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# A profile of young NEETs: Unpacking the heterogeneous nature of young people not in employment, education or training in South Africa

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# A profile of young NEETs: Unpacking the heterogeneous nature of young people not in employment, education or training in South Africa

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## Introduction

Globally, the large numbers of young people who are "Not in any kind of Education, Employment or Training" (NEET) are a cause of great concern. These youth are often seen as disengaged from the labour market and "perhaps from society in general" (Eurofound, 2012). A multidisciplinary body of evidence indicates associations between being NEET, and especially remaining NEET for an extended period of time, and negative outcomes such as deteriorating physical and mental health, substance abuse, precarious job prospects, discouragement, social exclusion, and increased risk behaviour (in Branson et al. 2019: Mann et. al, 2014; O'Higgins, 2015; Henderson, et al., 2017; Bălan, 2014; Franzen & Kassman 2005; Chen, 2011; Graham, 2002; Bäckman & Nilsson, 2016). At the societal level, large numbers of young NEETs are predicted to lead to negative economic consequences such as lost output, lost government revenue and increased public spending, for instance in areas as the justice and policing system (in Branson et al. 2019: O'Higgins, 2015).

While the South African policy environment shares the concern over the large numbers of young people who are NEET (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2017: 2), there is little recognition of the heterogeneity of the group, and therefore, little engagement with the characteristics of youth in various NEET subcategories (Holte et al. 2018). This is unlike the situation in the European Union, where member states have agreed to design and implement a *Youth Guarantee* that 'aims to reduce the number of inactive young people and support them into education, training and employment' (ILO, 2015: 3). The design and implementation of this EU Youth Guarantee builds on a multi-disciplinary evidence base that disaggregates the NEET population into a range of subgroups and that interrogates, for each of those, what kind of intervention would be needed to 'ensure that no young person is left on their own' (ILO 2015: 3).

> *It is important to highlight that the heterogeneity of the NEET population needs to be addressed when designing policies to re-engage NEETs with the labour market or education. The different needs and characteristics of the various subgroups have to be*

*taken into account, and the one-size-fits-all approach must be avoided. Only a tailored approach to tackling the needs of the different subgroups will effectively and successfully reintegrate NEETs.* (Eurofound, 2012: 25)

In other words, it is recognised that perceiving the overall NEET rate as one homogenous indicator of 'disengaged youth' hinders our understanding of their situation and of their specific needs for support. Different subgroups of youth require different kinds of interventions and support to help them to successfully navigate their transitions through the education and training environment, into a changing and challenging labour market or into a new stage of their lives, such as parenthood (Yates and Payne, 2006).

This paper aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of the youth NEET group in South Africa. It forms the basis of further work that will investigate what a well-designed package of support for youth in South African would look like and uses some of the work on the EU Youth Guarantee as a guideline. Following the example of analyses conducted by the European Commission and in the various European member states, the first part of the paper provides a mostly descriptive profile of the South African NEET cohort aged 15 to 29 based on second-quarter data of the 2018 Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS). We do this as the QLFS contains detailed and recent individual labour market information (for employed, unemployed and inactive) that allows us to unpack the heterogeneous nature of the NEET youth group. In the second half of the paper, we complement the QLFS analysis with the 2017 General Household Survey (GHS) that provides us with additional relevant household level information not captured by the QLFS. We use the GHS data to provide statistics on household income poverty status among NEET youth. We also use the GHS data for further regression analysis that allows us to shed light on the microeconomic factors associated with being NEET among black youth in South Africa.[1]

In collecting labour market information, these two surveys go beyond simply collecting information on individual employment status and further gather information on why individuals are economically inactive. This information is critical in determining the group of youth who are NEET. For instance, 2018 QLFS data shows that 223 092 of the inactive youth indicated being students/scholars, while also reporting that they did not attend any educational institution. This is contradictory and we would expect young NEETs not to be students or scholars. A possible explanation is that these are youths who were NEET at the time the survey was administered because they were in transition between different stages of education. The timing of the interviews might also have been a factor. For example, QLFS, Q2 survey is conducted between April and June 2018, a period that coincides with school holidays that started from 29 March to 9 April 2018 for Term 1 and from 23 June to 16 July 2018 for Term 2. Thus, to avoid confusion in the calculations of the NEET group, we opted to reclassify these youths as students/scholars[2].

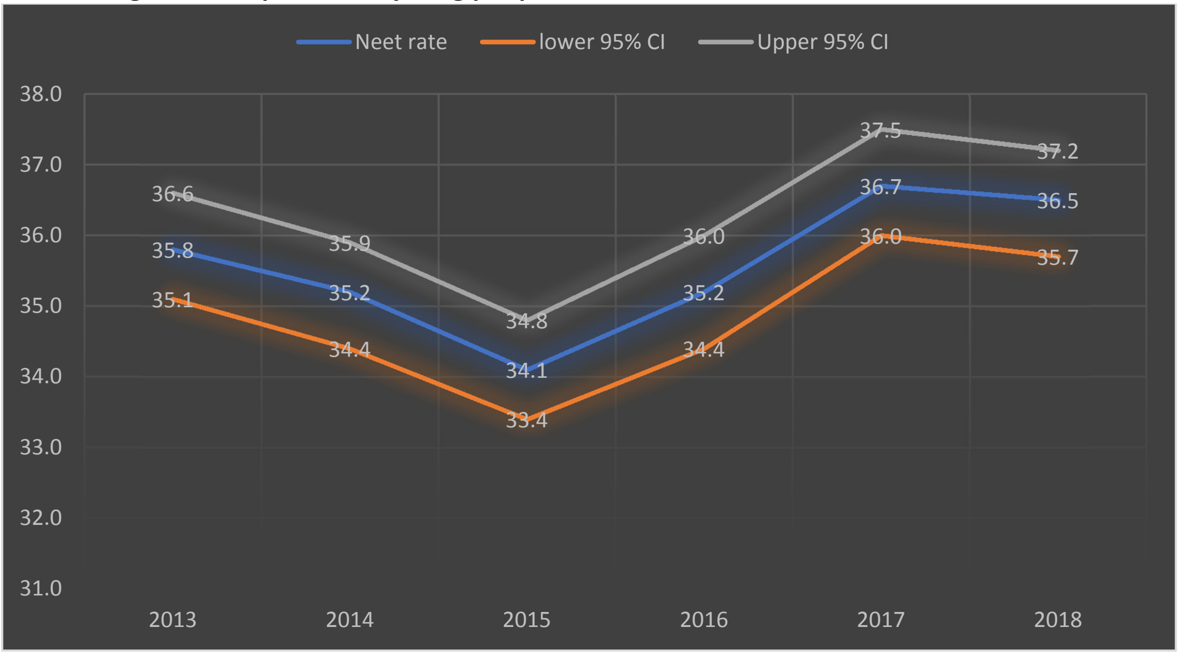
[1] To ensure that we get a clear and unambiguous picture of the profile of NEET youths in South Africa, we checked the comparability of the NEET youth statistics from different surveys in South Africa. Results of this exercise are presented in addendum 1.

