. As a result, the country continues to face challenges of fragmented implementation of youth-oriented programmes and a lack of policy alignment across sectors. Additionally, though the health and education sectors in Swaziland have strong monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, the same is not true of many other sectors. As a result, policymakers and programmers are often operating in an environment of incomplete or completely missing local or national evidence.

A review of the National Youth Policy and accompanying implementation structure is on the horizon. In order to comprehensively inform the revision of existing policies and programmes, and the development of new strategies, there is need for accurate and current information on the status of youth in Swaziland. This report outlines in detail the current state of affairs for youth in Swaziland, across a variety of sectors. At present, young people in Swaziland face a variety of challenges, some individual, some structural:

Individual

Education

- Only 50% of secondary school aged children attend school (MICS 2014).

Early Pregnancy

- 16.7% of women aged 20-24 had their first live birth before age (MICS 2014)

HIV/AIDS

- New incidence of HIV infections reach 4.4% in women aged 20-24 (SHIMS 2011).

Mental Health and Wellbeing

- 17.3% of students have seriously contemplated suicide (WHO 2013)

Substance Use

- 53% of students who report having used drugs did so before age 14 (WHO 2013)

Structural

Orphanhood

- Only 50% of secondary school aged children attend school (MICS 2014).

Poverty

- 63% of the total population live below the poverty line (HIES 2010)

Employment

- 42.6% of young people 15-24 are unable to find work (World Bank 2015)

Inequality

- With a Gini Coefficient of 51.5, Swaziland is one of the most unequal countries in the world (World Bank 2015)

1.2 Objectives

The State of the Youth Report aims to provide a comprehensive and cross-sectoral picture of the state of the youth in Swaziland by:

- Providing an accurate socioeconomic and demographic profile of the country's youth for policy and planning, including research considerations;
- Gathering data and documenting conditions that affect young people in the country;

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- Mapping out existing national programmes and strategies across key thematic areas; and
- Formulating recommendations and additional research questions to further inform the improved implementation of the National Youth Policy in Swaziland.

The report follows a similar structure to the pillars of the NYP, though some have been consolidated and other's revised.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the youth population in the country: age and gender breakdowns, where they live, and trends in migration, fertility, marriage, and life expectancy. This gives us a baseline for understanding the following chapters.

Chapter 2 discusses the state of education and youth in Swaziland, from primary to tertiary level, highlighting educational attainment of youth, the level of inclusiveness of the education system, some of the factors that hinder attendance or completion of school, and the appropriateness of the training youth receive for the labour market in which they are trying to participate.

Chapter 3 examines employment, unemployment, and poverty in the youth population. These dynamics are explored for both urban and rural youth, and differences between males and females are discussed.

Chapter 4 provides evidence of the state of the sexual and reproductive health and rights of youth.

Chapter 5 discusses the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, examines the extent of early pregnancy and childbearing, review the information available on the accessibility of family planning and reproductive health commodities and services, and discusses the issue of gender-based violence.

Chapter 6 covers the topic of youth and crime, building on evidence previously presented regarding educational attainment, employment, and poverty.

Chapter 7 examines the civic participation and leadership of young people, and the extent to which they are involved in public life and the decision-making processes of government.

Chapter 8 reviews alcohol and substance use among the youth.

Chapter 9 discusses youth participation in Sports, Culture, Media, and the Arts, and reviews the information and communications technology available to young people, and their ability to access and utilize appropriate communications tools.

1.3 Methodology

The State of the Youth Report was prepared in 5 stages: desk review and analysis, consultations/interview meetings with key stakeholders, data analysis and compilation of the report, stakeholder workshops, and report revision.

Desk Review and Analysis involved collecting, analysing, and synthesizing background documents, with a particular focus on the concept of the demographic dividend as described above. Specific attention was focused on key policies affecting the various thematic areas and the programmatic interventions in place to support progress therein.

Consultations/interview meetings with key stakeholders were undertaken in order to more fully understand key policy framework issues and policy and programmatic gaps. A standard interview guide (Appendix 1), was used during the interviews. In addition, focus group discussions (FGDs) with youth were also conducted, to enrich the participatory nature of the report. The FGD guide is presented in Appendices 2. Information collected from key informants and focus groups was particularly useful for the thematic areas in which substantial information was not available during the desk review stage.

Data analysis and compilation of the report was accomplished by triangulating the information collected during the desk review, FGDs, and stakeholder consultations. In addition, demographic and statistical analyses were conducted, mainly using secondary data sources such as the population census of Swaziland, the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) of 2007-2008, the interim DHS of 2012, the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2010 and preliminary findings from MICS 2014, and various sector-specific regular surveillance and evaluation publications, such as the Annual Education Census reports and various Ministry of Health annual programme reports. In September 2013, a series of consultations supported by the United Nations Development facilitated the development of an agenda for sustainable development in Swaziland post-2015. As part of this series, a youth forum was conducted, and youth prioritized sustainable development issues to carry forward beyond 2015. To the greatest extent possible, their priorities, vision, and voices are incorporated into the 2015 Swaziland State of the Youth Report.

Stakeholder's workshops took place in four forms to discuss and vet the State of the Youth Report. First, an inception workshop took place prior to undertaking any research, to develop consensus and understanding on the methodology for preparing the report. Second, an input workshop was held after producing a draft report, to discuss and suggest areas within the report that could be improved. Third, a validation workshop was conducted to review the revised draft. Finally, a fourth editorial and review workshop was conducted to review and edit the report structure and strengthen the conclusions and recommendations.

A revision of the report was written based on the outcomes from the fourth workshop, and this version of the report is presented here.

To a great extent, this report depends on secondary data sources. All statistics and indicators were obtained from such sources, as no specific quantitative survey was conducted for the purposes of the State of the Youth Report. Primary data was collected in qualitative form only and in the context of FGDs and stakeholder interviews, to contextualize the information gathered from secondary sources. It should be noted that many of the secondary sources of data were collected and compiled several years prior to the preparation of this report, and this is a limitation of the report which needs to be acknowledged. All secondary data sources and relevant dates can be located in the bibliography.

CHAPTER 2: THE YOUTH POPULATION IN SWAZILAND

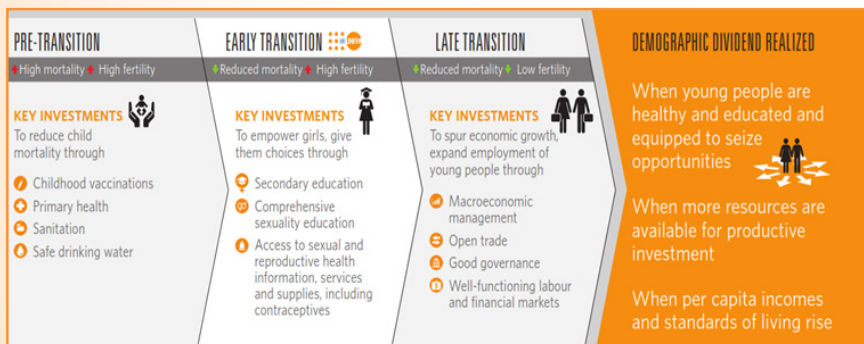
“We are part of the key population and we should be taken into consideration as we are the future leaders.” – Youth FGD Participant

Understanding the population dynamics in Swaziland is a critical underpinning for any discussion surrounding the future of the Kingdom’s youth and harnessing the potential demographic dividend in the country. The population of Swaziland is overwhelmingly young, with 39% between the ages of 15-34, and a total of 79% under the age of 35 (7). The youth proportion of the population is expected to increase before levelling out, and the manner in which Swaziland meets the needs of this segment of the population will likely have a profound effect on the future of the country.

A shift in the demographic structure of Swaziland is occurring, with the bulk of the population beginning to age into the work-eligible population. This projected growth in the number of people in the working age population opens a window of opportunity known as the “Demographic Dividend.” With a smaller percentage of the population either too young or too old to work, those people of working age find themselves supporting fewer dependents.

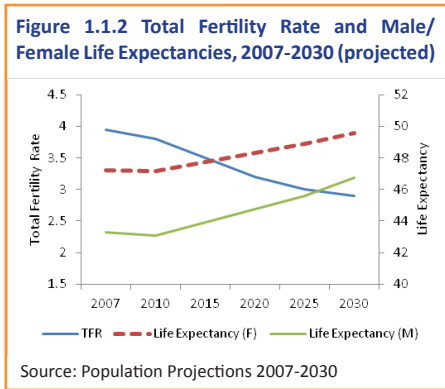
The transformation of the age structure augurs well for the country’s developmental prospects since a large workforce with fewer children to support creates a window of opportunity to save money on health care, education and other social services; increase economic output because of more people working; invest more in the productive sectors of the economy including in technology and skills development; and, ultimately create wealth and reduce poverty.

Figure 1.1.1 Young People and the Demographic Dividend



Source: UNFPA State of the World Population 2014.

The demographic dividend is driven by two key elements: a declining fertility rate and increasing life expectancy. Generally, as countries make progress in reducing infant mortality, parents choose to have fewer children. If, concurrently, investment in key pillars such as sanitation and primary health care yield increased life expectancies, then in addition to fewer dependent children being born, the young adult and adult population spend more healthy years in the working-age population.



According to Figure 1.1.1 Swaziland is entering the early transition phase as a result of increasing life expectancy and declining fertility shown in figure 1.1.2. Total fertility declined from 6.4 in 1986 to 3.3 births per woman in 2014 (1). It is projected to continue decreasing, and the next generation of Swazi mothers will likely have, on average, fewer than 3 children over the course of their lifetimes. Life expectancy in the country is on the rise, after a sharp decline in the 1990s and 2000s, and is expected to reach around 46 years by 2030. Hence, the basic conditions for a demographic window of opportunity are present in the country. A closer examination of youth-specific demographic indicators in the context of this changing population structure follows.

2.1 Definition of Youth

There are a variety of definitions for the ages that classify a person as a ‘youth’ or a ‘young person.’ The NYP categorizes youth as individuals aged 15-35. A more globally accepted definition is 15-24. Since many statistics in Swaziland are not routinely disaggregated according to standardized broad ages, or are disaggregated according to the global definition of youth, throughout the State of the Youth Report, key indicators cannot all be examined using the same definition. Wherever possible, age categories or varying definitions of youth are supplied.

Table 1.3.1 Varying Definitions of Youth

15-<35	Swaziland internal definition of youth
15-24	Global definition of youth
10-19	Adolescents
10-24	Adolescents and young people

2.1 Age and Sex, Structure, and Spatial Distribution

As described briefly above, the population in Swaziland is undergoing a transition. The most recent Demographic and Health Survey, conducted in 2007, shows a broad-based population pyramid, with a large portion of the population below 14 and therefore by definition dependent on members of the population who are old enough to work. However, the population structure is changing, and while the bulk of the population is currently quite young, by 2030 it is anticipated that most of the population will be in the work-eligible age groups.

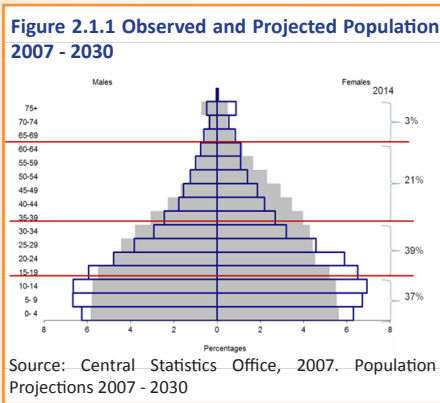
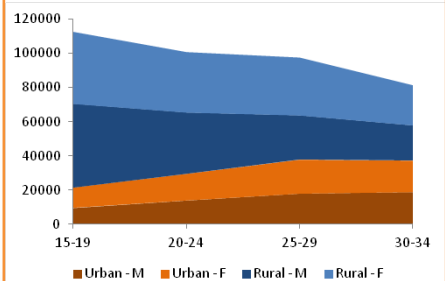


Figure 2.1.1 illustrates the expected change in population structure from 2007 – 2030, and population proportions for several categories have been highlighted for 2014. Of key importance are the following: the 0-14 age range, indicating very young members of the population; 15-24 year-olds, who are young working-age Swazis; 25-34 year-olds, who are working-aged individuals still considered youth by the country’s definition; 35-64 year olds, or non-youth working-age members; and those over 65, considered to also be dependent, due to advanced

age. As of 2014, 39% of the population were youth of working age (7).

