YOUTH DEVELOPMENT POLICY FOR 2026/2027 FY

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1. Introduction

South Africa's population is largely made up of young people; those who are below the age of 35 years constitute about 66% per cent of the total population. This demographic situation in South Africa has resulted into the emergence of a 'Youth bulge' which is expected to be in existence for the next decade.

Young people are facing multiple challenges and the socio-economic gap continues to widen. Many of the young people are facing uncertainty than any other social group. Those who have the opportunity to go to school are forced to study longer as job opportunities become scarcer, less well-paid and less secure, delaying the age at which they become financially independent from their parents.

Those who do not have the opportunity to pursue their education or who choose to leave the school system at an early age face marginalisation from the broader community from which they may never recover, either as a result of long-term unemployment, or low-paid, insecure and even dangerous jobs.

In relation to health issues, young people are the most highly vulnerable to HIV, STIs, teenage pregnancy and addiction to drugs and other substances. Violence and suicide are growing problems in some communities.

The South African government developmental agenda calls upon all state institution to develop policies and strategies to respond to the challenges faced by the societal vulnerable groups and young people constitute that segment of the population.

In line with the National and Provincial response to young people's issues and challenges, Mbhashe Local Municipality identified the need to develop a policy framework that serve as a guide and ensuring that young people's issues are mainstreamed within the broad municipality programmes.

The Mbhashe Local Municipality youth policy seeks to create an environment that enables young people to unleash their potential through identification of mechanisms that will make it possible for them to grow and develop and thus ensuring the development of the local communities.

This policy framework also seeks to create space and platform for young people to identify interventions that will ensure that developmental challenges that local young people face are unblocked.

The policy is located within the South African Constitution, United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and beyond (1995) and the Africa Youth Charter (2006),

National Youth Policy (NYP) 2020-2030 and various other policies including the National Development Plan (NDP).

2. Context and Background to the Policy

The development of the Mbhashe Youth policy is informed by the political and socio-economic historical and current realities that define our societal development. Mbhashe municipal area is located in an area that constitute the former homeland of Transkei that was characterised by low to no socio-economic development especially the rural areas that constitute the greatest part of the municipality.

The development of this policy is also informed by the commitment of the South African Government with all institutions of ensuring the development of a democratic society as well as ensuring that all sectors and sections of the society enjoy equal and quality services in a sustainable manner.

In redressing the imbalances of the past and channelling the country and its Citizens towards a trajectory of equality and access for all, the new democratic government adopted the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) as its policy framework to guide the transformation process. The RDP as holistic government policy framework laid the foundation to address the political, cultural, social, economic, infrastructural and human capacity development challenges of our country.

Building of viable local government as a sphere of government that is closer to the people is one of the cornerstones of our country's transformation agenda. At the centre of the creation of a developmental local government, is the strengthening of the institutional capacity to deliver effective and quality services based on the needs of the communities.

Local government is obliged by the South African constitution and the other related legislations to provide leadership, mobilise and ensure improvement of the living conditions of our communities as well as creation of opportunities for all sectors of our society.

Municipalities in their interventions in improving the quality of life of our communities should be developmental, holistic and focus on political, social, economic, cultural and human rights challenges faced by the communities.

Central to the transformation of the South African society, is the integration and creation of platforms and fora for the participation of communities in the development and implementation of policies, strategies and programmes that seek to improve their lives. Participation of communities and creation of opportunities and fora for the voices of the marginalised and vulnerable which include women, children, people with disabilities and

youth is one of the corner stones of the transformational agenda of the democratic government.

Fundamental to addressing the plight and challenges of these groups, is the creation of an environment that is conducive for the involvement of young people in the political, socio-economic and cultural development of the broader society as well as access to quality services.

To ensure the comprehension of the above objectives, municipalities need to adopt and implement a mainstreaming approach that ensures that issues and needs of young people are central in the broader municipal service delivery programmes. In essence, this means that young people's issues an integral components of government's planning, budgeting, implementation and evaluation of programmes targeting the broader society.