[2] As a result, our derived NEET youth population and NEET rates reported in the next section are slightly different from those reported in table 15 and 16 in the addendum.

## Young people who are Not in any kind of Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

The share of young people between the ages of 15 to 29 who were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in South Africa was 36.5% in the second quarter of 2018, the equivalent of over 5.6 million youth. Drawing on QLFS Q2 data for the past five years, figure 1 illustrates that the NEET rate has been consistently over one-third of the youth population aged 15 to 29 years, but it did fluctuate between 2013 and 2018. While the rate was 35.8% (a total of 5 358 261 young people) in 2013, it decreased to 34.1% (5 174 988) in 2015, before increasing and reaching a peak of 36.7% (5 649 055) in 2017. The decrease in the rate in 2015, which falls outside the 95% confidence interval for all the other years, is confirmed in a study by DHET (2017) using the same QLFS, Q2 data.

**Figure 1: Proportion of young people who are NEET in South Africa, 2013 - 2018**




Notes: Sample restricted to youths aged 15 to 29 years with complete information on education attendance and employment status. We reclassified all inactive youths who indicated being students/scholars, while also reporting that they did not attend any educational institution as students/scholars. Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

Table 1 illustrates the heterogeneity of this youth NEET group, but also the relative continuity in its composition over the past five years[3].

The 2018 data show that, of those youth who are NEET, close to 48% are unemployed, following the strict definition of unemployment (a total of 2 688 226 youth aged 15 to 29); 24% are discouraged job seekers (a total of 1 348 156 youths); and just over 28% are inactive[4] (a total of 1 363 330 young

[3] While in this paper we define youth as those between the ages of 15 to 29 years, in table 17 in the addendum, we also present a profile of youths aged 15 to 24 years. The 15 to 24 age bracket is important as it is the international definition of youth as applied by the United Nations and represents the crucial development stage during which young people transition from adolescence into young adulthood..

[4] According to Stats SA: Unemployed (strict) youth are individuals who replied that they have looked for any kind of work or tried to start any kind of business in the reference period; Discouraged job-seekers are individuals who

people). This is a first indication of the limitations imposed by considering the entire NEET youth group as 'disengaged'.

The majority of young NEETs are female (55%); among those female NEETs, 1 311 872 (43%) are unemployed according to the strict definition, 716 244 (23%) are discouraged job-seekers and 1 055 712 (34%) are inactive; of those female, inactive NEETs, 654 470 are inactive because of caregiving responsibilities (62%) and 86 155 because of health reasons (8%). In other words, a large proportion of inactive, female youth is contributing to their households' functioning by looking after children and/or others in need of care (corroborating Hall and Sambu, 2015: 125). We will return to the concept of inactivity in section three of this paper.

**Table 1: Overview of NEET Youth in South Africa, QLFS Q2 data for 2013 and 2018**

| | Indicator | | 2013 | | 2018 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | **Total number** | **Percentage** | **Total number** | **Percentage** |
| **Total SA population:** | Total | | 52 892 224 | | 56 532 629 | |
| | Total Youth (15-29 yrs.) | | 14 952 590 | 28.3 | 15 444 809 | 27.3 |
| | NEET Youth (15-29 yrs.) | | 5 358 261 | 35.8 | 5 630 179 | 36.5 |
| **Of those young people who are NEET:** | Unemployed | | 2 475 778 | 46.2 | 2 688 226 | 47.8 |
| | Discouraged job-seeker | | 1 206 235 | 22.5 | 1 348 156 | 24.0 |
| | Inactive | | 1 676 247 | 31.3 | 1 593 797 | 28.2 |
| | Gender: | Male | 2 394 309 | 44.7 | 2 546 352 | 45.2 |
| | | Female | 2 963 952 | 55.3 | 3 083 827 | 54.8 |
| | Race: | Black | 4 749 152 | 88.6 | 4 971 326 | 88.3 |
| | | Coloured | 425 481 | 7.9 | 447 580 | 8.0 |
| | | Asian/Indian | 74 013 | 1.4 | 65 063 | 1.2 |
| | | White | 109 614 | 2.0 | 146 210 | 2.6 |
| | Geo_type : | Rural | 2 222 427 | 41.5 | 2 372 583 | 42.1 |
| | | Urban | 3 135 834 | 58.5 | 3 257 596 | 57.9 |
| | Age category: | 15 -19 | 582 057 | 10.9 | 598 288 | 10.6 |
| | | 20 - 24 | 2 459 120 | 45.9 | 2 469 235 | 43.9 |
| | | 25 - 29 | 2 317 083 | 43.2 | 2 562 656 | 45.5 |
| | Education level: | Grade 9 only | 534 847 | 12.5 | 493 961 | 10.5 |
| | | Grade 10 and 11 | 1 687 318 | 39.5 | 1 842 678 | 39.0 |
| | | Matric | 1 811 225 | 42.3 | 2 085 178 | 44.2 |
| | | Any tertiary[5] | 252 084 | 5.9 | 298 452 | 6.3 |

Notes: Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

wanted to work and the main reason why they did not try to find work or start a business in the reference period was because of any of the following: i) No jobs available in the area; ii) Unable to find work requiring his/her skills; iii) Lost hope of finding any kind of work. Inactive youth are defined as those who did not work in the reference week; did not look for work or try to start a business in the four weeks preceding the survey; and were not available to start work or a business in the reference week.

[5] Youth with "Any tertiary" education are those youths with at least 13 years of education; these youths have the following qualifications: 13 years - Certificate with grade 12/ STD 10, diploma with grade 12/ STD 10, N5/NTC 5, N6/NTC 6, Higher Diploma; 15 years - Post Higher Diploma (Masters; Doctoral Diploma), Bachelors Degree; 16 years - Bachelors Degree and Post Graduate Diploma, Honours Degree and 18 years - Higher Degree (Masters/Phd).