The majority of Swaziland’s youth reside in rural areas. Unemployment and poverty affect the total population in rural areas more so than in urban environments (8), and so it is likely that young people living in rural areas are also affected by these dynamics. In older segments of the youth population, the proportion living in urban areas increases, possibly as a result of internal migration for employment seeking purposes.

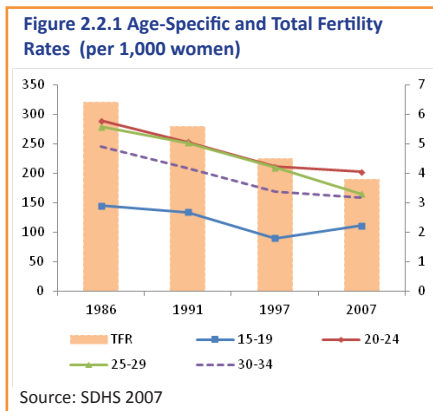
Figure 2.1.2 Youth Population by Age, Sex, and Place of Residence 2012



Source: Central Statistics Office Population Projections 2007-2030

2.2 Fertility, Mortality, Marriage and Migration

Fertility, mortality, marriage, and migration are all key contributors to population dynamics. In Swaziland, overall fertility has been declining, and age-specific fertility for the youth population slowly increases from 15 to 35. At the same time, mortality in the country is slowly declining. As migration into Swaziland does not appear to be high, it may not be contributing significantly to the shifting population structure in the country, unless large numbers of working-age youth are migrating out of Swaziland to seek their lives and livelihoods elsewhere. Most migration in Swaziland appears to be internal, and may explain the shifting urban/rural divide in the youth population as age increases.



In terms of total fertility, there has been a sharp decline in the number of children a woman is likely to bear over the course of her lifetime: from 6.4 in 1986 to 3.8 in 2007 (9). Examining trends in fertility by age, figure 2.2.1 illustrates that the age-specific fertility rate (ASFR) had been on the decline, but has begun rising slightly for 15-19, and has dropped consistently for 20-24 year olds. Despite an overall decline in fertility, childbearing in Swaziland begins quite young, and the implications of this will be discussed in more depth in the chapters regarding

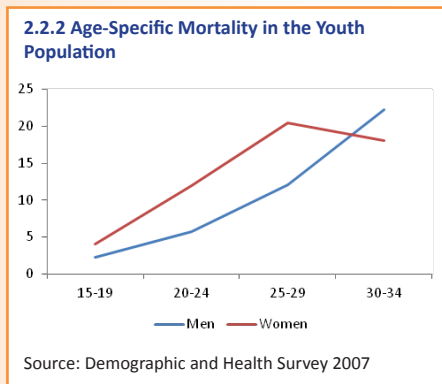
education and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR.)

Overall, fewer and fewer Swazis are opting for marriage. In 2007, 49.9% of the adult population reported never having been married, and in 2012, that had climbed to 57% (1). This may point to a decline in traditional family structures, which some credit with increasing instability in children and youth. Early marriage, though not entirely eliminated, appears to be on the decline. Between 2010 and 2014, the percentage of people reporting to have been married or in union before the age of 15 declined among women and men, as did the percentage of people reporting having been married or in union before the age of 18 (10).

Despite these declines, early marriage continues to be something that consistently affects young women, and early marriage often occurs with a much older man. Early marriage can be seen as a consequence of early pregnancy or as a result of the custom

of arranged marriages (11). Early marriage can be a violation of a girls' rights, by denying her a childhood, disrupting her education, jeopardizing her health, and limiting her opportunities (11).

As of 2014, 4% of young women in Swaziland between 15-19 were currently married or in union. 32.5% of these young women are married to a spouse who is at least 10 years her senior. Among women 20-24, 22.5% are married to man who is at least 10 years older. These statistics are indicative of the prevalence of cross-generational relationships in Swaziland, which are often cited as a key driver of the transmission of HIV.



As mentioned in the introduction, life expectancy in Swaziland is increasing. In terms of the reproductive population, or people aged 15-49, there is no difference in overall mortality rates between women and men. However, in the youth population, mortality rates are higher for women than for men. Mortality for young women eclipses that of young men throughout the younger years of life, until the early 30s, when male mortality begins to outpace female.

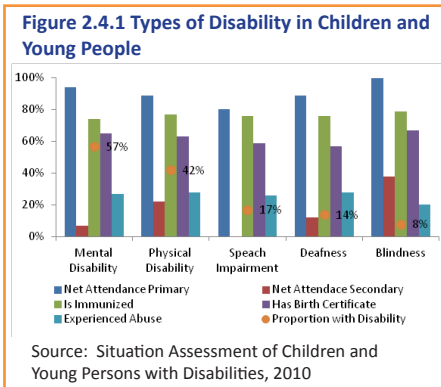
In terms of migration, international migration to and from Swaziland does not seem to contribute significantly to population dynamics in the country. Migration in Swaziland is a largely internal phenomenon. Most internal migrants in the country are between the ages of 24-34, and most migrate from rural areas to the major population centers of Mbabane and Manzini (12), which supports the hypothesis that most internal migrants are seeking work.

2.3 Orphanhood and Vulnerability

The twin issues of orphanhood and vulnerability shape the family situations of young Swazis to a great degree. Children, defined as being under 18, are considered orphans if one or both parents have died, and are considered vulnerable if one parent is chronically ill, or if another adult in the household has died of a chronic illness (11). Over 1 in 3 young people between 0-17 are living with neither biological parent, 1 in 5 have at least one biological parent dead, and 1 in 10 have at least one biological parent living overseas (13). According to the 2013 Annual Education Census, OVCs account for 24% of primary students and a startling 43% at secondary level.

Overall, nearly half of Swazi children are considered to be orphans or vulnerable (11). It is very important to note that an orphan is not necessarily poor, and non-orphans are not necessarily in a better position than orphans. However, there are more vulnerable children in the poorest households than there are in the wealthiest, and more in rural areas than urban. While rates of orphanhood increase with age, vulnerability tends to be constant (11). The high levels of OVC in Swaziland are significant for the youth population, as growing up in an environment of vulnerability decreases the strength of a youth's foundation for success.

2.4 Disability



The presence of a disability represents an additional vulnerability for youth in Swaziland. A nationally representative survey conducted in 2009 identified the inability to access education and healthcare, abuse, and discrimination as particular areas of concern for children and young people living with disabilities (14). While it is difficult to ascertain the total percentage of the youth population living with disabilities, those who appear to be roughly evenly distributed across the 4 regions: 29% in Hhohho, 25%

in Manzini, 22% in Shiselweni, and 24% in Lubombo (14). More males (54%) were living with disabilities than females (46%) and 26% were living with more than one disability (14). The majority of children and young people living with disabilities were diagnosed at birth, though nearly a quarter of disabilities are attributed to being the result of an illness and not congenital, particularly for hearing or visual impairments (14).

Access to essential services for children and young people living with disabilities appears to be limited, as demonstrated in figure 2.4.1. Overall, 74% reported having ever attended school, and 58% of those living with disabilities who were not receiving any treatment were nonetheless in need of some form (14). Overall enrolment rates in school are lower for persons living with disabilities than for the general population, and only 64% had a birth certificate.

2.5 Conclusions and Recommendations

Swaziland is entering a transition phase and the window of opportunity to harness a demographic dividend is opening. A large, young, working-age population is on the cusp of emerging, with fewer dependent children to support and more potential healthy years in the workforce. If these young people are healthy, well-educated, and able to find or create work, the economic growth potential for the country as a whole could significantly increase. The critical nature of leveraging the potential positive benefits associated with a demographic dividend cannot be overstated. A better present and future for young people in Swaziland will mean a better future for the entire nation.

This window of opportunity opens only once in a country, and does not last forever. With strategies and policies in place to safeguard the health of young people, ensure they have access to quality education and skills development, can access comprehensive reproductive health services, and are ensured adequate employment opportunities, Swaziland can harness the potential demographic dividend to reap substantial benefits.

In order to create a more enabling environment for the health and success of its young people, and to realize the benefits of a Demographic Dividend, Swaziland must invest in creating the right conditions, including:

- Access to quality education and skills development, to ensure that the labour force is adequately trained and educated to meet the needs of the market;
- Access to comprehensive healthcare services, including and especially sexual and reproductive health, to ensure that young people can mitigate their risk of HIV acquisition, exercise more control over family size and spacing of childbirths, and to ensure that young women do not suffer the negative outcomes often associated with early childbearing; and,
- Adequate employment opportunities for young people as they enter the workforce, so that as the working-age population increases, they enter an environment of opportunity and gainful employment.

Specific programmatic or policy recommendations relevant to the above will be outlined in more detail in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 3: EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

“Every Swazi citizen has the right to education and training appropriate to their age and needs, including the provision of free and compulsory basic education.” –Swaziland Education and Training Sector Policy

3.1 Background and policy environment

Education is the foundation and main pillar of economic and social development (15). Relevant, affordable, and quality education prepares youth to participate fully in the civic and economic spheres of the country, and can serve as a buffer against living in poverty. Swaziland is no different than most other countries in that it's more educated citizens are less likely to be poor. Hardly any of Swaziland's people living in poverty have completed secondary education, and the likelihood that someone below the poverty line is illiterate or poorly educated is much higher than for a person who is not (16). The connections between education and economic standing in Swaziland are strong.

NYP Education Objective:

The provision of relevant and affordable quality education that engenders a sense of civic-mindedness and fosters the skills that are necessary to participate effectively in the economic development of the country and for the youth's self-sustenance.

The country provides free primary education, but faces issues of grade repeating and drop-outs throughout primary and secondary, and overall low enrolment and attendance at higher levels. It is clear that pregnancy is a strong contributor to drop-outs for girls, and there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that corporal punishment and sexual violence may be contributing factors as well (11).

The policy environment in the country appears to be conducive to a strong and inclusive educational system. The Education sector is governed by two primary policy documents: The Education and Training Sector Policy of 2011 and the Free Primary Education Act of 2010. Policies outside of the Education Sector that nevertheless guide or inform education and training policy include the Poverty Reduction Strategy Action Plan (PRSAP), the NYP, the Children's Protection and Welfare Act (CPWA), and the National Development Strategy (NDS).

The Education and Training Sector Policy assures the provision of relevant educational and training programmes, and commits the country to inclusive, life-long learning and improvements in access, quality, equity, relevance, efficiency, and delivery of education. It is driven by the legal framework of the Education Act and the national development goals presented in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Action Plan (PRSAP). The policy clearly outlines the right of every Swazi citizen to education and training appropriate to their age and needs, including the provision of free and compulsory basic education; the right to protection from all forms of stigma and discrimination; and to education and training of appropriate quality and relevant to the socio-economic and cultural needs of Swaziland and its citizens. Further, the policy states that ‘no Swazi citizen shall be excluded from age-appropriate formal and non-formal quality education because of its cost.’

The policy reflects a series of commitments, not least to inclusive, life-long learning, also to regional protocols on education and training espoused by the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs). It is also aligned to international contexts and reflect Swaziland’s commitment to the many agreements and conventions that shape and direct international education development, including a commitment to Education for All (EFA), the ESA commitment to Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), now the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). (15)

Beginning in 2008, the MOET introduced the ‘Schools as Centres of Care a Support’ programme, or Inqaba. In the context of widespread poverty, the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the world, and endemic issues of violence against women and children, the Inqaba programme strives to promote school environments that are child-friendly, safe, and conducive for learning. It is composed of 6 pillars.

Table 3.1.1 The Six Pillars of Schools as Centres of Care and Support

School and Community Partnerships	Strengthening relationships between schools and communities to promote engagement in, and ownership of, children’s education
Safety and Protection	Increasing the awareness and involvement of teachers, parents, and guardians in child protection issues at schools and in communities
Psychosocial Support	Identifying children at risk of abuse and ensuring that they receive guidance and counselling, and medical attention where necessary

Food Security	Expanding school feeding to ensure every child has at least one hot meal per day
Water, Hygiene and Sanitation	Providing basic water and sanitation, and promoting good hygiene among children in the school, home, and community
Gender, HIV, and Life-Skills Education	Raising knowledge and awareness of gender and HIV, and developing critical life skills

Source: Education Sector Strategic Plan

The MOET is currently implementing Life Skills Education curriculum under the HIV, Gender, and Life Skills pillar of *Inqaba* in all secondary schools. The Life Skills Education curriculum covers issues of empowerment, sexual and reproductive health, communication, HIV/AIDS, and gender, as well as career planning. Future chapters will illustrate the importance of integrating these topics across all levels.

