



wanna escape

The

Little Circle

STEPPING STONES

"You must constantly be thinking of new things"

Just me, miss!

taste it. Crave it

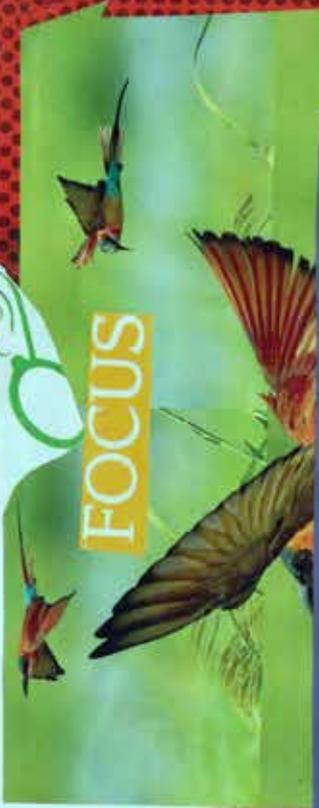
WATER

BEST

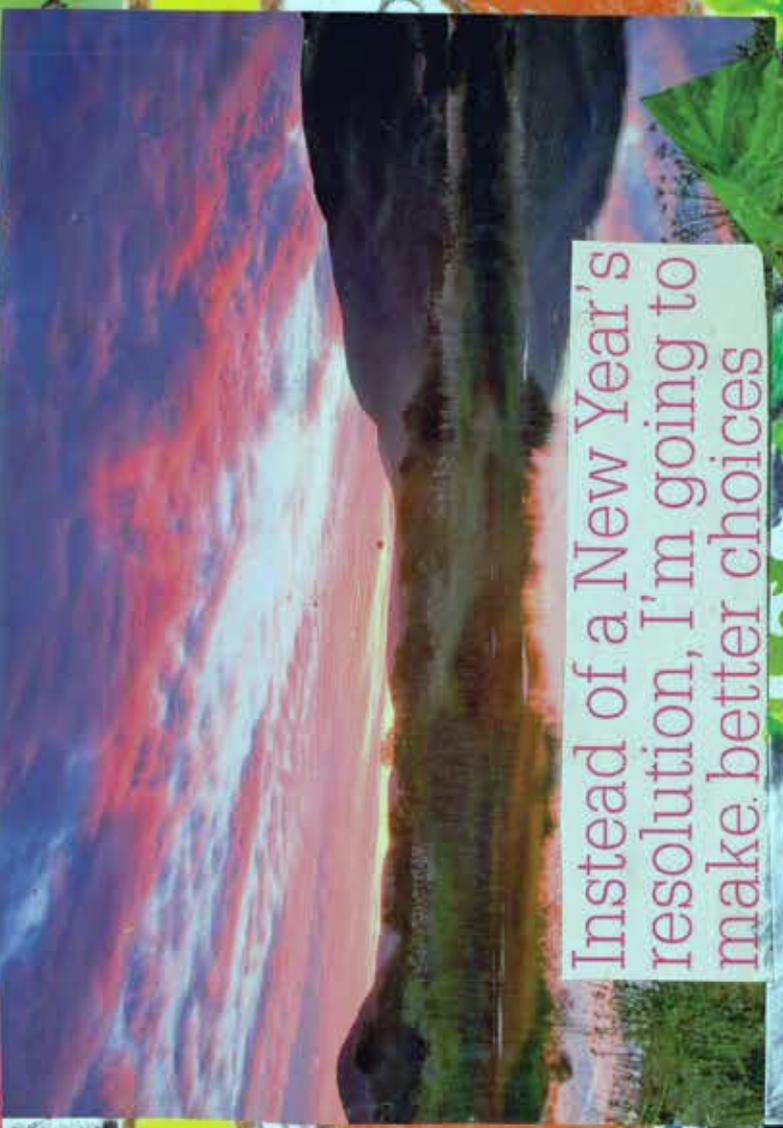
PROUD

I love sitting on the beach chatting to my mom, watching the seagulls as the sun goes down

Sweat tears



FOCUS



Instead of a New Year's resolution, I'm going to make better choices

GOOD, BETTER





PART TWO:

# Youth and the intergenerational transmission of poverty

Part two presents a series of nine essays that explore key challenges facing youth in South Africa and that recommend targeted interventions during the critical transition from adolescence to young adulthood. The essays outline:

- the multiple dimensions of poverty and their impact on youth development;
- inequalities in the schooling of children that perpetuate an intergenerational cycle of poverty;
- the challenges young people face in accessing and completing post-school education;
- the challenges of young people to access employment;
- the central role of parents, and the need to support families within their broader socio-economic context;
- the need to promote the health and well-being of adolescents and youth;
- the patterns and potential drivers and impact of youth mobility and migration;
- opportunities to promote social cohesion and a sense of belonging; and
- the importance of developing young people's capacity to navigate adversity.