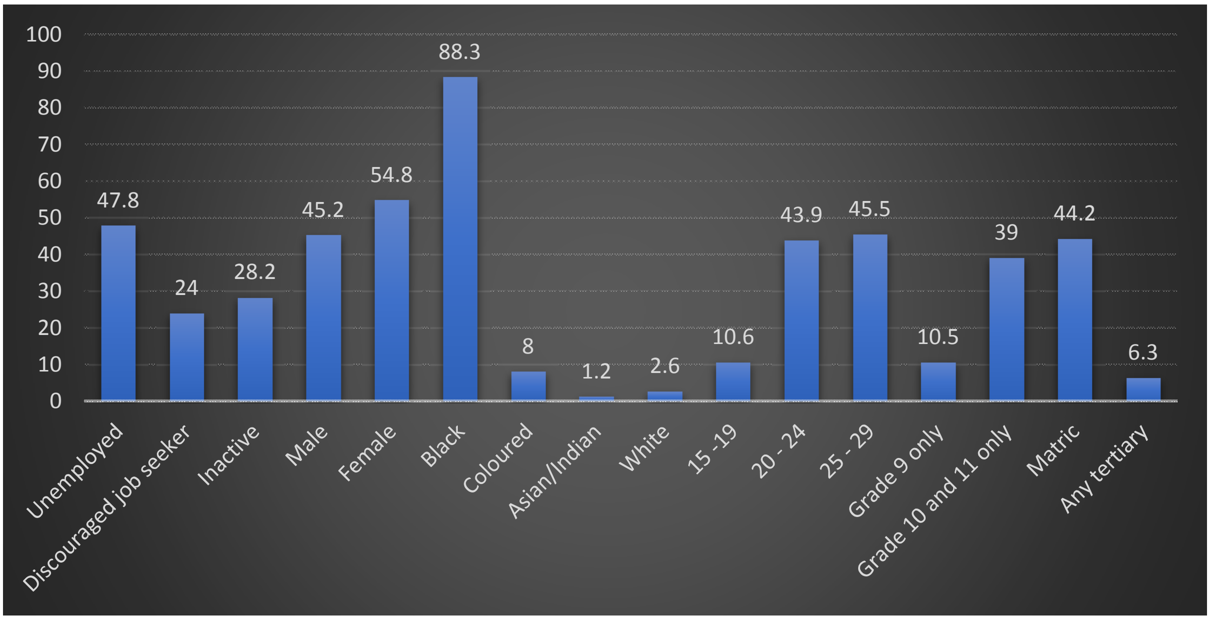
Table 1 further indicates that the overwhelming majority of NEET youth in South Africa is black. In addition, young NEETs are mostly concentrated in urban areas (58%), and most NEETs are found in the older age categories of 20-24 (total number of NEETs in that age bracket is 2 469 235) and among the 25-to 29-year-olds (total of 2 562 656).

Finally, almost half of all young NEETs have completed less than their final year of high school (49% or the equivalent of 2 336 639); this is a sub-group of youth that is not often targeted by interventions that aim to improve employability (De Lannoy et al. 2018). Longitudinal analysis using National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS) data, looking at young people who did not complete their matric and who were NEET in the first wave of the NIDS, also showed that these are young people who are more likely to remain in a state of NEET over prolonged periods of time (Branson et al. 2019).

These characteristics have important implications for the design, implementation and cost of an intervention that could support these youths and reconnect them to either education, training or employment (Arnkil, 2016): young NEETs who have completed less than their final year of secondary education may wish to re-gain access to the schooling system; some may have made it into the matric year, but did not manage to pass their final high school exams; they may thus want to re-write their matric exams. Youth who have some tertiary education but who struggle to find work may need to gain access to an intermediary programme that connects them to the labour market, while others may want to enroll for an additional year of study.

Figure 2 presents a summary overview of the composition of the NEET youth group, drawing on the 2018 QLFS, Q2 dataset.

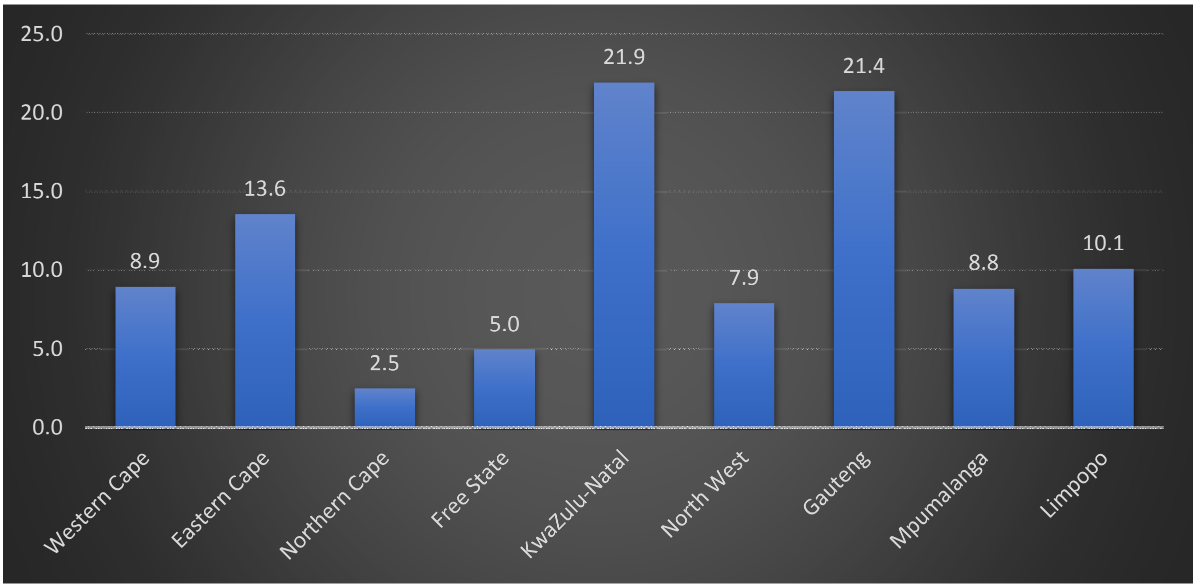
**Figure 2:** **Key characteristics of youth NEETs in South Africa in 2018 by category**




Notes: Sample restricted to youths aged 15 to 29 years. Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

The QLFS is representative at the provincial level (Stats SA, 2018), thus allows us disaggregate the NEET youth population by province. In figure 3, we show that NEET youth in the country are mostly concentrated in Kwazulu-Natal (22%), Gauteng (21%), and the Eastern Cape (14%). The provincial profiles attached in addendum 1 indicate significant differences in the NEET composition in each of the provinces and illustrate the need to understand the nuances within the young NEET group at the sub-national level to allow for an efficient intervention design.

**Figure 3: Distribution of NEETs youth by province (% within the NEET group)**




Notes: Sample restricted to youths aged 15 to 29 years. Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

We provide more detail on the provincial differences in section 4 of the paper, but first, we move on to a disaggregation of the NEET group by labour market engagement, at the national level.

## Young NEETs and labour market engagement

Table 1 indicated that many more young NEETs are unemployed (48% are searching unemployed and 24% are discouraged job seekers) than inactive (28%). Again, to better understand the kinds of services required to support youth in each of those groups, a more nuanced analysis of their heterogeneity is warranted.