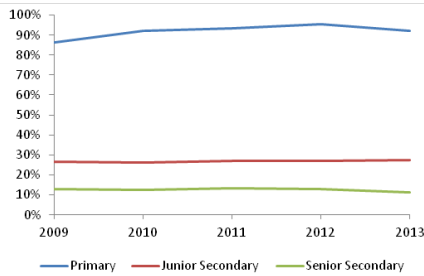
A strong policy environment, combined with free primary education and the mainstreaming of the *Inqaba programme* would indicate significant effort to provide quality, appropriate, and affordable education for all, regardless of disability and without discrimination. Promising efforts are being made to enhance the educational environment and provide a holistic package of development support to learners, including addressing issues of safety and protection, psychosocial support, and food security.

Though a number of policies and programmes exist to improve the access and equity of Swaziland’s education, the extent to which those policies have been successfully implemented is far from complete. Many of Swaziland’s youth appear unable to access their right to an education, despite the strides taken to advance the situation.

3.2 School Enrolment and Educational Attainment

The advent of free primary education in Swaziland augured well for access to and enrolment in primary education. Over 90% of primary-aged children are enrolled in school (17). The country has not seen the same success at secondary and tertiary levels. By some estimates, only 27% of secondary –school aged children are actually enrolled in school, and with the University of Swaziland (UNISWA) facing fiscal challenges and reducing the number of annual entrants, the proportion of tertiary-eligible youth in Swaziland who are receiving that level of education will continue to decline.

Figure 3.2.1 Trends in Net Enrolment at Primary and Secondary, 2009 - 2013



Source: Annual Education Census 2013

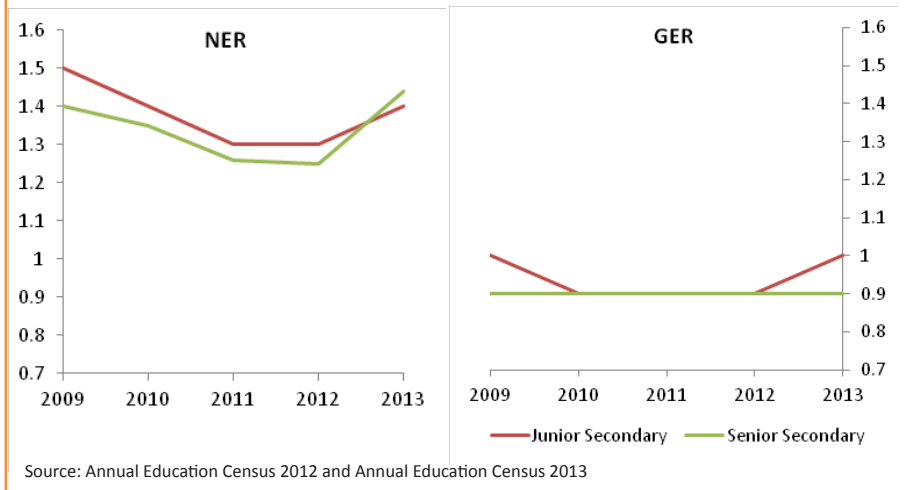
Primary school in Swaziland begins at age 7 in grade one, and a normal progression would last for 7 years and end with the receipt of a Primary Certificate. Beginning in 2010, primary education in Swaziland has been provided free of charge under the Free Primary Education (FPE) programme. There are two levels of secondary education: junior secondary, a three year programme (Form 1 to Form 3), and senior secondary, which lasts for two (Form 4 and Form 5).

Swaziland is on the way to ensuring that all children attend and complete primary school, through the FPE program, with a net enrolment rate at primary level steadily increasing and at 92.3% nationally in 2013 (17). However, the net enrolment rate (NER) for secondary-school aged youth is only 27% (17), which indicates that many young people are not able to take advantage of their right to education. Between the ages of 15-24, youth should be enrolled in secondary and then tertiary, if on-track educationally. However, country-level educational data shows a different picture.

Essentially, just over 90% of children of primary-school age are enrolled in primary school, but the proportion of junior secondary-school aged children enrolled has hovered below 30% since 2009. At senior secondary school, only around 12% of those in the appropriate age for senior secondary are enrolled. This strongly suggests that issues of grade repetition and drop-out begin during primary school and these two factors only become more problematic as a youth progress through school.

Enrolment rates can provide an understanding of the accessibility of education as young people grow older, but it is also important to examine the relative accessibility of education to each gender. By looking at the Gender Parity Index (GPI) for both gross and net enrolment rates, we can further understand girls' and boys' access to education. GPI measures the relative access of girls and boys by comparing enrolment trends. Net enrolment gender parity indicates the ratio of girls to boys who are receiving education appropriate to their age. Gross enrolment gender parity shows, overall and regardless of age-appropriateness, the ratio of girls to boys enrolled in school.

Figure 3.2.4 Trends in Gender Parity



secondary level far above 1 (indicating perfect parity), the comparison also shows that, overall, more young men than young women are enrolled in school. Of note, however, is that GER is very close to 1 for gross enrolment, indicating that equity of access to education has nearly been achieved, at least when examined by gender.

One explanatory variable for the slight decrease in gender parity observed between lower and upper secondary could be the drop-out rates. Overall, drop-out rates are higher among young women than young men, which could be the cause of lower gender parity at higher levels of education.

Figure 3.2.5 below shows trends in drop-out rates by gender and year, from 2009 to 2013. Interestingly, drop-out rates are higher at the junior secondary than senior secondary level for both male and female students, and the trend is showing drop-out rates increasing at lower secondary, while there has been an overall decrease at upper secondary. This suggests that stronger focus on retention could be placed on the lower secondary levels.

Figure 3.2.5 Trends in Drop-Out Rates by Gender and Education Level

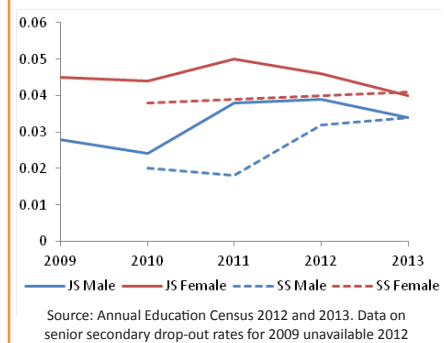
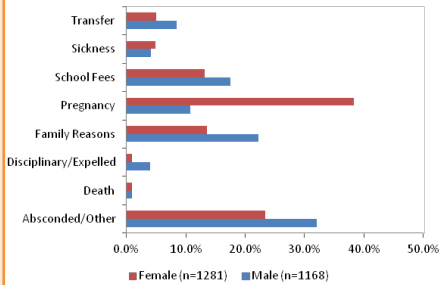


Figure 3.2.3 Reasons Given for Dropping Out by Gender, 2013



Source: Annual Education Census 2013

In order to understand how to mitigate drop-outs, a closer look must be taken at the reasons that students are leaving school. Young women overwhelmingly report pregnancy as their reason for dropping out, followed by ‘absconded or other’ which is a category that gives no real indication of cause. For young men, this difficult to interpret category is the biggest reason for dropping out, followed by family reasons.

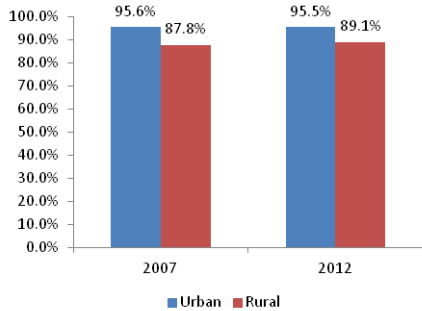
There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that corporal punishment and sexual violence are also pushing children out of school (11). When asked during focus group discussions surrounding the development of the post-2015 Development Agenda, most girls stated they had heard of incidences of the rape of young girls (18). They also cited that there is abuse by male teachers who have sexual relations with girls, citing in some cases the need for money on the part of the student, or the effect of coercion on the part of the teacher. The group was also very concerned that corporal punishment was being meted out at school (18).

Drop-out rates are influenced by the same contextual factors that affect so many other areas of the lives of Swaziland’s young people: poverty, affecting the ability to pay fees or the costs of uniforms and transportation; early pregnancy, which in many instances signals the end of a young woman’s education; and health and family issues. There are additional structural challenges within the education system, such as physical infrastructure, which may also affect enrolment and attendance.

3.3 Literacy

Swaziland has quite a high literacy rate, at 91.03% (1) for the overall population and at 92.1% and 95.3% for young men and women between 15-24, respectively (10). Compared with many other countries in the region, these literacy rates are quite high. However, there is some variation between men (92.5%) and women (89.7%), and again, as with many other indicators, there is an urban/rural divide (1).

Figure 3.2.1.1 Urban and Rural Literacy, 2007 and 2012



Source: Demographic and Housing Survey Key Findings, 2012

Youth-specific data on literacy rates among the urban and rural population are not kept. However, given that the majority of young people reside in rural areas, it is reasonable to conclude that there is also a lower literacy rate among rural youth. Overall, youth literacy stands at 95.3% of women 15-24 and 92.1% of men, making youth literacy among young women roughly equivalent to the general population, and slightly higher than the general population for young men (19).

3.4 Tertiary and Non-Formal Education

Tertiary education takes two forms: higher education and post-secondary education. There is one public institute of higher education in the country, The University of Swaziland, which provides for a 3-year diploma, a 4-year bachelor’s degree, or a 5-year bachelor’s degree in law. Post-secondary education is primarily vocational and technical, and enrolment periods vary by training provider from a few months to several years (3).

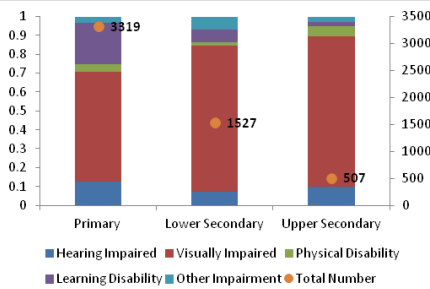
As indicated by enrolment rates, attendance rates, and drop-out rates, a significant number of the eligible school-going aged population is not included in the educational system. There are two primary providers in the non-formal sector that provide adult basic education and training (ABET) programmes. Sebenta National Institute provides a general education programme, basic and post basic English and numeracy, and non-formal upper primary education (NUPE). Sebenta also implements vocational and skills training. The Government of Swaziland also provides some training through Rural Education Centres (RECs), which provide technical and vocational training and short entry-level skills programmes for adults and youth (20).

The availability of post-secondary and higher education is limited geographically to two areas, Manzini and Mbabane, with a few exceptions. Further, TVET instructors often lack adequate qualifications, have limited or outdated industry experience, and do not need to adhere to any national occupational standards. The geographical limitations on educational ability and poorly regulated environment may severely hinder the quality of TVET available in the country (21).

3.5 Special Needs

Education sector data primarily uses the discretion of school-level reporting personnel to delineate a student with special needs. The classification of special needs within schools is not medically validated and is based on the perception and interpretation of school staff (17). Categories of special need include hearing impairment, visual impairment, physical disability, learning disability, and ‘other impairment.’ Reporting on special needs is only newly incorporated into the education census and is highly variable.

Figure 3.2.5 Trends in Drop-Out Rates by Gender and Education Level



Source: Annual Education Census 2013

The majority of students described as having special education needs are at primary school, and the proportion falls throughout progression in school. The vast majority of special needs are categorized as visual impairment, followed by hearing impaired and learning disability. Though overall, disability among children and youth in Swaziland is characterized by mental disability or physical disability, the vast majority of identified cases in school are visual impairment, which suggests that young people living with other types of

disability are not as able to access education.

Swaziland’s Education and Training Sector policy provides assures the provision of relevant educational and training programs and commits the country to inclusive, life-long learning and improvements in access, quality, equity, relevance, efficiency, and delivery of education (15). Additionally, the child protection and welfare act requires the provision of education to all persons under the age of 18 regardless of disability (22). There are 5 educational institutions in Swaziland that provide for children with special needs, though only one is considered ‘truly inclusive (11).’

3.6 Conclusions and recommendations

Though Swaziland has made some significant accomplishments in primary education, that success has not translated to higher levels. While primary education is required and free of charge, free and compulsory education does not extend through basic education, and a large portion of Swaziland’s young people are not progressing through the educational system and fall back due to grade repetition.