3. Policy vision and aims and the scope of the Youth Policy

This policy is meant to serve as guide and inform the mainstreaming and integration of the programmes targeting Mbhashe Local Municipality Young People in the development and implementation of policies, strategies and integrated service delivery programmes of the municipality and development partners.

3.1 Policy Vision

The vision of the Mbhashe Local Municipality Youth Policy is consistent with the broad goals of the South African Government of ensuring improvement of the quality of life of its citizens through quality and sustainable service delivery programme and redressing of the imbalances of the past which is as follows:

'Integrated, holistic and sustainable development of all citizens especially the vulnerable groups, conscious of the historical imbalances and current realities, in building a non-racial, democratic society in which individuals enjoy equal access to quality services.'

3.2 Policy Aims

The aims of this Mbhashe Youth Policy are defined as that of:

a) Guiding and informing the mainstreaming of young people's issues and programmes in the broad development and implementation of municipal policies and strategies and the broader integration of young people issues and programmes in the development of the municipal policies, strategies and broader integrated municipality service delivery programmes.
b) Facilitating the provision of integrated socio-economic services to the Young people within the Mbhashe Local Municipality jurisdiction.

c) Providing guidance to the Mbhashe Local Municipality and its service delivery partners in addressing the conditions and situations that create conducive conditions for local young people.

3.3 Scope of The Policy

This policy on Young people

a) affects all persons living within the jurisdiction of Mbhashe Local municipality;
b) Is intended to compliment all other policies, strategies of the Mbhashe Local Municipality targeting young people and communities in general.
c) Serve as a guide for all the service providers and Mbhashe Local Municipality's service delivery partners.

4. Legislative and Policy frameworks

4.1 The Republic of South Africa Constitution; Chapters 3 and 7 provide the overarching framework within which the National, Provincial and Local government planning must be understood. The Constitution mandates Local Government to:

a) Provide democratic and accountable Government for all communities;
b) Ensure the provision of service to communities in a sustainable manner;
c) Promote social and economic development;
d) Promote a safe and healthy environment; and
e) Encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of Local Government.

4.2 In addition to the constitutional provisions, there are a number of policies and legislation that municipalities must comply with and take into cognisance in their planning and delivery of services in the communities. And the most important of are the following:

a) The Municipal Systems Act (2000); read together with the Municipal Planning and Performance Regulations (2001);
b) National Youth Policy 2020-2030
c) Integrated Youth Development Strategy 2020
d) Provincial Youth Development Strategy 2015
e) The Local Government Municipal Finance Management Act, (2003)
f) The Municipal Systems (2000) Act regulates municipalities to compile Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) that enable municipalities to:
    - link, integrate and co-ordinate plans and take into account proposals for the development of the municipality;

- align resources and capacity of the municipality with the implementation of the plan;
- form the policy framework and general basis on which annual budget must be based;

g) Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act (No5 of 2000)
h) White Paper on "Integrated National Disability Strategy", 1997 – (Policy Mandate)
i) Basic Conditions of Employment (Act No 75 of 1997)
j) Employment Equity Act (No 55 of 1998) with its applicable codes of Good Practice
k) Commission on Gender Equality Act, 39 of 1996
l) Children's Amendment Act, 41 of 2007
m) Technical Assistance Guidelines on Employment of People with Disabilities
n) White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education
o) The South African National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality
p) Skills Development Act, 97 of 1998
q) National Health Care Act, 61 of 2003 and Mental Care Act 17 of 2002
r) Basic Conditions of Employment (Act No 75 of 1997)
s) Employment Equity Act (No 55 of 1998) with its applicable codes of Good Practice

South African government on behalf of its citizens is a signatory and subscribes to international laws and their objectives, such as the:
a) United Nations Millennium Development Goals; and
b) United Nations (UN) Convention on the Right of the Child and others.