Within the unemployed, Stats SA distinguishes between various categories: Job loser, Job leaver, New entrant, Re-entrant and Other – last worked > 5 years ago[6]. These distinctions are important as they capture the kind of transition that young people are going through and that may require different or additional interventions. Those who are short-term unemployed, for instance, may need reminding to update their CVs with the relevant latest employment details, or to ask for reference letters that may

[6] These groups are defined as follows: Job losers – These are unemployed persons who were working when they became unemployed and had lost their job; they were laid off; the business in which they had previously worked had been sold or had closed down. Job leavers – These are unemployed persons who were working when they became unemployed and had stopped working at their last job for any of the following reasons: Caring for own children/relatives; Pregnancy; Other household/community responsibilities; Going to school; Changed residence; Retired; or Other reasons. New entrants - people who were unemployed during the reference period, that had never worked before and that were currently looking for work. Re-entrants – These are unemployed persons who worked before and who were currently looking for work, and whose main activity before looking for work was any of the following: managing a home; going to school; other reason. Other – These are unemployed persons who last worked more than 5 years ago.

facilitate and positively influence their next contact with employers (Abel et al. 2017); those who are new entrants may benefit from being contacted as quickly as possible after entering the labour force, and from more hands-on guidance about how to engage with the labour market in their particular environment and with their specific skills set (Santos-Brien, 2018). Those who last worked 5 years ago may require a more intensive approach, both in terms of outreach and support (ibid). Table 2 presents these sub-categories for the NEET youth population (15-29 yrs).

**Table 2: NEET Youth by Unemployment Status**

| Unemployment Status | Total Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Job loser | 717 449 | 17.8 |
| Job leaver | 104 355 | 2.6 |
| New entrant | 2 610 582 | 64.7 |
| Re-entrant | 397 463 | 9.9 |
| Other - last worked > 5 years ago | 206 533 | 5.1 |
| Total | 4 036 382 | 100 |

Note: Notes: Sample restricted to youths aged 15 to 29 years. This table is based on NEET youths who are unemployed (unemployed: searching unemployed and discouraged job seekers). Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

Of these different groups, the New Entrant - which is defined as people who were unemployed during the reference period, that *had never worked before and that were currently looking for work* - is of interest as the bulk of the NEET youths fall under this category. In Table 3 we present the numbers and proportions of New Entrant NEET youths by the time they have spent in the labour market looking for work. More than 45% of the New Entrant NEET youths have been in the labour market looking for work for at least 3 years. Tables 27 and 28 in the addendum provide a further breakdown of the numbers of New Entrants, by age group and education level.

Taking into consideration the subdivision of these New Entrants is crucial when developing the basket of services for youth, as New Entrants who did not complete their final high school year will require access to different pathways than those who did, and availability and accessibility of these pathways will be dependent also on age. The disaggregation shows that significant proportions of the older age groups are New Entrants, having completed less than their matric year, or only matric.

The European Union (EU) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) further distinguish between young NEETs who are considered to have a continued orientation to or engagement with the labour market, and those who are considered “completely detached ” (i.e. not available and not searching for work) (Eurofound 2012; 2016). Following a similar sub-categorisation, we go on to divide the South African NEET youth population (15-29 yrs) into two groups[7]: those who remain with an orientation

[7] The total number of NEET youths in the Engaged and Not engaged categories does not add up to the total number of NEET youths who are unemployed and inactive (5 630 179) because we excluded 182 781 youths from this analysis who did not give a reason for why they did not want to work; who gave a reason that was specified as other reasons and who gave as reason that they had retired or were too old to work – the latter of which seems incompatible with the age group under consideration.

towards the labour market (even though they may have become discouraged) and those who are not economically active, for reasons other than being a student.

**Table 3: Youth NEETs, New Entrant by time in the labour market looking for work**

| Time in the labour market looking for work | Total number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 3 months | 95 890 | 5.9 |
| 3 months - less than 6 months | 109 818 | 6.8 |
| 6 months - less than 9 months | 59 137 | 3.6 |
| 9 months - less than 1 year | 111 425 | 6.9 |
| 1 year - less than 3 years | 494 965 | 30.5 |
| 3 years - 5 years | 336 382 | 20.7 |
| More than 5 years | 414 884 | 25.6 |
| **Total** | 1 622 501 | 100 |

Note: Notes: Sample restricted to youths aged 15 to 29 years. This table is based on New Entrant NEET youths who answered the question: "For how long you have been without work and trying to find paid work or start a business. By definition, New Entrants are individuals who are looking for working. Some of the New Entrant NEET youths did not answer this question. Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

Included in the group that we refer to as Engaged, are young NEETs who are still considered to have an attachment to the labour market:

(i) Short-term unemployed (youth looking for work for less than one year);
(ii) Long-term unemployed (youth looking for a job for more than one year);
(iii) Discouraged young workers (i.e. those who report wanting to work, but who have stopped searching for a job);
(iv) Seasonal workers (youth who are NEET but who are awaiting return to seasonal work, or who are awaiting recall to a former job);

Included in the second group that we refer to as Not engaged, are youths who are:

(v) Inactive due to illness and disability;
(vi) Inactive due to household reasons; and
(vii) Other inactive youth (inactive due to pregnancy, lack of money to pay for transport to look for work, voluntarily not working, and too young to work).

In table 4 we provide the total numbers and proportions of NEET youth for each of the subgroups within the broader categories Engaged and Not engaged. 74.5 % of the young NEET group falls into the subgroup that we refer to as Engaged (the equivalent of 4 059 204 young people); there is an almost equal gender split in this group, with 50.2% (2 036 681) of this category being young women. A total of 25.5% (or the equivalent of 1 383 869 youth) fall into the Not engaged category. Here, however, no less 67.9% (940 984) are young women.

**Table 4: Youth NEETs by unemployment and inactive sub-groups**

| | | Total number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Engaged | Short term unemployed | 910 852 | 16.7 |
| | Long term unemployed | 1 775 363 | 32.6 |
| | Discouraged | 1 348 156 | 24.7 |
| | Seasonal workers | 24 833 | 0.5 |
| **Engaged subtotal** | | **4 059 204** | **74.5** |
| Not engaged ('inactive') | Home-maker | 772 957 | 14.2 |
| | Health reasons | 240 756 | 4.4 |
| | Other Inactive | 374 481 | 6.9 |
| **Not engaged subtotal** | | **1 383 869** | **25.5** |
| Total | | 5 447 398 | 100 |

Notes: Sample restricted to youths aged 15 to 29 years. The numbers in the table do not add up to the total population of NEET youths since some youths had missing information in some of the unemployment and inactive states. Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

These are again important demographic differences to consider when deciding on the target group of a possible package of support for youth in South Africa. Firstly, as mentioned, different subgroups in the Engaged group would need different forms of outreach and support: discouraged job-seekers may be more difficult to reach, and may need to re-gain trust in the possibility to access various pathways through the education and training system or into the labour market; a job-seeker stipend or easier access to reliable transport may facilitate 're-connection'; short-term unemployed may simply need access to a database of job opportunities that fit their experience. Secondly, careful consideration needs to be given to the outcome measures set for a Youth Guarantee intervention. Yates and Payne (2015) point out that such measures would need to be determined in such a way that they do not act as disincentives to include, for instance, young women who may be temporarily inactive but who may need support accessing the social grant system, or who may wish to understand their options for returning to the labour market or the training system in the future.