Enrolment and attendance continues to decline in the higher grades, and the drop-out rate is worrisome, affecting more young women than young men, with pregnancy being the primary reason most young women leave school. In addition to low participation in secondary education, tertiary education is widely inaccessible and TVET instruction is largely unregulated, threatening the quality of training youth receive.

Youth with disabilities or special needs are especially vulnerable at all levels, as a lack of reliable data makes them largely invisible, and disabilities outside of visual impairment are not well catered for. Without an accurate, well-informed, and medically validated picture of how many students have special needs, and what type of needs they have, the Ministry of Education will be unable to form an appropriate strategy.

Key recommendations are highlighted below:-

1. The Free Primary Education Act should be expanded to include the 3 years of junior secondary, thereby becoming a Free Basic Education Act entitling all children to at least 10 years of schooling free of charge.
2. Anecdotal evidence regarding physical punishment and sexual violence as drivers of school drop-out rates should be closely examined, the extent of the issue identified, and strict measures put in place. This can and should include the ability of the Ministry of Education to revoke the teaching certificate of an individual who is found to be guilty of perpetrating physical punishment outside of the policy or any form of sexual violence.
3. To better address students with special needs, reporting should be standardized and required, categories of special need formalized and validated. Intensive training should take place to assist school staff to properly identify and support students with special needs, and MoET should develop a plan to address needs outside of visual impairment.
4. Programmes to prevent teenage pregnancy should be strengthened and more widely implemented, and interventions to allow young mothers to remain in school should be implemented or accelerated, as motherhood should not be a barrier to achievement.
5. The school curriculum should be reviewed at all levels, and a thorough analysis of the labour market done. The curriculum should be better aligned to the needs of the market and provide education and training that will equip youth with the skills they need to find or create employment. More and more relevant training programmes should be made accessible.
6. Regulate the vocational and training environment at tertiary level, ensuring that minimum standards are met, so that the quality of training youth receive is commensurate with the needs and expectations of employers.
7. Expand and implement ICT and entrepreneurial education at all levels, focusing on the provision of computers and internet in all schools in the country. Youth will not be competitive in the labour market without these key foundational skills.

CHAPTER 4: YOUTH EMPLOYMENT, UNEMPLOYMENT, AND POVERTY

“...youth [...] form the majority of the unemployed, unskilled and are most likely to be poor...if nothing is done to address this situation, a lot more Swazis will enter the poverty bracket in the foreseeable future.” - Swaziland Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan

4.1 Background and policy environment

Youth in Swaziland – as in many other parts of Africa – are striving to achieve economic independence and find their identity in the context of weakening family and community structures as well as an educational system that does not always equip them with skills demanded in the global economy (23). Swaziland’s unemployment rate is among the highest in sub-Saharan Africa, standing at 22.5% for the overall workforce, and at 42.4% between 15-24, as of 2013 (24). Poverty levels are also startlingly high, with 63% of the country living below the poverty line (25).

National Youth Policy: Unemployment and Poverty Objectives:

Place emphasis on projects that employ young people’s skills in productive activities as well as enhance skills toward self-employment.

There are a plethora of policies intended to address issues of poverty and employment. Swaziland’s primary development framework of Vision 2022, implemented in part through the Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan (PRSAP) and the National Development Strategy aim to reduce poverty, create employment, promote gender equality, and improve overall quality of life (3). The PRSAP, specifically, targeted a reduction of poverty by 50% by 2015 and the total eradication of poverty by 2022. Both strategies place youth employment as a key pillar of economic growth and poverty reduction. The National Youth Policy calls for investing in an educational curriculum that is responsive to the needs of the labour market, expanding public works and infrastructure to provide youth with work, investing in technical and vocational education (TVET), and improved regulations of the wage system (3). Additionally, the Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Development Policy aims to encourage youth entrepreneurship by providing training, stimulating lending, and providing support to individuals wishing to establish businesses. In addition, in 2008, The National Youth Enterprise Fund was established to provide young people with subsidized loans to

enable them to start their own businesses. Swaziland also ratified the African Youth Charter in 2013, which clearly emphasizes the need to invest in youth employment, livelihoods, and skills development.

Despite the high number of policies attended to address the issue, given the bleak statistics surrounding youth, employment, unemployment, and poverty, it appears that many, if not most, of the above policies have not been implemented effectively enough to achieve desirable outcomes. Youth poverty and unemployment remain high. Understanding whether this is due to a mismatch of the training youth receive to the needs of the labour market or as a result of Swaziland’s macroeconomic policies that determine the absorptive capacity of the labour market would go far in formulating a clear strategy to mitigate the issue.

4.2 Youth Employment and Unemployment

Conventionally, a person is considered unemployed when he or she is actively seeking work and unable to find it. This definition of unemployment is considered strict. In countries such as Swaziland, there are a high number of individuals who wish to work, but have given up on seeking employment, likely due to a belief that there is no employment available to them. This is often the result of a prolonged and fruitless job search. This phenomenon is referred to as ‘discouraged workers.’ Counting discouraged workers as part of the unemployed labour force better captures the situation of the labour market. The below figure illustrates both the proportion of the population that are seeking work and unable to find it (strict), but also those who would like to work but have given up on seeking a job (relaxed).

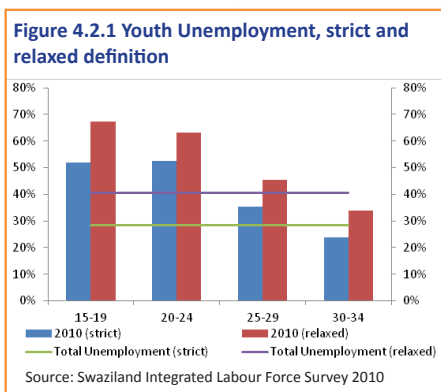
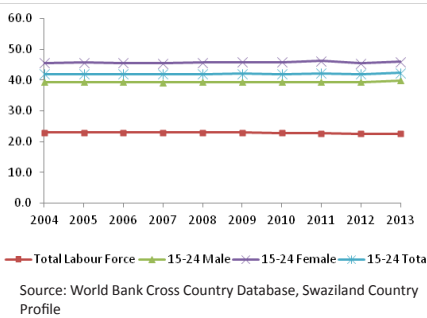


Figure 4.2.1 demonstrates that youth tend to be unemployed in larger proportions than the general population, regardless of definition. It also demonstrates that significant numbers of young people have given up searching for employment, which indicates a worrisome situation. Employment is a challenge across the board for youth in Swaziland. However, young women and rural inhabitants face a starker situation. While employment increased slightly for 15-24 year olds in urban areas between 2007 and 2010,

the gap in employment widened for women overall more so than men, and unemployment increased by 15% in rural areas (26).

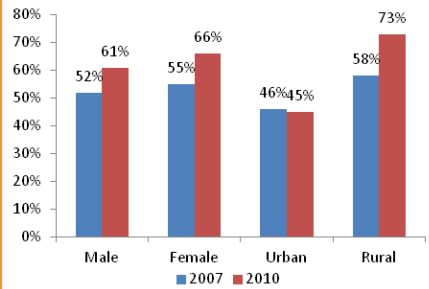
Youth in Swaziland have faced employment challenges for a number of years. The proportion of young people available and seeking work but unable to find it has remained essentially stagnant for a decade, which is likely a strong contributor to the phenomenon of discouragement among young workers.

Figure 4.2.3 Trends in Youth Unemployment, 2004-2013



Employers in the country have indicated that there are major challenges with employing young people, primarily relating to a lack of computer literacy and appropriate technical skills, further emphasizing a lack of alignment between the available education and training and the available jobs (3). In addition, a study conducted by UNDP and UNFPA in 2013 found that those youth who do manage to find employment are significantly more likely (75%) than older workers (48%) to hold insecure jobs, without a contract or protection against the increased risks associated with age (27).

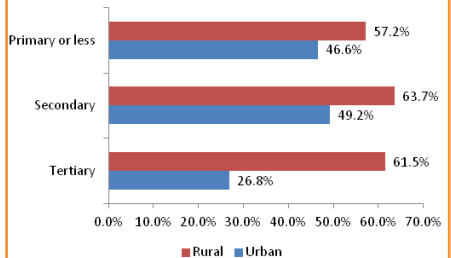
Figure 4.2.2 Youth Unemployment by Sex and Place of Residence



Source: Swaziland Integrated Labour Force Survey 2010

Unemployment tends to disproportionately affect the less educated. This is generally true of the urban youth population, but in rural areas in Swaziland, increased education is not a buffer for youth facing a weak labour market, and a young person with tertiary education is actually more likely to be unemployed than one with primary or less (26).

Figure 4.2.4 Unemployed Youth by Education Level



Source: Swaziland Integrated Labour Force Survey 2010

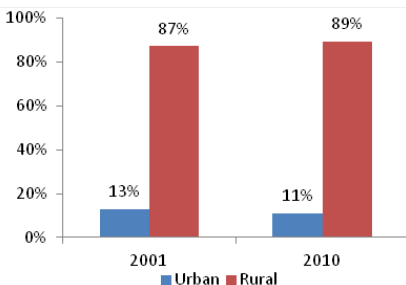
While young people are encouraged to start their own businesses, as indicated by the SME policy and the YERF, the environment surrounding the creation of a business in Swaziland is quite challenging. In a country with a poverty rate above 60%, the purchasing power in the market is weak. And, in a difficult market, the costs and time associated with starting a business in Swaziland are among the highest in the SADC region (27). Many youth report that they are unable to access capital from financial institutions, and that despite being aware of government grant programmes, the criteria for eligibility were unclear and many young people did not understand how to create a business plan (3). Additional challenges cited were access to land and legal requirements, such as business registration and the acquisition of licenses (3).

The above picture is one of youth facing the compounding challenges of an unfriendly labour market, insufficient and/or inappropriate training, and a series of difficulties in pursuing independent business endeavours. The struggles of young people to sustain themselves in the labour market lead directly to financial instability, and the inability to earn money to meet financial needs and obligations. This inability can further lead to an increased susceptibility to malnutrition, physical and mental illness, reduced self-esteem, increased pessimism about the future, and self-destructive behaviours such as alcohol and substance use.

4.3 Youth and Poverty

Despite being classified as a middle-income country, according to the 2010 Income and Expenditure Survey, 63% of the population in Swaziland live below the poverty line. Income and Expenditure data is collected at the household level, and therefore youth-specific data can be difficult to come by, but by examining a few household-level indicators may provide a reasonably clear picture of the effect of poverty on Swaziland's youth.

Figure 4.3.1 Percentage of Urban and Rural Families Below the Poverty Line



Source: Income and Expenditure Survey 2010

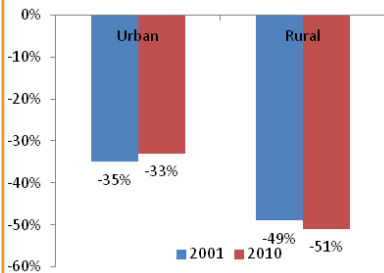
As with employment, poverty affects the rural population to a greater and deeper extent than those living in urban areas. Figures 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 demonstrate the proportions living below the poverty line and the income gap. The income gap illustrates the average percentage below the poverty line at which families fall. What is worth noting is that not only are substantially more families living in poverty residing in rural areas – 89% of families below the poverty line lived in

rural areas in 2010 – rural families are also living on significantly less, and the divide between rural and urban incomes has widened since 2001 (25).

Youth themselves have indicated that there are some significant structural barriers to pulling themselves out of poverty. One, conventional financial mechanisms, and the banking system at large, are relatively inaccessible to young people. Additionally, the traditional system that surrounds the allocation

of Swazi nation land does not allow for most youth to benefit. Because land is only granted to married males under the Konta system, and marriage is becoming a choice that fewer and fewer Swazis make, access to land is a serious hindrance for the development of Swaziland’s youth.

Figure 4.3.2 Rural and Urban Income Gap



Source: Income and Expenditure Survey 2010

4.4 Conclusions and Recommendations

The level of unemployment and poverty affecting Swaziland’s youth is startling. Addressing the first will be central to addressing the second, particularly over the long term. The high level of youth unemployment is a major concern for Swaziland, if the country is to harness a demographic dividend, and if measures are not taken swiftly, the country will face the challenges associated with a growing and unemployed cadre of young people as the population bulge moves upward in the future.

Key recommendations for employment, unemployment, and poverty are below.