5 Principles, Values and Objectives of the Policy

5.1 PRINCIPLES

The principles underlying the youth policy are aligned with the constitution of South Africa and other National, continental and international prescripts that guide the integration and mainstreaming of issues of the targeted young people. These principles include among many:

a) Accessibility

b) Responsiveness
c) Integration
d) Non-discriminatory

e) Redress
f) Participation and inclusion
g) Social protection
h) Sustainable development
i) Social cohesion
j) Human rights
k) Gender equality

5.2 VALUES:

This policy on youth promotes the following values:

a) Valuing human life
b) Respecting the dignity of all people.
c) Respecting diversity and promoting the equality of all people without distinction of any kind, such as sex, race, colour, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, physical or mental disability, health status (including HIV and AIDS), sexual orientation or civil, political, social or other status.
d) Preventing and removing human suffering
e) Supporting community values that encourage respect for others and a willingness to work together to find solutions, in the spirit of compassion and mutual support.
f) Addressing social and economic inequities and fostering social justice.

5.3 OBJECTIVES

The overall objectives of this policy is ensure that the issues and needs of the young people are effectively mainstreamed into all policies, plans, budgeting, programmes and activities of Mbhashe local Municipality, thus significantly helping to enhance the quality of life, full participation and their empowerment.

In addition to the above broad objective, this policy is intended at achieving the following objectives:

a) Social and Economic empowerment of young people...
b) Mainstreaming of the vulnerable groups issues into the planning, implementation and evaluation of the municipal broad service delivery programmes and activities.
c) Creating and making available of resources to remove barriers and establishing appropriate structures for the institutionalisation of the vulnerable groups' issues.

d) Representation/participation and inclusion of young people in the municipal agenda, workforce and relevant decision-making structures.
e) Meeting the needs and aspirations of young people.
f) Eradication of abuse and violence directed at and the vulnerable groups especially children, women and the elderly.
g) Creation of environment free from discrimination and abuse.

6 Policy imperatives and proposed interventions

Youth challenges as much as they are universal they also assume a local form informed by the socio-economic dynamics of different areas, therefore responses and interventions are to be informed by such peculiarities.

6.1 Economic Participation, Entrepreneurship and Job creation

Youth empowerment should be one of the core outcomes of the economic and social transformation agenda. Measures to enhance youth employment in this should include:

a) Short term youth absorption stimulated by employment set aside targets and incentives to stimulate hiring of first time job seekers as well as the National Youth Service, public employment schemes and youth-focused programmes.
b) Skills development and training to prepare youth for jobs and enhance career mobility.
c) Work exposure measures to provide young people an opportunity to gain on-the-job experience.
d) Support youth owned companies and cooperatives with finance, access to markets and business skills.

6.2 Quality Education, Skills and Second Chances

a) Ensure that the youth is equipped with technological and digital skills as the 4IR demands.
b) Creation of linkages between schools, Adult Education and Training (AET) Centres, TVET Colleges, universities and other providers of education and training.
c) Creation of clear linkages between education and training and the world of work.
d) Ensure access to quality career information and receive appropriate and adequate career guidance and advice to pursue education and training opportunities leading to a career and ultimately employment.

e) Provision of funding assistance covering tuition, books, accommodation and living allowance to students from poor families
f) Ensure equal and sustained access to education in particular to those previously disadvantaged by apartheid policies, namely Black people, women and people with disabilities.
g) Ensure the reduction of the number of youth at risk of premature exit from the education system prior to completing their National Senior Certificate or any post school qualification.
h) Ensure the development of interventions that seek to provide young people with opportunities should they leave school prematurely.

6.3 Physical and Mental Health Promotion including Covid 19;

a) Ensure the realization that Young people need to be supported with information, skills and services that help them prevent non-communicable and communicable diseases including pandemics, as well as mental health disorders.
b) In order to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, young people need to be a visible part of the solution, and to actively contribute to efforts to reduce the spread of the virus and mitigate its impact.
c) Inculcating a core value system void of gender stereotyping and prejudices as well as a sense of inner-belief, self and mutual respect along with a deepened understanding of their own sexuality and that of others.
d) The grooming of skills and capacities to be assertive and exercise agency in negotiating and making decisions about their sexual and reproductive health and rights (and reporting when these rights are violated.
e) Access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (services and information, and the ability to exercise personal choice in decisions guided by non-judgmental and empathetic health, social and community workers.
f) The breaking down of barriers (self-imposed and contextual) to allow for health seeking behaviour.
g) Protection from coerced sexual experiences, exploitative sexual and reproductive relationships, sexual and gender-based violence, STIs, substance abuse and unplanned pregnancies.
h) Building a supportive network to adolescents.
i) Challenging of taboos; myths; misperceptions; stereotyping and discrimination related to sexuality, in a positive manner with facts and openness.

j) Building the skill and capacity of the family and community to communicate to adolescents on their sexual and reproductive health and rights (with freedom and with confidence especially in local language
k) Recreational facilities and diversion programmes that prevent vulnerable populations from becoming substance abusers/dependents be developed.