In Table 5 we report the statistics of NEET youth for both Engaged and Not engaged categories in more detail. It provides the breakdown of the groups by age, gender and education. In both Engaged and Not engaged categories, the majority of NEET youth are in the 20-24 and 25-29 age groups and have grade 10/11 or matric. While the gender composition is almost equal for the Engaged category, young women are more dominant in the Not engaged category.

**Table 5: NEET Youth, categories, by age, gender and educational attainment**

| | **Age group** | | | **Gender** | | **Education attainment** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **15-19** | **20-24** | **25-29** | **Male** | **Female** | **Gr 9** | **Gr 10/11** | **Matric** | **Any tertiary** |
| Engaged | 7.6% | 44.2 | 48.2 | 49.8% | 50.2 | 9.6% | 37.6 | 45.5 | 7.3 |
| Not engaged | 16.7 | 42.4 | 40.9 | 32.1 | 67.9 | 14.5 | 44.7 | 37.4 | 3.4 |

Notes: Sample restricted to youths aged 15 to 29 years. Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

In Table 6 we go on to present the disaggregation of youth in the Engaged category (those who are considered to still have a connection to the labour market). We find that long-term unemployment in this particular NEET group is slightly more concentrated among young women and that being NEET because of waiting for seasonal jobs is much more concentrated among young male NEETs. There is a higher concentration of young people with some form of tertiary education among those who are short term unemployed and a considerably higher concentration of those who have only grade 9 among the discouraged.

**Table 6: Youth NEETs, Engaged category, by age, sex and educational attainment**

| | Age group | | | Gender | | Education attainment | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **15-19** | **20-24** | **25-29** | **Male** | **Female** | **Gr 9** | **Gr 10/11** | **Matric** | **Any tertiary** |
| Short term unemployed | 10.8 | 47.0 | 42.2 | 54.9 | 45.1 | 7.5 | 32.1 | 49.4 | 11.0 |
| Long term unemployed | 3.8 | 41.6 | 54.7 | 49.2 | 50.8 | 7.5 | 37.6 | 47.2 | 7.7 |
| Discouraged | 10.6 | 45.8 | 43.6 | 46.9 | 53.1 | 14.0 | 41.3 | 40.6 | 4.1 |
| Seasonal workers | 7.4 | 47.8 | 44.8 | 64.8 | 35.2 | 10.0 | 76.6 | 13.4 | 0.0 |

Notes: Sample restricted to youths aged 15 to 29 years. Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

In table 7, we present the statistics of NEET youth for the Not engaged category (those who are inactive and do not have a connection to the labour market). It indicates that inactivity because of illness and disability increases substantially by age and that there is a much higher concentration of this type of inactivity among NEET male youths (64%). The Quarterly Labour Force Survey does not provide us with more detail as to the nature of this illness or disability. The design of an intervention that aims to provide a basket of services to support youth and that includes these young people in its target group would need to take into consideration the availability of counsellors or health care workers who can assess the kind of support needed by these youths. Finally, the figures confirm the earlier established higher concentration of inactivity because of household or 'other inactive' reasons (84.7% and 59.3% respectively) among young NEET women. Again, we do not have further detail on these household and 'other' reasons.

**Table 7: Youth NEETs, Not engaged category, by age, sex and educational attainment**

| | Age groups | | | Gender | | Education attainment | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **15-19** | **20-24** | **25-29** | **Male** | **Female** | **Gr 9** | **Gr 10/11** | **Matric** | **Any tertiary** |
| Household reasons | 9.4 | 44.9 | 45.8 | 15.3 | 84.7 | 12.6 | 45.6 | 37.8 | 4.0 |
| Illness & disability | 17.6 | 36.3 | 46.0 | 64.2 | 35.8 | 24.6 | 40.3 | 32.9 | 2.3 |
| Other Inactive | 31.1 | 43.0 | 25.9 | 45.1 | 54.9 | 11.2 | 40.3 | 45.8 | 2.7 |

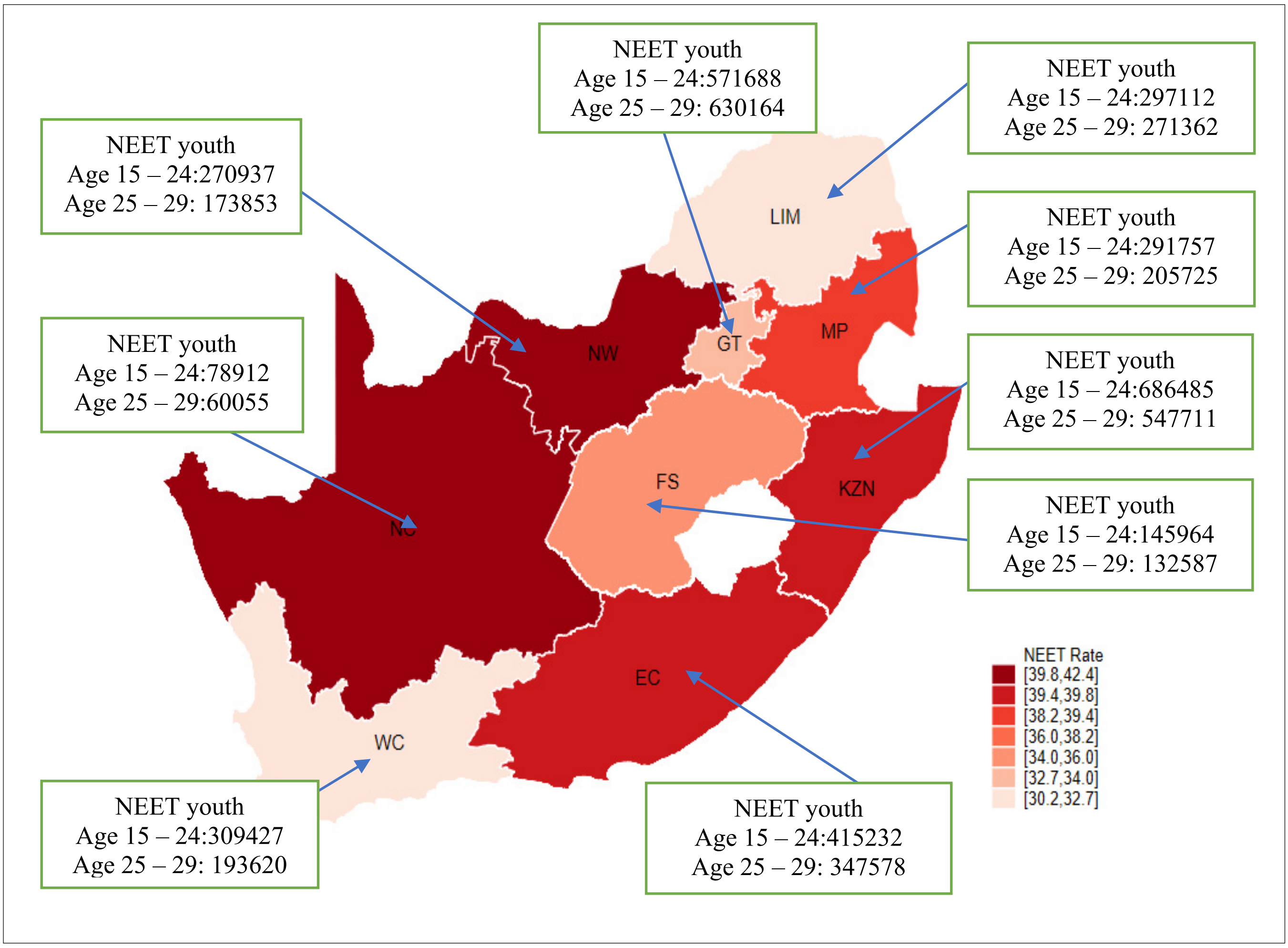
Notes: Sample restricted to youths aged 15 to 29 years. Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