1. More effectively implement and accelerate strategies to reduce unemployment and underemployment, particularly for youth. As the majority of youth reside in rural areas, job creation programmes should focus on those areas. The country could consider, for example, infrastructure developments such as road improvements in rural areas, creating employment opportunities for youth.
2. Finalize the National Land Policy and make specific provisions to ensure that land is accessible to youth, especially young women, and consider removing provisions requiring marriage.
3. Improve regulations in the labour market to ensure that minimum wage laws are enforced and to encourage participation of women in production-related employment.
4. Increase funding allocations for the YERF and provide additional training and capacity building programmes.

CHAPTER 5: SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

“You find that the child grows up and get a boyfriend without having proper information and then they fall pregnant.” – Focus Group Participant, Drivers of Teenage Pregnancy Study

5.1 Background and policy environment

Youth in Swaziland experience a broad range of sexual and reproductive health challenges. Particularly for youth within the younger age category of 15-24, there are specific vulnerabilities, largely related to age: physiological vulnerability, high susceptibility to peer pressure, tendencies toward risk-taking behaviour, lower ability to negotiate safer sex practices, and difficulty accessing sexual and reproductive health information and services.

The SRHR challenges of Swaziland’s youth are exacerbated by a variety of the contextual factors discussed in more detail in other sections of this report. There is a low level of progression from primary to secondary school, high unemployment rates among young people, and high levels of poverty. A lack of education puts the power of young people to make protective and informed decisions for themselves, and the economic vulnerabilities associated with poverty and unemployment put young people at risk of engaging in behaviours that make them susceptible to the acquisition of HIV and other STIs. Additionally, high levels of sexual abuse and gender-based violence affect young people especially.

National Youth Policy: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Objectives:

Ensure awareness of the consequences of HIV/AIDS and also to ensure counselling, rehabilitation and care for HIV/AIDS infected youths and youth orphans whose parents were victims of HIV/AIDS as well as to mitigate the forces that drive the rapid increase in HIV infections amongst youth.

Empower young women and young men to access equal opportunities and to protect them from any form of abuse given gender differences.

Improve access to high quality and youth friendly sexual and reproductive health services provided to reduce the risks of sexually transmitted infections, high teenage pregnancy, and early sexual debut.

Adolescents and youth in Swaziland do not have adequate information and accessibility to services which will enable them to make informed decisions on their sexuality and reproductive health (28). The vulnerabilities that this creates for young people are especially critical to address, as young people engage in sexual activity at early ages, and with limited knowledge of sexual and reproductive health and rights, lack skills to negotiate safer sex, access appropriate health commodities, and exhibit poor health-seeking behaviour.

Generally, the policy environment for the provision of SRH services to young people is favourable. This is evident by the availability of various policies in support of provision of SRH services to the young people. The National Health Policy of 2007 emphasizes decentralization of services and access to appropriate care at community levels, which is critical for young people to access necessary healthcare. The National Policy on Sexual and Reproductive Health of 2013 states that comprehensive sexuality education, information, and integrated SRH services shall be provided to children, adolescents, and youth people at all levels of health care delivery systems and other relevant settings according to their age and need. The policy also stipulates that MOH shall provide an enabling environment and resources to provide ASRH services and that quality family planning information and care shall be provided to all reproductive-age (defined as 15–49) women and men. The National Youth Policy calls for improved access to HIV/AIDS treatment for youth, the integration of Life Skills Education (which includes sexuality education) curricula into all institutions, the promotion of school- and community-based health clubs, and scale-up of SRH services targeting all youth, to reduce STI prevalence and unplanned pregnancies. All of these policies emphasize that healthcare delivery should be appropriate to the age of youth being served.

There are also a plethora of programmatic interventions regarding SRHR in the country. Comprehensive sexuality education was introduced in schools and communities through teacher training and peer education under the Inqaba pillar of HIV/AIDS, Gender, and Life Skills. The Life Skills Education (LSE) curriculum includes comprehensive and age-appropriate sexuality education, though full implementation of the curriculum has faced a number of delays. The Ministry of Health also led partners to improve access of sexual and reproductive health information and services (SRH) in the community, and has implemented the Integrated Youth Friendly Health Services Programme, which is a package of healthcare services targeted specifically at young people and emphasizes SRHR. Health Care Workers (HCW) have been trained to understand the diversity, sexual and reproductive rights, and dynamism of young people, and to provide services in an accessible and non-judgemental way. The package includes, at a minimum, SRH information and education, life skills, family planning, addressing Gender Health issues.

Coordinated multi-sectoral interventions have also been put in place by the Government in partnership with stakeholders to improve the SRH status of youth and their access to SRH services, for example by implementing a Social and Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC) strategy or the HIV prevention toolkit. Often, these take the form of community education through sports, arts, and cultural activities, and these same mechanisms are utilized to reach out-of-school youth. These forums are intended to increase the utilization of services on the part of young people by increasing their access to information on sexuality and sexual and reproductive health and rights. Government and various partners have also intensified efforts to provide Comprehensive Sexuality Education in school, under the LSE programme, and out-of-school, through various community-based activities focused on youth.

Again, though, as with education and employment, a strong policy environment and multiple interventions may not translate to substantially improved outcomes, and this appears to be the case in the health sector as well.

5.2 Reproductive Health

Early sexual debut, high adolescent fertility rate, unmet need for family planning, and on-going problems with sexual and gender based violence (GBV) are some of the key issues faced by young people in terms of reproductive health. There are many indicators that highlight a need for a comprehensive sexuality education and evidence based interventions.

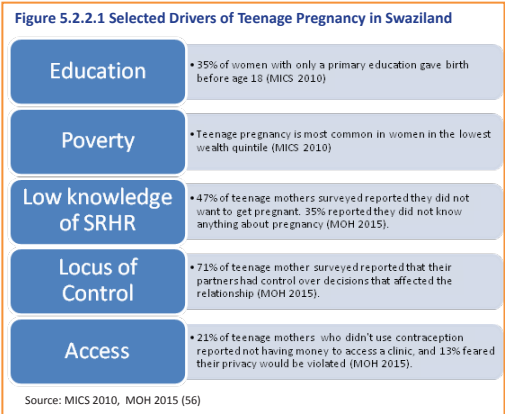
5.2.1 Early Sexual Debut

Young people in Swaziland begin engaging in sexual activity at an early age. The median age at first intercourse in Swaziland is 16 years for girls and 18 years for boys, while the median age at first marriage is 24 years (29). Delaying first sexual intercourse is strongly correlated with more years of education in young women, and a reduced risk to HIV exposure and early pregnancy (11).

According to the 2012 Market Segmentation Analysis on Family Planning and accompanying survey, sexual activity increases with age and women age 25-39 are the most sexually active. Worth noting is that nearly 3 in 5 women age 15-19 have never had sex, while 13 percent were sexually active at the time of the survey (30). While perhaps not currently sexually active, it does seem that close to 40% of young women under 19 have at some point engaged in sexual intercourse, which demonstrates a need for early and comprehensive SRH education and youth-friendly SRH services.

5.2.2 Adolescent Fertility Rate, Teenage Pregnancy, and Early Motherhood

Teenage pregnancy in Swaziland remains a cause for concern. In SDHS 2007, teenage pregnancy was at 24% and over the years it has not shown responding decline despite programmatic interventions. Adolescent fertility did decline slightly from 89/1000 to 87/1000 between 2010 and 2014 (10), but this decrease is quite small and does not signify great success in efforts to substantially reduce early pregnancies.



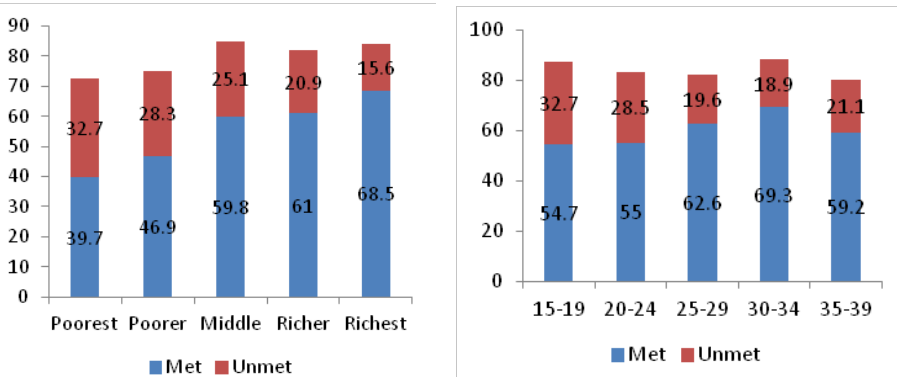
Pregnancy among girls less than 18 years of age has a number of negative consequences. It violates the rights of girls and can pose life-threatening consequences. From 2011 – 2013, roughly 7% of maternal deaths were accounted for by mothers between 15-19 (31). In addition, early pregnancy can have lasting negative effects in terms of sexual and reproductive health for young women and it poses high development costs for communities, particularly in perpetuating the cycle of poverty. In 2014, 16.7% of women between 20-24 had at least one live birth before 18 years of age. While this is a decline from 2010, when 22% of young women reported having borne a child before 18, the number of early pregnancies in Swaziland is still cause for concern.

5.2.3 Contraceptive Prevalence Rate

Contraceptive use is particularly important for the prevention of HIV/AIDS and other STIs and for the reduction of unintended and early pregnancies. Contraceptive prevalence (CPR) among all women aged 15-19 years was 16.5% and among those aged 20-24 was 60.2% (13). In the general population, CPR has increased from 49% in SDHS 2007 to 65% in MICS 2010 and slight increase to 67% in MICS 2014. Among women 15-35, the most commonly reported contraceptives used were the male condom, injectables, and female sterilization (30).

80.6% of the sexually active women in Swaziland report using or wanting to use some form of contraceptive. The needs of 57.5% of sexually active women are met, but 23.1% of women have an unmet need for contraception (30). Women with little or no education report the lowest prevalence of contraceptive use or desired use, but also the highest proportion of unmet need. Similarly, women in lower age groups and wealth quintiles also face higher unmet need (30). Essentially, the younger, poorer, and less educated a woman in Swaziland is, the more likely she is unable to access or utilize contraception.

Figure 5.2.3.1 Unmet Need for Family Planning by Wealth Quintile and Age



Source: Market Segmentation Analysis on Family Planning

5.2.4 Young people and abortion

Abortion refers to intentional and unintentional termination of pregnancy before the foetal viability gestational age, which varies from country to country. In Swaziland it is 28 weeks. Abortion in the country is illegal unless medically indicated as outlined in the Swaziland Constitutions 2005 section 15(5) and there are no service provisions for voluntary termination. The country also has no parameters to measure illegal and spontaneous abortions. Women age 15-19 years who reported miscarriage or abortion was 1.3% whilst those age 20-24 years was at 4.7% (32).

5.3 Youth, HIV/AIDS, and other STIs

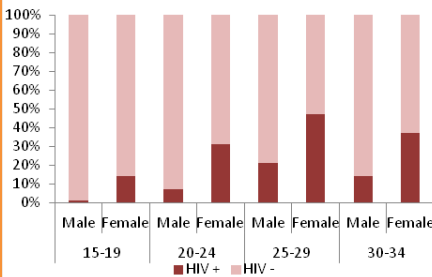
A number of factors have been identified as the key drivers of HIV in Swaziland. These include multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships, low levels of male circumcision, early sexual initiation, late formation of stable relationships, low levels of consistent condom use, age-difference of partners in sexual relationships, income inequality, gender inequality and gender-based violence, and mobility and migration (33).

5.3.1 HIV Incidence, Prevalence, and Treatment

Swaziland has the highest HIV prevalence in the world, and the epidemic begins to take a strong hold on the youth population during the early years of youth. Overall knowledge of drivers and prevention strategies for HIV among young people are low, with only 49.1% of women 15 - 24 and 50.9% of men in the same age category able to correctly identify ways of preventing sexual transmission of HIV (19). Knowledge

of HIV status and both the prevalence and incidence rates of HIV within the youth population are also areas of concern. Many sexually active young people are not even aware of their HIV status. In 2014, 80.2% of women 15-24 who had been sexually active had been tested and new their results. Only 62.3% of their male counterparts had been tested and knew their HIV status. HIV testing is a critical first step in the continuum of care, and those who are HIV positive but no not know their results may be unknowingly transmitting the virus to their sexual partners.

