



Strengthening psychosocial well-being and RESILIENCE of young people in South Africa

Young people already face tremendous challenges and disparities, especially those coming from disadvantaged communities, in terms of poverty, unemployment, opportunities for further education and training, and disrupted family situations, which the Covid-19 pandemic has served to draw greater attention to and amplify. These growing pressures are having a significant negative impact on the mental and emotional well-being of young people, with added anxieties, fear and loss of hope during this time. This may manifest in more risky behaviour, including alcohol and substance misuse, or involvement in violence. Within this context, promoting the resilience of young people, to be able to cope with their situations, the daily pressures and stresses they have to deal with, and forge a positive direction for their lives, and envision a positive stake in the country's future, is more critical than ever. The National Youth Resilience Initiative (NYRI) was conceptualized in response to the COVID-19 pandemic with the aim of strengthening the psychosocial well-being and resilience of youth in South Africa. Additional vulnerabilities and stressful factors such as unemployment and access to income, opportunities for further education and training are demanding a societal response to strengthen the resilience of our youth.



Vision

South African youth are empowered to responsibly strengthen youth resilience, especially amongst the most vulnerable young people, to proactively contribute to building a capable South Africa during Covid-19 and beyond.



Mission

To strengthen the social infrastructure (services and programmes) that supports young people to build resilience and achieve psychosocial well-being. By activating youth capacities and leadership to initiate youth-led activities within communities that improve young people's access to quality, evidence-informed programmes and psychosocial support services. Therefore, amplifying the youth voice and nurture emerging and active youth citizens that build youth resilience and psychosocial wellbeing in their communities.



WHAT WE DO

The NYRI is a multi-stakeholder programme stakeholder programme driven by various national actors from government, civil society, academic and development cooperation that coordinates and implements a holistic approach structured into the following 5 pathways:



Pathway 1

Establishing and capacitating a NYRI network of ambassadors for resilience

The NYRI aims to equip youth ambassadors with the necessary foundational skills and agency to design and implement projects within their communities that will activate the youth agenda and promote psychosocial wellbeing and resilience of young people.



Pathway 2

Resourcing and supporting the NYRI youth network of ambassadors to offer opportunities to vulnerable youth

The NYRI aims to develop a strategy that ensures that NYRI alumni and young people as well as organisations that support initiatives/programmes that build or strengthen resilience in young people are supported and financed to ensure long-term impact.



Pathway 5

Advocating for the further inclusion of youth in decision-making processes

The NYRI aims to develop and implement a systemic participatory process for youth structures to strengthen their youth activism in platforms of social responsibility and active citizenship in order to advocate for increased support to young people on services and programmes that promote their psychosocial well-being and resilience.



Pathway 3

Advocating for data support for resilience initiatives implemented by non-profit organisations

The NYRI aims to identify means and opportunities for young people to access online platforms and information in the field of youth resilience work in a low to no-cost manner, through meaningful engagement and consultation with key stakeholders.



Pathway 4

Developing a framework for youth resilience work

The NYRI aims to develop a theoretical grounding of youth resilience that will help to coordinate and support youth-led resilience initiatives. This research will also inform the development of knowledge products, toolkits, and policy alignment products and will strengthen resilience work in a more intentional manner informed by academic grounding.

The NYRI recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic has immensely magnified the pressures and risks affecting young people in South Africa and in order to effectively find solutions a holistic and inclusive multi-stakeholder approach has been prioritised. This will ensure results in the long term as well as alignment and synergy across various processes resulting in an initiative has lasting impact and successful implementation.

As the initiative also aims to not only be youth-centred but also **youth-led**, we have learnt (and will continue to learn) that our interventions need to be relevant and impactful. This means that the involvement of young people in the process must be prioritised. **The strength of the NYRI is that young people have been involved since the inception of the initiative**, thus playing a significant role in the conceptualisation of the NYRI. The learning here is to ensure this throughout the continued implementation of the initiative. As we shift from the immediate response to COVID-19, to ensuring long lasting impact, we will continue to **prioritise learning and improving our interventions**.