Educational attainment seems to play an important role in inactivity: far higher proportions of those who are inactive because of illness, disability, or household reasons, are found among those who have completed less than their matric year. In Table 29 in the addendum, we provide a breakdown of the numbers and percentages of the different inactives that make up the “Other Inactive” category, while Table 30 presents the breakdown of the groups by age, gender and education. The disaggregation presented in tables 28 shows that, of the 371 671 young people who are considered ‘other inactive’, almost 42% indicate being ‘voluntarily not working’; 23% indicate being inactive because they do not have money to pay for transport to look for work.

## Profiles of young NEETs in the different South African provinces

In figure 3 we indicated that young NEETs are mostly concentrated in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. In addition, in figure 4, we display the variation of youth NEET rates across provinces, where the darker colours are provinces with high youth NEET rates and lighter colours show low rates. The map clearly shows that the national average of 36.5% hides worse situations in provinces like Northern Cape (NC), North West (WN), Eastern Cape (EC) and KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) that all have youth NEET rates of more than 39%. The tables in addendum 1 provide a breakdown of NEET youth for each of South Africa’s nine provinces. While there are a number of general trends, the composition of the NEET group does differ somewhat in the various geographical areas. This influences the kind of interventions needed to help reconnect youth in the provinces to education, training or the labour market.

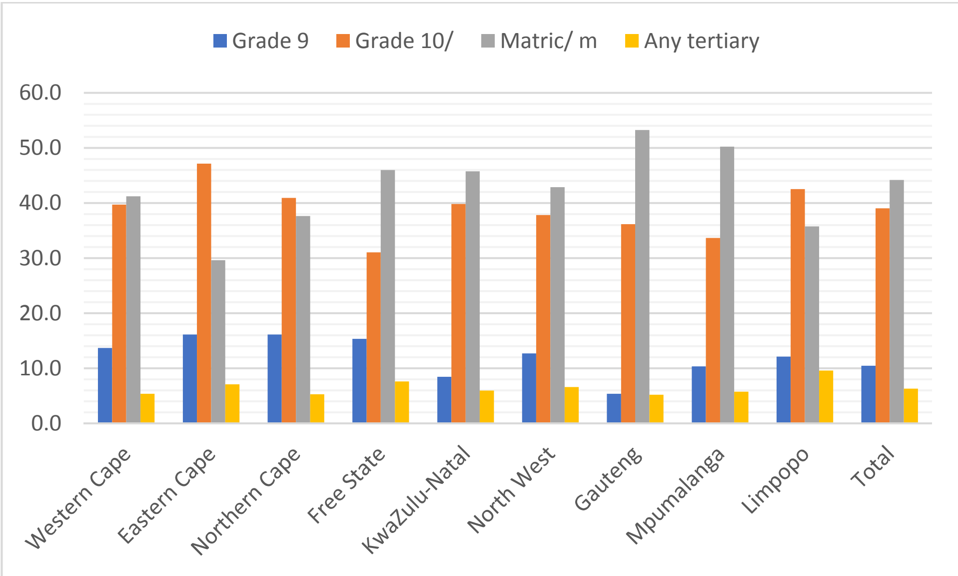
**Figure 4: NEET youth rates by province**



Notes: Sample restricted to youths aged 15 to 29 years. Point estimates weighted using personal weights. On the map, WC – Western Cape, EC – Eastern Cape, NC - Northern Cape, NW - North West, KZN - KwaZulu-Natal, FS - Free State, GT – Gauteng, MP – Mpumalanga and LIM – Limpopo.

For instance, while there is a gender dimension to 'NEET-hood', there is disparity across the provinces, with almost 60% of young NEETs concentrated among young women in the Western Cape versus an almost 50-50 split in Gauteng. Also, while the concentration of NEETs increases in the age groups above 20, the share of NEETs in the age groups 20-24 and 25-29 fluctuates. In Gauteng, over 50% of young NEETs are concentrated in the age group 25-29 whereas this is less than 40% in the Western Cape. And finally, while education clearly plays a role with much smaller shares of NEET youth among those who have completed some tertiary education, the distribution across those who have less than a matric and those who did complete their final secondary education year also differs across the provinces, with 53% of young NEETs in Gauteng concentrated among those who have completed their matric year (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5: NEET youth by educational attainment level and province**




These differences warrant further investigation, alongside an investigation of the labour market and education systems in the various provinces, in order to thoroughly inform the design of an intervention at the provincial and sub-provincial levels. While that investigation falls outside the scope of this particular paper, it needs to be taken into account when determining the design, implementation and evaluation framework of a pilot intervention at the local level.

In table 8, we show that Gauteng has a higher proportion of NEETs who have matric or higher, while those with less than a matric make up the majority of NEETs in other provinces. The Eastern Cape has the highest proportion of young NEETs who have less than matric. The high proportion of NEET youths with higher education in Gauteng could be partly explained by the in-migration of people from the rural provinces like Eastern Cape to the urban provinces in search of better opportunities (see Garlick. et al., 2016).

**Table 8: NEETs youth by educational attainment level and province**

| | Less than matric | Matric or higher |
|---|---|---|
| Western Cape | 62.0 | 38.1 |
| Eastern Cape | 72.2 | 27.8 |
| Northern Cape | 67.5 | 32.5 |
| Free State | 56.0 | 44.0 |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 54.7 | 45.3 |
| North West | 61.3 | 38.7 |
| Gauteng | 45.7 | 54.3 |
| Mpumalanga | 52.6 | 47.4 |
| Limpopo | 62.1 | 37.9 |
| National | 57.3 | 42.7 |

Notes: Sample restricted to youths aged 15 to 29 years. The table shows the distribution of NEET youths across provinces by educational attainment level, where less than matric refers to all NEET youths with less than 12 years of education, while matric and higher refers to those with 12 years or more. Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

Finally, geographical differences also exist in the composition of our earlier established Engaged and Not engaged categories, which capture young people's orientation towards the labour market. In table 9 we show the distribution of these youth NEET sub-groups by province and for the country as a whole, while table 31 in addendum shows the distribution of these sub-groups by geo type (rural/urban).