Figure 5.3.1.1 HIV Prevalence Among Youth by Age



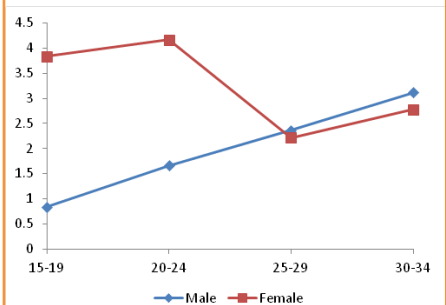
Source: Swaziland HIV Incidence Measurement Survey, 2011

HIV prevalence is much higher in young women than young men across all age groups, and marked increases in prevalence become apparent throughout the 20s for both sexes. This implies that in future more effort should be directed to both young men and women, targeting them by age segmentation in order to effectively respond to HIV/ AIDS.

HIV incidence, or the rate of new infections, begins to accelerate rapidly in the youth population. For young women, an already high rate of new infections in the 15-19 age group only increases in the early 20s. For young men, incidence does not reach its climax until the early 30s, though HIV incidence in young men steadily increases from adolescence onward. This data would suggest that many new infections in young women are not due to sexual intercourse with young men in their own age bracket. Rather, young women are likely being infected by older men.

HIV incidence rate refers to new infections while prevalence refers to both new and prevailing infection, as a cumulative percentage of the HIV+ population within a given age group. According to the 2006-07 SDHS the HIV prevalence in the total sexually active population was estimated at 26%, while the incident rate was 2.9% (9). SHIMS 2012 indicated a decline in the HIV incidence to 2.4% in the overall population, but prevalence and incidence continue to be alarmingly high in the youth population.

Figure 5.3.1.2 New HIV Incidence Among Youth



Source: Swaziland HIV Incidence Measurement Survey, 2011

In the 2013 HIV Annual Report, 7.1% of the young people aged 15-19 tested positive for HIV and an increase was observed among those age 25-34 at 14.5% overall. However, treatment coverage for young people is not as high as it could be, particularly as emerging research continues to demonstrate the efficacy of treatment as a mechanism for preventing the transmission of new infections. Young people aged 15-19 on ART was at 78% while the 20-24 years were at 77% in 2013 (34).²

5.3.2 STIs other than HIV

HIV/AIDS is a singular example of a particular SRH threat to the health of young people, but there are many other STIs to consider as well. Youth sexual behavior influences not only the acquisition of HIV, but of all other STIs, the presence of which makes youth more susceptible to HIV infection.

Drivers of STIs for young people can include multiple partners and the inconsistency or absence of condom use. Among sexually active young people 14-25, 37.3% of women and 40.9% of men had engaged in sex with a non-regular partner, though reported condom use was higher, at 70.9% for young women and 93.4% for young men (10). The diagnosis of STIs in Swaziland is based on symptoms present, rather than on screening, and since many STIs can be asymptomatic, the challenges of diagnosing and treating STIs extends beyond issues of access to SRH services for young people.

5.4 Youth and Gender-Based Violence

Gender based violence is a public health concern and one of the critical areas of concern in Swaziland which profoundly affects young people - men, women, and children. Approximately 1 in 4 females in Swaziland experienced physical violence as a child and 9% of the youth aged 18-24 experienced coerced sexual intercourse before they turned eighteen (35). Findings from a nationally representative sample of young women aged 18-24 in Swaziland indicated that 33% had experienced sexual violence before the age of 18, and that 24.4% of women 18-24 had experienced sexual violence in the 12 months preceding the survey (35). Most incidents of such violence occurred either in the victim's own home or the home of a friend or neighbour (35).

Between the ages of 18-24, 32.6% of women report experiencing physical violence, and this violence is most often perpetrated by a boyfriend or husband, followed by other male relatives (35). Only 27.5% of respondents sought help of any kind, though the reasons that victims are not seeking help were not examined (35). Attitudes toward

² Notable missing in this report is all young people HIV Positive and eligible for ART.

gender-based violence in general continue to be worryingly accepting, with 33.4% of women and 16.3% of men believe that a husband is justified in hitting his wife (10). The majority of the respondents in agreement to this opinion were ages 15-24 years old, which shows the magnitude of the acceptability of gender-based violence within the youth population.

5.5 Conclusions and Recommendations

There seems to be some improvement in sexuality education and behaviour change interventions. There is gradual increase in age at sexual debut and in the proportion of adolescents reporting to be abstaining from sexual activity. This suggests that some interventions may have dissuaded some adolescents from sexual intercourse.

The likelihood of a young woman giving birth before 18 has decreased slightly, though early motherhood is still quite prevalent. A lower age at first birth is associated with education level attainment, wealth of the parents, and urban residence. Related to delayed fertility is also high use of contraception, especially for the peak years of the fertility curve for ages 25-30 years, though younger, poorer, and less educated women face more challenges in meeting their reproductive health needs. Public health facilities are the most popular methods of accessing contraceptives, however, they are not youth friendly. The efforts to provide youth friendly SRH services by organisations such as FLAS should be strengthened by integrating them with other services such as HIV and AIDS voluntary counselling and testing and STI.

There are high levels of gender based violence in Swaziland, affecting at least 1 in five women, and not exempting men. There are key policies and interventions within the context of gender and SRH that seek to address Gender Based Violence, such as: National Gender Policy 2010, the Child Protection and Welfare Act of 2012, the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Bill 2011, One Stop Centre, national surveillance system on violence, safe court system, and a number of interventions by government and civil society.

Key recommendations for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights are below:-

1. Inter-ministerial government collaboration, in partnership with donors and civil societies, should strengthen public education on gender-based violence. The Ministry of Education and Training should mainstream gender in the curriculum at all levels including tertiary and specialised colleges and vocational centres. Focus should be placed on building political will to pass legislation such as the Violence Against Women act and to rigorously enforce such legislation.

2. A minimum standard for health facilities to be considered youth-friendly should be put in place, and all facilities assessed against the standard. The standard should address issues of accessibility of key SRHR services and commodities, as well as input from young people about the approachability of service providers.
3. Health services should be further decentralized, to make them truly accessible to youth, especially in rural areas.
4. The availability of SRH information and services in schools should be strengthened, with appropriate linkages to commodities as a key focus.
5. The ability of young women to exercise control over their reproductive health should be strengthened by upscaling girls' empowerment programmes and making a concerted effort to incorporate boys into programmes designed to empower girls and young women.

CHAPTER 6: YOUTH AND CRIME

“Not that we don’t have dreams as young people. We do have dreams, but when we are discouraged by poor access to youth programme funds , where the response is not welcoming, or they will say we need some capital, we will go to crime.” – Youth Participant at State of the Youth Workshop

6.1 Background and Policy Environment

Swaziland is generally considered to be a peaceful country and according to the Royal Swaziland Police, annual crime reporting is on the decline. However, of those crimes that are reported on record, a significant proportion are perpetrated by young people. This, combined with the unemployment situation in the country and the challenges with education, presents a picture of young people in Swaziland who may be contravening the law as an outcome of their educational and socioeconomic status.

National Youth Policy: Youth and Crime Objectives

Ensure that criminal justice institutions provide increased access to justice for the youth so as to reinforce a sense of justice for all, thus preventing the dislocation of sustainable livelihoods as well as the interruption and termination of promising careers.

As poverty, unemployment, and alcohol and substance abuse are widely recognized as key drivers of crime, addressing these underlying causes in Swaziland may go far in reducing the likelihood of young people to be in conflict with the law. Though there are several national policies which touch on issues of youth and crime, at present, there is no nationally adopted document or framework directly addressing issues of youth crime prevention, rehabilitation, and/or internment.

The Swaziland National Youth Policy promotes utilizing youth to promote peace and non-violence, and emphasizes rehabilitation, calling for social rather than judicial approaches when dealing with young offenders. The Policy also calls for compliance with UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Application of Juvenile Justice. However the Action Plan and M&E Framework that accompanies the policy makes no reference to issues of youth and crime. The Child Protection and Welfare Act of 2012 enshrines the rights of youth below age 18 to certain legal protections in case of the accusation of crime.

In most cases, crime data available in Swaziland are either not disaggregated by age or given in very broad age groups, and so it is not possible in many instances to extract crime data specifically for youth.

6.2 Youth as Perpetrators of Crime

Youth perpetrators of crime in Swaziland appear to be overwhelmingly more likely to be male than female, and the types of offences committed by young people fall into two general categories: violent and non-violent offences. The majority of violent offences tend to be domestic or sexual assault, and non-violent offences appear more likely to be drug or substance related (36).

From 2011 – 2013, the most common crimes for which young people 12-24 were arrested were assault of a domestic nature, rape, statutory rape, and indecent assault (36). More young men than young women are offenders, and the young population perpetrates a significant proportion of Swaziland's crime. 46.6% of crimes in 2013 were perpetrated by young people 16-24 and of those crimes, 91% were reported to have been committed by young men (36). As the youth population in Swaziland continues to grow and age into the economically active population, addressing issues of youth and crime, in particular rehabilitation, will be a key pillar of harnessing the demographic dividend.

According to key informants, at present, youth who perpetrate non-violent offences are not treated differently legally or criminally than youth who perpetrate violent offences. In addition to being housed together post-conviction, they tend to receive the same pre-trial treatment, which includes being held with adult offenders if not remanded.

Access to legal counsel and support is reported to be very limited, and mainly available only to youth whose families have the means to pay. As a result, many young people may be facing time in incarceration facilities for offenses of which they are not guilty, or may be sentenced to more time than they need serve.

6.3 Homicide and Suicide

Youth-specific data regarding homicide and suicide are very difficult to come by. Anecdotally, it has been reported that many cases of homicide and suicide occur concurrently within the context of intimate partner violence. Suicides in Swaziland have also been associated with financial challenges and other sources of significant stress. The link between unaddressed mental illness and suicide in Swaziland has not been investigated.

6.4 Youth and Rehabilitation

There are various programmes for young people within the correctional service system in Swaziland, although the extent to which they are focused on rehabilitation is unclear. There is one correctional facility for youth in Swaziland, with an associated educational institution: Malkerns Young People's Prison and Mdutshane (Malkerns) Industrial School. The Young People's Prison is for young males only, and young female offenders are housed with the adult prison population. There are psychologists, social workers, and chaplains on staff at the Young People's Prison, but the extent of rehabilitation support is difficult to evaluate.

In order to mitigate the additional complications and negative consequences to the future of young people as a result of incarceration, Malkerns Young People's Prison, through the Mdutshane Industrial School, has adopted the standard Ministry of Education and Training curriculum, so that incarceration does not necessarily lead to a lack of access to education and the accompanying confounding challenges for a young person's future. Young women who are incarcerated are also educated at the Mdutshane facility, and are transported from the women's prison to Mdutshane on school days.

At present, youth who are released from the correctional facilities do not have a formal or strong mechanism to support their reintegration once they return to their communities, save for one facility. Emafini, a private, faith-based inpatient rehabilitation center is located near Mbabane. Is not accessible to the majority of young offenders due to location and cost. The lack of rehabilitation and reintegration structures may lead to recidivism, or reoffending. The recidivism rate for Swaziland has been estimated at 17%, of which over 80% are repeat offenders under the age of 35 (37).

6.5 Conclusions and Recommendations

Though data on youth and crime are difficult to come by, it appears that young people who perpetrate crimes are not likely to find the resources for access to appropriate legal counsel or rehabilitation if convicted. Crime among young people is perpetrated by more young men, and the types of offences, especially violent offences, confirm earlier information regarding levels of violence against women.

Given the strong and widely recognized connections between unemployment, poverty, and crime, and the growing youth population in Swaziland, addressing the macroeconomic environment that shapes Swaziland's labour market and concurrently

strengthening the quality of education to which young people have access will also be necessary in order for the country to avoid the potential negative consequences of a large and growing unemployed and economically struggling youth population, the likely outcome of which may be increasing crime.

The most critical recommendations regarding youth and crime for Swaziland are:

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive plan to address the root causes of crime: poverty, unemployment, and substance use and abuse. There may be a need for a youth crime prevention and rehabilitation policy, to form a framework for, first, reducing the likelihood of youth perpetrating crime and, second, ensuring that young people who are in conflict with the law are rehabilitated and reintegrated as quickly and to the greatest extent possible.
2. Establish structures or facilities for rehabilitation and reintegration of youth offenders at the regional level, to ensure the availability and accessibility of necessary services. Involve local leadership structures at the chiefdom and Inkhundla level to ensure that there is appropriate supervision and support for the rehabilitation and reintegration of youth offenders.
3. Establish separate facilities to house and educate youth female offenders, so that they are no longer incarcerated with adults.
4. Utilize the concepts in the Crime Prevention Bill to leverage the Tinkhundla system and customary courts to oversee diversion programs for nonviolent offenders.