# Overview

**P**art 2 provides an overview of the “state of youth” in South Africa, informed by a life course understanding of development. The collection of short essays highlights the need for a range of targeted interventions during this critical transition stage of youth into young adulthood. It motivates for a stronger evidence base, provides recommendations for changes in key areas to increase the life chances of young people *and* of the next generation of children, and identifies a series of capacities that may contribute towards breaking the cycle of persistent poverty.

## **A focus on youth: An opportunity to disrupt the intergenerational transmission of poverty**

*(pages 22 – 33)*

More than half of all young people in South Africa live in poverty and are faced with low levels of education, high levels of unemployment and a very restricted access to the social grant system. This essay reviews evidence on the intergenerational transmission of poverty in South Africa, and explores its impact on the youth population. It stresses the need for an integrated approach to youth development and increased coordination between government departments to ensure effective programming and implementation of the National Youth Policy 2015 – 2020.

## **Schooling in South Africa: How low-quality education becomes a poverty trap**

*(pages 34 – 41)*

The strong legacy of apartheid and the consequent correlation between education and wealth helps drive an intergenerational cycle of poverty where children inherit the social standing of their parents or caregivers, irrespective of their own abilities or effort. This essay provides an overview of educational outcomes in South Africa, and describes the linkages between the education system and the labour market. It illustrates clearly how low-quality education in South Africa is a key mechanism in the reproduction of inequality and proposes policy and programmatic interventions to alleviate the situation.

## **Post-school education:**

### **Broadening alternative pathways from school to work**

*(pages 42 – 50)*

Post-school education has a critical role to play in breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty by increasing young people’s employability and earning potential. This essay outlines the structure of the post-school education sector, and explores the obstacles youth face in accessing and completing post-school education. While government is on track in terms of policy in many spheres, implementation needs to be improved. The essay concludes with key recommendations to improve post-school outcomes.

## **Youth unemployment in South Africa:**

### **Understanding the challenge and working on solutions**

*(pages 51 – 59)*

Young people face multiple obstacles on their path from education to the labour market, in the context of high levels of unemployment. While challenges in schooling and post-secondary education are contributing factors, the structure of the labour market and personal, household and community factors also impact on young people’s ability to access employment. This essay describes the extent of youth unemployment and explores the impact of the structure of the labour market and other key factors on access to work. It stresses the importance of acknowledging youth agency and survival strategies in developing and implementing effective interventions to address youth unemployment in South Africa.

## **Youth health and well-being: Why it matters**

*(pages 60 – 68)*

Improving the health and well-being of adolescents and youth is crucial for their well-being today, and for their future economic productivity. Behaviours and health developed during these stages of life are key predictors of the *adult* burden of disease and health – like education – is a key factor in the intergenerational transmission of poverty. This essay provides an overview of the current state of youth health and well-being and identifies opportunities to improve these.

**Parenting, poverty and young people in South Africa:  
What are the connections?**

*(pages 69 – 74)*

Parenting affects child development from conception to adulthood. But poverty can make parenting a very difficult task, and parenting that becomes harsh and inconsistent can increase the risk that young people continue to live in poverty – because such parenting is more likely to lead to poor health and risk behaviours in children that will negatively affect their ability to perform well at school and find employment. This essay examines how poverty affects parenting, with particular emphasis on teen parenting, and explores what can be done to support parents in South Africa.

**Youth and mobility: Is movement linked to opportunity?**

*(pages 75 – 82)*

Migration and mobility are under-researched topics in South Africa, with very little known about youth mobility in particular. Migration is not only about individual choice; it is related to broader livelihood strategies of households and family networks. This essay reviews current evidence and provides some preliminary analysis about the patterns and main drivers of mobility and migration and their impact on the lives and life chances of young people.

**Youth identity, belonging and citizenship:  
Strengthening our democratic future**

*(pages 83 – 91)*

Young people in South Africa today have to contend with an uncertain future characterised by persistent poverty, inequality and violence. Within this context, this essay explores youth identity and agency, in particular the need to facilitate a sense of belonging and active citizenship. It highlights the need to take youth agency seriously, and to provide support and bridging relationships as well as maximising dedicated youth programmes and media platforms to allow youth access to opportunities that enable a sense of real and imminent possibility in life, and to build a positive collective identity.

**Developing young people’s capacities to navigate adversity**

*(pages 92 – 97)*

This essay draws together some of the key arguments explored in the preceding essays about the “state of youth” in South Africa and reflects on what is needed – and can be done – to promote youth development, and to disrupt the negative personal and societal effects of the intergenerational transmission of poverty.