The figures indicate again the dominance of unemployed youth – or of young people who maintain an orientation towards the labour market, i.e. our engaged category - among NEETs, in each of the provinces. The table also indicates, however, the dominance of long-term unemployed and discouraged youth in the Engaged category, reflecting the need for a time dimension to the design of a support package that would avoid large groups of young people 'falling through the cracks' of the systems for a prolonged period of time, and for interventions that are especially aimed at providing an understanding of possible pathways that could avoid discouragement and loss of hope among the country's young people.

This need is especially high in some of the poorer provinces (Limpopo and KZN, for instance) that have proportions of discouraged youth well above the national average. The Western Cape, on the other hand, has the smallest concentration of discouraged workers among young NEETs, but a higher proportion of short-term unemployed, indicating an opportunity to put in place an intervention that would continue to support young people as they exit previous job opportunities and to capitalise on their previous experience in the labour market.

**Table 9: Geographical distribution of Youth NEETs Sub-groups by province**

| | WC | EC | NC | FS | KZN | NW | Gau | Mpu | Lim | SA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Short term unemployed | 30.7 | 13.2 | 15.0 | 27.7 | 7.9 | 13.9 | 19.6 | 20.9 | 15.8 | 16.7 |
| Long term unemployed | 37.8 | 30.6 | 28.9 | 42.9 | 20.7 | 21.8 | 50.7 | 42.2 | 14.4 | 32.6 |
| Discouraged | 3.9 | 30.9 | 23.7 | 11.7 | 37.5 | 29.6 | 14.8 | 21.5 | 33.8 | 24.8 |
| Seasonal workers | 1.4 | 0.1 | 7.7 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.5 | 0.1 | 0.5 | 0.2 | 0.5 |
| Household reasons | 13.8 | 8.1 | 12.8 | 7.8 | 24.1 | 15.6 | 8.2 | 6.1 | 23.0 | 14.2 |
| Health reasons | 4.9 | 7.7 | 5.6 | 2.3 | 4.9 | 4.3 | 2.7 | 3.9 | 3.5 | 4.4 |
| Other Inactive | 7.6 | 9.4 | 6.4 | 7.4 | 4.9 | 14.4 | 3.9 | 4.9 | 9.3 | 6.9 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| % of NEETs | 8.9 | 13.6 | 2.5 | 5 | 21.9 | 7.9 | 21.4 | 8.8 | 10.1 | 100 |

Notes: Sample restricted to youths aged 15 to 29 years. The table shows the distribution of NEET youths across provinces by different unemployment and inactive sub-groups. While we have very small percentages for some sub-groups in some provinces (especially for seasonal workers), the QLFS is representative at the provincial level. These small percentages are inevitable given that we further restricted our sample of 15 – 29-year-old to NEET youths only and went on to analyse NEET youths by highly disaggregated sub-groups. Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

## Young NEETs and income poverty

In the next table, we report the statistics of NEET youth by household income poverty status, drawing on the General Household Survey (GHS) data. As indicated in table 16 in the addendum, the 2017 GHS data generate a higher total population (56.5 million) and NEET youth population numbers (5.9 million) than the 2017 QLFS, Q4 data, which show a total population figure of 56.2 million and 5.6 million NEET youth. On the other hand, the QLFS reveals a higher youth population (15.4 million) compared to the GHS (15.1 million). In both surveys, the youth population is about 27% of the total population, while the NEET rates in above 36% (39% for GHS and 37% for QLFS). The proportions for NEET youths by gender, race, location, age group and education level are roughly similar across the surveys. However, the proportions for NEET youths by unemployment status vary across the surveys, especially for discouraged job seekers and inactive youths. We acknowledge these differences and the fact that the QLFS is recognised as a better survey tool to determine labour market statistics. However, overall both surveys reach similar conclusions about the profile of NEET youth in South Africa. Therefore, as we wish to profile NEET youth by household income poverty status, we use the 2017 General Household Survey (GHS).

Based on Statistics South Africa's 2018 upper-bound poverty line[8], a household is considered to be income poor if the per capita monthly income of their household is less than 1183 Rands (Statistics South Africa, 2018). Based on this definition, 69.2% of NEET youth aged 15 to 29 live in income-poor households.[9] This implies that large proportions of young NEETs in South Africa are not only faced with

[8] This upper-bound poverty line refers to the food poverty line plus the average amount derived from non-food items of households whose food expenditure is equal to the food poverty line. Statistics south Africa estimates the upper-bound poverty line at R1 183 per person per month in April 2018 prices.

[9] A slightly different approach would be to look at the composition of young NEETs who live in households that access at least one social grant. Statistics for this group are presented in table 32 in addendum. Household income is, however, considered a better measure as those who do not have a grant are likely to be worse of.

poor labour market prospects (see the high proportions of long-term unemployment and discouragement) but are also faced with low educational outcomes and household poverty.

In table 10 we provides an overview of NEET youth living in income-poor households. Of those young NEETs who live in income-poor households, almost 60% are female.