CHAPTER 7: CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP

“Looking at the national election, it is not an opportunity for the youth as there are cultural norms which dictate that elders tell the youth what to do and not the other way round.” – Interview with Youth Key Informant, ‘Youth Public Policy in Swaziland’

7.1 Background and policy environment

Swaziland has a youthful population which accounts for a majority of the total population of the country. Therefore, the participation of youth in the social and political development of the country, if equitable, would be quite high. The lack of data on youth civic engagement especially at community level does not suggest that there is no youth civic engagement at all, however it does make it difficult to measure the extent of youth civic engagement in Swaziland.

National Youth Policy: Civic Participation and Leadership Objectives

Stimulate youth and their integration in the socio-economic and political development of the nation through popular participation in decision-making processes, programmes, and activities.

Swaziland is governed by the monarchy and the current ruler is King Mswati III. The country adopted a national constitution in 2005, but there are no political parties and many offices are appointed rather than elected. The country has 4 administrative regions, and each region is further divided into *Tinkhundla*, or groupings of chiefdoms, called *Umphakatsi* (2). As a Constitutional Monarchy with no political parties, the custom-based *Tinkhundla* system defines the country’s public administration.

Swaziland has adopted a dual legal system, based on a customary/traditional system on one hand, and a Western legal system on the other (3). Elections are held for a variety of offices: Bucohpho, or a community developer at the chiefdom level; Indvuna yenkhundla, a community developer at the Inkhundla level; and Members of Parliament (MPs) in the House of Assembly (38). 55 MPs are elected by the general public, and a further 10 are appointed by the King. The House of Assembly elects 10 senators, and 20 senators are directly appointed by the King (3).

Following the Swaziland Constitution, which was passed into law in 2005, several additional laws have been passed. The Elections and Boundaries Commission Act of 2013, the Voters Registration Act of 2013, the Elections Act of 2013, the Senate

(Elections) Act of 2013, the Parliamentary (Petitions) Act of 2013, and the Elections Expenses Act of 2013. These Acts together are intended to regulate the electoral environment in the country. All persons 18 years and older, who are citizens or ordinary residents of Swaziland, have paid taxes or made arrangements with the Commissioner of Taxes, and are registered voters, are eligible to vote (3).

The 2005 Constitution contains a Bill of Rights, within which there are provisions for the people to have a right to representation and the right to elections. Swaziland has had two national elections since the Constitution was enacted, the most recent was in 2013.

There are also international policy frameworks which Swaziland has adopted or to which the country is a signatory. The African Youth Charter, for example, states that every young person shall have the right to participate in all spheres of society and it guarantees the participation of youth in parliament and other decision-making bodies in accordance with proscribed laws (39). The United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth and the Commonwealth Youth Charter also encourage the full participation of youth at every level of the decision-making process (3).

The development of the Ministry of Sports, Culture, and Youth Affairs, and the subsequent National Youth Policy are positive developments, as is the development of a Memorandum of Agreement between MOSYCA and the Swaziland National Youth Council (SNYC), to implement the policy. The Youth Policy clearly articulates that the current urban and rural structures allow for very minimal participation of youth in the economic, social, and political arena, and therefore youth participation is minimal in decision-making processes at both a local and national level (6). The policy also highlights the minimal access that youth have to legislative and policymaking bodies. The policy calls for the establishment of various structures wherein young people's views may be solicited in the development and review of national policies, such as SNYC youth associations and the Youth Parliament.

A Youth Parliament was convened in 2009 and the most recent session took place in August of 2015. The youth Parliament was a forum where the young people from Matsapha and surrounding schools engaged its leaders and decision makers with the view of teaching them that they too are a meaningful voice in the crafting of their future and to create deeper levels of engagement between the youth and their Government. However, Youth Parliament is not a permanent body, and it is difficult to assess the extent to which feedback or recommendations from Youth Parliament are adopted by the country.

7.2 Youth participation in electoral activities

Youth participation in political life is seen by many young people as being limited (3). Since the Swaziland Constitution was adopted in 2005, there have been 2 national elections, one in 2008 and one in 2013. In the 2013 elections, there were youth who ran for the positions of MP, *Indvuna yenkhundla*, and *Bucophu*, but the majority were not elected, despite youth having a demographic advantage (3).

The political system of Swaziland may have negative impact on the extent to which youth are represented in the government. The constitution of Swaziland allows the King to select the cabinet, two-thirds of the senate, ten of 65 members of the House of Assembly and senior civil servants (38). It is unlikely that the youth are privileged to be appointed in these key positions. At the regional and local level, youth face several obstacles to becoming electoral candidates. Older people tend to dominate the political sphere in the country and are viewed as having more wisdom and experience. The conservative, patriarchal socio-cultural and religious norms in Swazi society together form an environment that makes it difficult for youth to be viable candidates in the political sphere.

7.3 Youth in Leadership

There are several mechanisms for youth participation that have been developed in Swaziland, primarily under the MOSCYA and SNYC. Tinkhundla Youth Committees have been established in all 55 Inkhundla in Swaziland, representing SNYC at constituency level. Most programmes are delivered through these committees, and the chairpersons of the TYCs select youth representatives to serve on the SNYC board (3). The Youth Development Consortium (YDC) was also established by SNYC and is composed of youth-led and youth-serving organizations.

King Mswati III is the patron of a forum for involving youth in the decision-making process as well. This forum is called the Smart Partnership's Club 29 and is said to be a consultative forum for youth (3). Membership to the Club is appointed, and therefore arguably very limited.

Data on youth in leadership positions is largely unavailable outside of the Shiselweni region, which is the only region in which the structures established by SNYC are still active, according to key informants. Hence, the data that is available for Shiselweni may not be representative of other regions, and may well be the 'best-case' of youth leadership in the country. As of 2014, 14.3% of MPs in Shiselweni were below 35, as were 20.4% of Tindvuna te Tinkhundla in the region (40).

7.4 Volunteerism

Volunteerism can be a good indicator for levels of civic participation, but information on volunteering is not readily available. Some youth report volunteering as a means to secure future employment, and others have reported that community outreach programmes often rely on the efforts of community volunteers (3). However, the prevalence of volunteering among youth cannot be discerned.

It was also reported during both the focus groups and the input workshop that youth have been involved in volunteering work over the years. But their attitude towards volunteering has changed dramatically in the recent past. This is due to the fact that youth feel they are being used. Several youth lamented that when it comes to volunteering, people look for youth but when opportunities arise, especially when funds are available, they are ignored and not included (41).

7.5 Conclusion and recommendations

Opportunities for civic participation and leadership for young people appear to be quite limited, and constraints on data availability make levels of participation difficult to measure. The strong cultural context for choices in political leadership may be a barrier to youth participation, and young people overall do not seem to feel that they are involved in the decision-making process.

Some recommendations in this regard include:

1. Develop and implement a National Youth Service Programme, which incorporates training in leadership and public administration, to encourage youth to fully participate in all spheres of the country's development and administration.
2. Consider non-traditional venues, outside of Tinkhundla centers, to engage with youth.
3. Develop strategies to increase the number of youth who are members of parliament and ministers so that they can be part of nation building especially where youth issues are concerned, and provisions requiring a minimum level of participation and representation by women should be enforced.
4. Initiatives should be developed in an effort to level the playing field for women and youth participation in national elections. Robust programs should be introduced and implemented by chiefs, the government, and the EBC, alongside civic society, to educate Swazis on equality and encourage women and youth to participate fully in the democratic process.

CHAPTER 8: ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE AND MISUSE

“I think as young people we lose our parents to death and we are left with grandparents who cannot advise us properly or will not have the energy to go after us in an attempt to stop us from doing things that would be harmful to us.” – Youth Focus Group Participant, Nkalashane Study

8.1 Background and Policy Environment

In Swaziland, as in many African countries, sufficient data to truly understand and evaluate the extent of alcohol and substance use and misuse is widely unavailable. As with many other issues, youth-specific data is not routinely collected on alcohol and substance use in Swaziland, and the data that exists is largely based on self-report, and therefore subject to bias. This data gap is a serious shortcoming in understanding the extent of alcohol and substance use among Swaziland’s young people, and in establishing policy and programmatic interventions to address it.

National Youth Policy Alcohol and Drug Abuse Objectives

Support the application of increased measures aimed at reducing the increase of drug and substance abuse among young people and the provision of youth-friendly psychiatric facilities which will assume prominence in efforts aimed at mitigating and reducing drug and substance use among the youth.

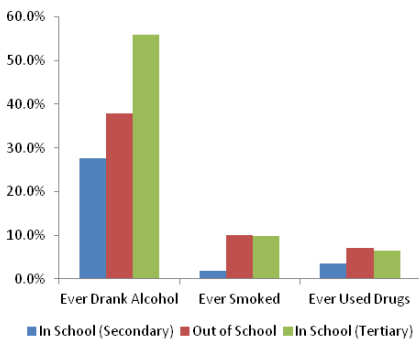
Key informants have stated that the use of alcohol and substance use and abuse among Swaziland’s youth is on the rise, primarily as an outcome of poverty and unemployment. Additionally, they have stated that cannabis is widely grown in the country for use and commercial purposes. From a policy standpoint, the Swaziland National Youth Policy touches on the subject, but there are no specific policy statements or recommendations regarding young people and alcohol and substance use. The constitution and criminal code in Swaziland do have policies related to alcohol and substance use, but they are not youth specific and are more focused on punishment than rehabilitation. The Children’s Protection and Welfare act does speak to the rights of youth offenders and rehabilitation, but the extent to which the Act has been operationalized is limited and supporting structures are weak.

Unlike many other sectors, government bodies responsible for implementing programmes related to the reduction of drug and alcohol use and abuse do not have the advantage of the presence of a variety of implementing partners and the issue does not receive much attention. There is one office which might focus on the issue, the UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), but the mandate of UNODC is currently limited to HIV/AIDS.

8.2 Alcohol and Substance Use Among Youth

As it has already been indicated above, nationally representative data on substance use and misuse is rare. Although alcohol use among African youth is, on average, lower compared with that in more developed regions, available regional evidence suggests that it is on the increase. The legal age for purchase and consumption of alcohol in Swaziland is 18 (42).

Table 8.2.1 Alcohol and Drug Use Among Youth 15-24

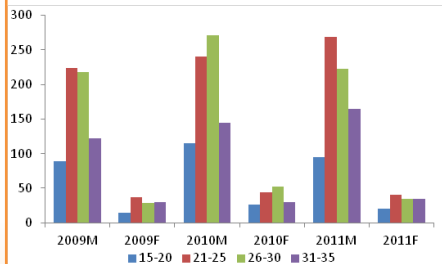


Source: Behavioural Surveillance Survey 2010

According to key informants, the involvement of many young people with drugs is in the form of the production, transportation, and sale of marijuana. It has been reported that involvement in the marijuana trade is seen by young people as one of the only viable ways to make a living, but the ramifications often tend to be arrest and imprisonment.

Use of alcohol and drugs appears most common in tertiary students, with youth at secondary school and out-of-school youth reporting much lower usage (43). Alcohol is used far more widely than other substances, with tobacco and other drugs reported at significantly lower rates (43). Average alcohol consumption per capita is estimated to be 5.7 litres of pure alcohol, and men report a consumption rate nearly 10 times higher than women (42). Of out-of-school youth who report drinking alcohol, 58.9% do so daily or weekly (43).

Figure 8.2.1: Alcohol and Substance Use Related Arrests, 2009-2011 by Age



Source: His Majesty's Correctional Services

Figure 8.2.1 presents the number of youth arrested for substance use offences in 2009, 2010 and 2011. The findings are presented separately for each gender. As with violent crime, alcohol and substance use offences tend to be far more prevalent among young men than young women, and incidence seems to peak throughout the 20s.