6.4 NATION BUILDING AND SOCIAL COHESION

Fostering Leadership and Active Citizenry- Society in its entirety should be responsible for creating an environment that is conducive for the development of the next generation of youth leaders. Leadership qualities that all members of society must practice include:

a) The ability to lead by example and to follow rules that apply to everyone.
b) Honesty, integrity and trustworthiness.
c) Agitating for transformation and continuous improvement in people's lives
d) The capacity to innovate, manage change, build enough support to drive an "essential" and not necessarily popular agenda,
e) The ability to listen, especially to those with a different opinion, perspective and or priorities and to create conditions that allow everyone to communicate in open dialogue. This requires tolerance, patience, openness to giving and receiving criticism.
f) The ability to promote meaningful inclusion, helping to overcome barriers associated with class, ethnicity, gender, disability and other factors of exclusion. Leaders must seek to empower the otherwise powerless, building bridges to other sectors of society, including business, civil society, and faith-based

Fostering Constitutional Values - All young people must familiarise themselves with the Constitution and assimilate in their behaviour and psyche the Bill of Responsibilities which outlines the responsibilities that come with the rights outlined in the Constitution. The Bill of Responsibilities urges young people to accept the call to responsibility that comes with the many rights and freedoms that they have been privileged to inherit from the sacrifice and suffering of those who came before.

6.5 EFFECTIVE AND RESPONSIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT MACHINERY

The following institutions are essential to the implementation of this policy:

a) There are youth units across sectoral departments in all spheres of governments. They have been established to develop sector specific policies/ strategies, mainstream youth development within their policies and programmes, and to lead in conceptualisation and implementation of sectoral programmes and projects. At local level, there should be Youth Offices charged with the responsibility of direct delivery of services to young

people and ensuring that they are prioritised within the Integrated Development Plans (IDPs). The local Youth Offices should work with Local Economic Development [LED] departments to support youth with information and capacity to respond to available opportunities. All these structures will ensure implementation of the policy.

b) *The South African Youth Council (SAYC)* – was established in South Africa in 1997 to represent the interests of young people. This is also established at local level and the SAYC has a wide range of member organisations. One of its focus areas is ensuring that youth organisations participate in broader social issues. Of relevance to this policy is that the SAYC's role of being a "voice for the youth" should be acknowledged and be formally recognised and supported with financial and human resources. This will assist in addressing pressing matters affecting young people and since the structure has to also champion mobilisation of the youth sector. It is therefore imperative to have the SAYC formally recognised as an apex body for young people locally. Its human and financial resources must also be strengthened to enable it to discharge effectively on its mandate. The SAYC is in turn be expected to strengthen the capacity of its member organisations to and actively engage the youth into active citizens.

c) *Non-government youth led and youth serving organisations* operate independently of government and deliver direct and indirect youth development services. They operate internationally, nationally and locally with some being community or faith based. This policy acknowledges the critical role played by these organisations in providing youth development services.

7 Policy Implementation and Co-ordination mechanisms

National government identified five key strategic priorities that should guide the development of strategies and setting up performance indicators for the development and upliftment of communities. These strategic objectives are:

a) Building and enhancing governance systems in order to enable sustainable development and service delivery.
b) Oversee the implementation of inter-governmental programmes to support the institutions to perform their constitutional mandate.
c) Building and strengthening the accountability and capability of provinces and municipalities to implement their constitutional mandate.
d) Monitor, evaluate and communicate the impact of government programmes in municipal areas in order to enhance performance, accountability and public confidence.

e) Strengthen government departments organisational performance and capability to deliver

7.1 THE MUNICIPAL ROLE

The role of the municipality is defined as that of:

a) Establish a youth unit with a focal person dealing with young people.
b) Ensure political and administrative buy-in from the highest offices of the municipality.
c) Establish an oversight committee to ensure mainstreaming of young people issues and programmes
d) Facilitate the establishment of special groups committees to ensure main streaming of youth development and fora and ensure their functioning.
e) Encourage active participation of young people in broad municipality programmes and activities including integrated development Plans (IDP) and budget processes.
f) Ensure young people's programmes are adequately and sufficiently addressed.
g) Raise awareness and promote vulnerable groups issues among all municipal staff.
h) Ensure that women, people with disabilities, young people have access to all municipal information and services.

7.2 THE ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR

To ensure effective and adequate mainstreaming of vulnerable groups issues as well as ensuring that they are provided with necessary support; and the role of the mayor is defined as that of:

a) Politically championing the young people issues and programmes.
b) Ensuring municipal programmes and projects targeting young people are well co-ordinated, implemented and oversee the promotion of and advancement of rights of young people.
c) Providing oversight and respond to advocacy campaigns by civil society.

7.3 ROLE OF MUNICIPAL DIRECTORATES OR DEPARTMENTS

To effectively address the needs and provide development opportunities for the young people, municipal departments are expected to:

a) Develop performance measures in relation to young people for departmental employees, monitor and evaluate their performance
b) Integrate young people components in budget, programmes, policies and strategies.

c) Implement programmes that will benefit young people in conjunction with civil society structures.
d) Prepare and submit reports to oversight committees and to management structures
e) Include reports on young people in all municipal specific departmental reports

7.4 ROLE OF MUNICIPAL MANAGER'S OFFICE

a) Prioritise young people issues and ensure their integration into municipal IDP.
b) Implement agreed performance management targets relate to young people
c) Ensure mainstreaming of the young people issues in all municipal departments or directorates of the municipality.
d) Co-ordinate and mainstream young people policy and structures.
e) Monitor and evaluate programmes implemented by the municipal departments' responsiveness and sensitivity.
f) Network and liaise with structures and organisations of the young people.
g) Develop progress reports on young people.

7.5 THE ROLE OF YOUTH COUNCIL

a) Identify the needs and priorities of young in the workplace and in the broader society;
b) Participate in planning, implementation and evaluation of services and measure concerning the lives of young people;
c) Contribute to the public awareness and advocacy for change;
d) Perform advisory role in different ways including ensuring representation on structures of public participation;
e) Develop instruments of self-help, provide and promote opportunities for the development of skills in various areas, mutual support among members and information sharing;
f) Develop and deepen the exchange of views and information between government institution, private sector and civil society;
g) Ensure effective representation in all co-ordinating structures with government as well as to strengthen the capacity of community based organisations and ensure that they influence decision making at community level.

8 Monitoring and Evaluation

The developmental local government as established by the South African Constitution and the other legislative and policy framework, mandates municipalities to play an active and pro-active role in responding to the challenges and issues of local young people.

To ensure that Mbhashe Local Municipality responds positively to the needs and challenges facing the vulnerable groups and the communities in general programme development and services rendering ha to be effective and efficient and address the community and social sectors.

To ensure the realisation of its broad service delivery objectives, Mbhashe Local Municipality should develop impact assessment processes and monitoring and evaluation tool.
Programme implementation and service delivery key assessment should be done in consultation with the relevant stakeholders.
A framework to promote, protect and monitor the implementation of this policy will be developed in accordance with the legal and administrative systems of the municipality.
Performance indicators on service delivery areas identified in the policy will be developed to measure and assess performance.
A programme review exercise which will analyse implementation strategies, experiences, opportunities and constraints should be conducted on regular intervals.
Monitoring should be infused in all levels of the service delivery through different criteria including report writing. Monitoring should be used as an educative tool to create awareness as well as to check the appropriateness of services provided whether they respond to identified needs.
Monitoring tool will serve as a guide to determine the congruency between the services and their provision.