8.3 Conclusions and Recommendations

It is vital for the country to have up to date data on the status of youth in as far as alcohol and substance misuse is concerned, but as with crime, data availability poses a real constraint to understanding the extent of the issue. There is a deep and glaring need for the country to examine the extent of alcohol and drug abuse among young people, and to include information on alcohol and substance use into routinely conducted national surveys. Key recommendations include:

1. Conduct an Indaba on drugs and other substances in relation to youth, to understand the drivers for youth involvement with illegal substances and ways to mitigate the negative impacts of same.
2. Concentrate on addressing root causes and rehabilitation. Specific areas of focus for addressing root causes include: job creation, school retention, the creation of youth activities and structures particularly in rural areas, and strengthening the social work sector in communities and schools.
3. Develop a clear referral and rehabilitation policy for young people with alcohol or substance abuse issues, a diversion system away from criminal punishment for non-violent drug and substance use related offences
4. Increasing the scope of Swaziland's UN Office of Drugs and Crime beyond HIV/AIDS to include crime and drug issues among youth.
5. Strengthen enforcement of the legal age to purchase alcohol.

CHAPTER 9. ARTS, MEDIA/ICT, SPORTS, AND CULTURE

9.1 Background and Policy Environment

Arts, media, sports, and culture can provide extensive development opportunities for youth and a strong ICT infrastructure can provide young people with a critical foundation to prepare themselves to be working professionals in a market increasing driven by and dependent on information and communications technology. Opportunities to

develop themselves through the arts and media participation provide new and often underdeveloped pathways for young people to pursue their livelihoods. The preservation of culture can strengthen the pride of young people in their national identity, though it is also important to note that there are cultural factors that contribute to the marginalization of young people and women in the country.

National Youth Policy: Arts, Media/ICT, Sports, and Culture Objectives

Provide diverse leisure options to all young people to have access to as well as maximize their participation in activities that promote school-to-work transition in all its forms, including access to ICT.

Swaziland's information and communication infrastructure was assigned to the portfolio of the newly formed Ministry of Information and Communication Technology in 2009 and the Swaziland Information and Communication Technology Policy was adopted around the same time. The policy recognizes the youthfulness of the population and the social and economic implications which that entails, and also identifies youth as a valuable human resource base to be tapped (44). Of key importance to youth is the emphasis the policy places on ICT access for the poor and for those in small and medium enterprises. Additionally, improvements in ICT could have significant benefit on Swaziland's tourism sector, which if developed, could prove to be a substantial employer for the unskilled, semi-skilled, and SME owners. As highlighted in the National Youth Policy, the development of the tourism, or recreational, industry could provide young people with more diverse career options.

In terms of Arts and Culture, the policy environment is underdeveloped and data in the country is very scarce. A draft bill is under development for the preservation of the siSwati language, as is an Arts & Culture bill. However, neither bill has been presented to Parliament as of the writing of this report. There is a national body, the

Swaziland National Council of Arts and Culture (SNCAC), which exists to promote, empower, support, and cultivate the Arts, but its activities are not widely publicized or understood.

Sport and recreation are primarily covered in the National Development Strategy supporting Vision 2022 and in the Millennium Development Goals, some highlights of which include: the promotion of the involvement of citizens in physical activity throughout the lifespan, ensuring the integration of marginalized communities and groups in sport and recreation activities, having an efficient and effective system of talent identification and development, facilitating and regulating the development of the sports industry, and improving the country's profile through hosting of international events and activities.

9.2 Youth Involvement in Sports

The participation of youth in the media, sports and other youth related services is hampered by the lack of resources and facilities. The available facilities are generally concentrated along the Manzini – Mbabane corridor, at the detriment of other areas. From the perspective of the youth, the Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland is not doing enough to promote arts, media, sports and culture in the country. Generally, there is also a lack of sporting facilities, and the organisations formed to spearhead the development and promotion of various sporting activities have been found wanting in many aspects.

In 2004 the Swaziland Government solicited resources from the Global fund to construct 16 youth centres in 16 constituencies across the country as a pilot project. This program has been implemented under the auspices of the Swaziland National Youth Council and the centres were intended to serve as a platform for several activities to be implemented including sports activities and HIV testing and counselling, minor sporting disciplines. Youth Centres are meant to also be a place where programme implementers in the country can utilize the presence of young people and conduct youth-focused community mobilization and education. The Swaziland National Sports Council (SNSC) and the Sports and Olympic Council in Swaziland (SOCS) also implemented a sports program, Asidlale, or 'let us play.' The intention of the Asidlale program was to build local capacity to deliver sports-based programs through activities designed and owned by communities.

Youth participants in focus groups commented that while youth centres are present, many if not most are not being utilized, and that the Asidlale programme had not been sustained in their communities. Youth also highlighted that the standard of sports facilities particularly in rural areas was quite low.

9.3 Youth Participation in Arts & Culture

The Kingdom of Swaziland is largely culturally homogenous. The vast majority of inhabitants are ethnic Swazi, and siSwati and English are the official languages. Swaziland has a strong and unique cultural identity, and youth participation is a key component of several major cultural events, such as the *Umhlanga reed dance*, the *Lusekwane*, *Umncwashi*, and the *Incwala ceremony*. While data on youth participation in arts and culture is very limited, the cultural context of the country no doubt shapes the environment of young people to a great degree.

The *Incwala* ceremony is considered to be Swaziland's most important cultural event. Essentially, the tradition is about cleansing and renewal, and – above all – celebrating kingship (45). Participation of unmarried young men is a cornerstone of this ceremony, which lasts for 6 days. Their activities consist mainly of marching from Engabezweni Royal residence to cut branches of the sacred shrub *lusekwane* under the light of the full moon, and placing them in the national cattle kraal. These branches are then woven by elders in between the poles of the king's private sanctuary, the *Inhlambelo*. A bull is then released from the *Inhlambelo* and the young men overpower it and return it to its pen. The *Incwala* ceremony has been annually occurring for hundreds of years, many of its inner workings remain shrouded in secrecy, and parts of the ceremony remain restricted to outsiders and women (45).

Umhlanga is an annual event and arguably Swaziland's most well-known. Girls and young women between the ages of 8 and 22 participate in this 8-day ceremony, during which they cut reeds and present them to the Queen Mother (Indlovukazi). Ostensibly these reeds are to repair the windbreak around her royal residence. Around 40,000 girls and young women participate in this event each year (46).

To promote Arts and Culture, the SNCAC inaugurated the Tihlabani Music & Art awards in 2009, to recognize and promote Swazi artists and recognize Swazi accomplishments in the arts. However, youth commented that this institution primarily served well established and popular artists, and it was especially not inclusive to rural youth.

9.4 Youth, Media, and ICT

Despite ICT development being highlighted in the National Development Strategy and the presence of the national Information and Communications Technology Infrastructure policy, access to ICT is limited for a large segment of Swaziland's youth. In 2014, which is the first year for which this data is available, only 42.7% of women and 48.9% of men aged 15-24 had used a computer during the last 12 months. It would be

Table 9.4.1 Computer Lab to School and Student to Computer Ratios, 2013

	Computer Lab:School	Student: Computer
Primary	0.13	122.95
Secondary	0.94	14.65

Source: Annual Education Census 2013

difficult to quantify the negative impact of this lack of access, but it is likely that over 50% of Swaziland’s youth will be seriously hampered economically by a lack of appropriate technological training and fluency.

Youth within the education system have some access to ICT. While there is no curriculum at the primary level, at secondary schools, students can enroll in courses such as design and technology (47). Computers and computer labs are much more widely available at the secondary school level, though whether computers and computer lab space are evenly distributed across the student population is unknown.

For primary school students, there are close to 123 students enrolled for every computer in schools. The ratio improves significantly at the secondary level, with roughly 15 enrolled students per computer. Most primary schools do not have computer labs, but nearly all secondary schools do. In terms of access to at least computer technology, young people in secondary schools do appear to have access, but as indicated in earlier chapters, many young people in Swaziland are not in school, even if they are at the appropriate age to be. Information on access to computers for out-of-school youth is not available.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is attempting to address issues of a lack of access to ICT with the development of Innovation Hubs. Innovation Hubs are centres that avail space and equipment for young people to develop innovative ICT products from conception level to production and marketing. They are aimed at fostering an innovative culture, providing a platform for sharing ideas and experiences, and involving young people in finding solutions to development problems (48). Plans for the Hubs placed them in Mbabane and Manzini, again restricting access to ICT and relevant development to youth residing in, or with access to, large urban population centres. The reach of this programme and the extent of its impact is unknown.

9.4 Conclusions and Recommendations

Data on youth participation in sports, arts, and culture is weak, and it appears that the accessibility of ICT to young people in Swaziland is not very wide. Key recommendation regarding youth in sports, arts, culture, media, and ICT include:

1. Strengthen access to ICT education and services for youth by ensuring internet access in schools and communities, and improving the accessibility of computers.
2. Conduct an assessment of Youth Centres to understand their resources and accessibility.
3. Develop and implement strategies to professionalize sports, arts, and culture as a means of livelihood for young people.

CHAPTER 10. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The State of the Youth in Swaziland urgently needs greater investment. A growing youth population faces challenges of the accessibility of education, the safety of the educational environment, high levels of unemployment and poverty, and low levels of access to appropriate sexual and reproductive health services. Perhaps as an outcome of some of these factors, young people appear to be engaging in more and more crime, and do not have support structures to divert them away from these activities and back into productive members of society. Young people are also struggling with alcohol and substance use, face an uphill battle in participatory governance, and have limited ways of developing and exploring their creativity.

However, the IMC has faced severe constraints with membership and attendance, and has not been as strong a coordinating or oversight body for youth issues as was envisioned. This may be due in part to the fact that the status of the Youth portfolio is not sufficiently placed or recognized. As a result, the country continues to face challenges of fragmented implementation of youth-oriented programmes and a lack of policy alignment across sectors. Additionally, though the health and education sectors in Swaziland have strong monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, the same is not true of many other sectors. As a result, policymakers and programmers are often operating in an environment of incomplete or completely missing local or national evidence.

There is a multi-tier structure to address youth affairs, through the MOSCYA and SNYC. However, the multisectoral nature of programmes affecting outcomes for Swaziland's youth calls for a much stronger interministerial and sector-wide coordination and accountability mechanism. Increased funding for MOSCYA to be able to coordinate and implemented youth issues may go far in allowing MOSYA to lead the country, through it's youth, to 2022. The IMC has not been a strong body, and this is perhaps down to the Youth portfolio not being positioned strategically within the government structure. Shifting the Youth portfolio to an office with higher stature may go far in enabling Swaziland to holistically address youth affairs.

While there are some sectors in which data is widely available and routinely updated, such as Education and Health, many of the factors affecting young people are difficult to provide quantitative information for. In general, data is not well disaggregated by gender and age, making it quite difficult to extract youth-specific information. Knowing that the developmental stages of youth and the unique challenges they face makes their needs and situations different from the majority of non-youth, examining data without disaggregating age groups shows an incomplete picture of the state of the youth, at best.

There is an urgent need for additional research and evidence-generation, as indicated by the lack of information on several critical areas of concern for Swaziland's youth. There is also a need for disaggregated data in all sectors, in which the youth are a specific and clearly identified segment, and disaggregated by gender. This is the strongest way for the country to be able to enhance monitoring and evaluation of the situation of youth in Swaziland, and to enhance policy and programmatic responses to their issues. In future reviews of the National Youth Policy or aligned implementation strategies, MOSCYA would be well-served to advocate strongly with the Central Statistics Office to bring this suggestion to bear.

The State of the Youth is not without opportunity, however. In an era of demographic change, it is a real possibility for Swaziland to leverage the growing youth population for greater economic growth. The development of ICT infrastructure and incorporation of ICT education, training, and commodities could accelerate and improve the readiness of the young population to participate meaningfully in the workforce.

Swaziland should also closely examine her macroeconomic policies, to encourage growth in the labour market and a diversification of the types of employment available. Simultaneously, if the education system can be better aligned with the needs of the market, young people may face a greatly improved employment situation.

Harnessing the demographic dividend means raising youth who are healthy, well-educated, and able to find or create work for themselves when they are old enough to participate in the economy. If the country can focus its investment on these key pillars: improving the availability and accessibility of SRH services and commodities, accelerating efforts to provide a free, safe, and adequate education to all, and training young people appropriately for the labour market of today's world, the dividend will be reaped.

The youth of Swaziland say 'nothing for us without us.' Every step of the way forward should be taken alongside Swaziland's young people, to create the reality that young people outlined in the Swaziland We Want: an end to poverty, the empowerment of girls and women, gender equality, quality education, healthy lives, food security and good nutrition, universal access to water and sanitation, sustainable energy, sufficient jobs, and good governance.

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