**Table 10: Overview of NEET Youth by household income poor status, GHS data 2017**

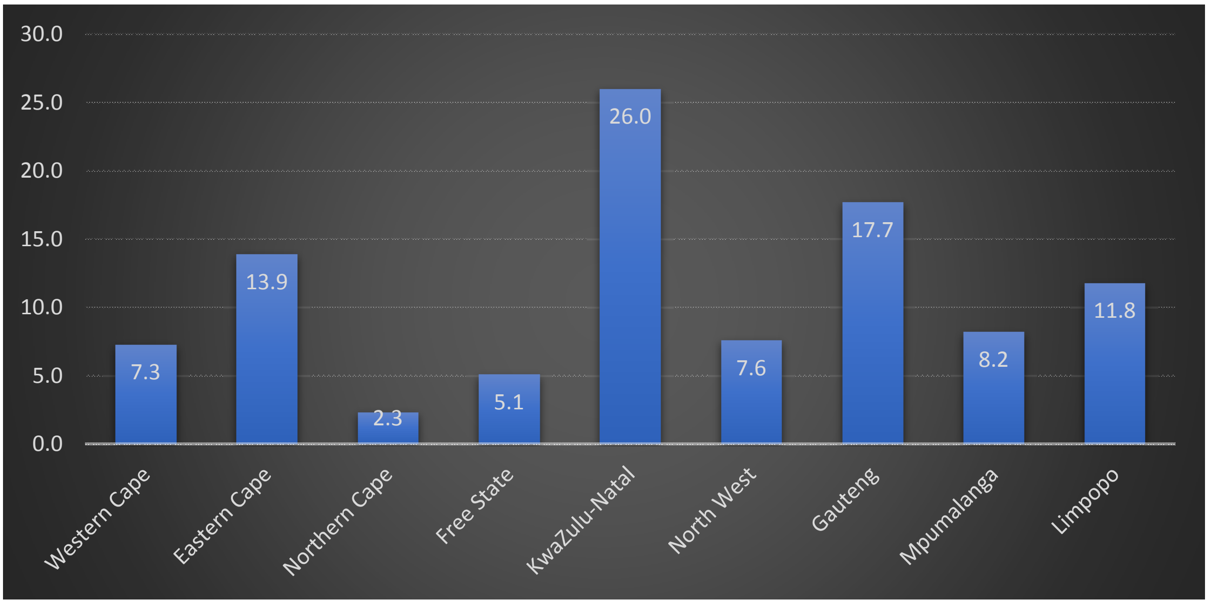
| | 2017 GHS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Indicator** | | **Total number** | **Percentage** |
| **Total SA population:** | Total Population | | 56 521 948 | |
| | Total Youth | | 15 141 577 | 26.8 |
| | NEET Youth (15-29 yrs.) | | 5 927 101 | 39.3 |
| **Of those young people who are NEET:** | Income poor | | 4 058 619 | 69.2 |
| **Of those young NEETs who are income poor:** | Gender: | Male | 1 663 654 | 41.0 |
| | | Female | 2 394 965 | 59.0 |
| | Age category: | 15 -19 | 491 775 | 12.1 |
| | | 20 - 24 | 1 837 782 | 45.3 |
| | | 25 - 29 | 1 729 062 | 42.6 |
| | Education level: | Grade 9 only | 463 896 | 14.0 |
| | | Grade 10 and 11 only | 1 332 534 | 40.3 |
| | | Matric | 1 440 524 | 43.6 |
| | | Any tertiary[10] | 68 682 | 2.1 |

Notes: Sample restricted to youths aged 15 to 29 years. Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

In Figure 6 we present the proportion of NEET youths who live in income-poor households by province; it shows that NEET youth in income-poor households are mostly concentrated in KZN, where over 80% of NEET youth live in income-poor households (Figure 7).

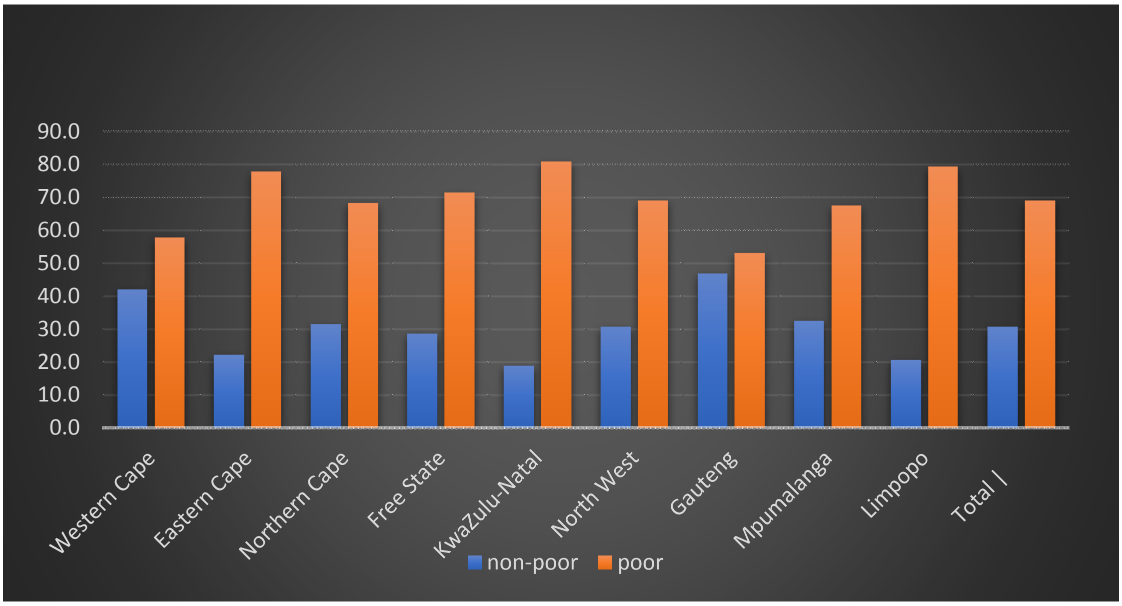
[10] Youth with "Any tertiary" education are those youths with at least 13 years of education; these youths have the following qualifications: 13 years - Certificate with grade 12/ STD 10, diploma with grade 12/ STD 10, N5/NTC 5, N6/NTC 6, Higher Diploma; 15 years - Post Higher Diploma (Masters; Doctoral Diploma), Bachelors Degree; 16 years - Bachelors Degree and Post Graduate Diploma, Honours Degree and 18 years - Higher Degree (Masters/Phd).

**Figure 6: NEET youths who live in income-poor households by province, GHS 2017**




Notes: Sample restricted to youths aged 15 to 29 years. Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

**Figure 7: NEET youths by province and income status, GHS 2017**




Notes: Sample restricted to youths aged 15 to 29 years. Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

## Factors associated with being NEET among black youth in South Africa

The descriptive evidence presented above revealed important insights into the heterogeneous nature of the NEET youth cohort, and that the overwhelming majority of young NEETs in the country are black (88%). This section asks what microeconomic factors are associated with being NEET among black youth in South Africa using the 2017 General Household Survey (GHS) data[11]. Understanding the factors associated with this status is crucial for the design of interventions that aim to prevent large numbers of youth becoming, or remaining, 'disconnected' from education and the labour market.

There is substantial international literature on the factors associated with being NEET among youth. This literature shows that NEET youth status is associated with individual factors such as age, gender, marital status (Ryan, 2001; Yuji, 2007; Tamesberger and Bacher, 2014; Kelly, and McGuinness 2015; Cabral, 2018), low educational attainment and field of study (Bynner & Parsons, 2002; Schoon, 2014; Quintano et al., 2018), perceived health status, disability and substance abuse (Eurofound, 2012; Salva-Mut et al., 2018) and immigration status (Eurofound, 2012). In addition, the research highlights an association between NEET youth status and household factors like household income, household size, parental education level, number of employed individuals and children under the age of 7 years in the household (Furlong, 2006; Susanli, 2016; Ranzani and Rosari, 2016; Noh and Lee, 2017). NEET youth status is also found to be associated with community factors such as area of residence (rural or rural) and type of accommodation (rented or owned) (Susanli, 2016; Quintano et al., 2018).

Thus, this evidence indicates that the NEET youth status is associated with multiple and often intertwined personal, household and community-related factors that tend to co-occur. However, a key challenge for the empirical literature has been to establish that this association is causal due to the problem of endogeneity. Many of the individual and household factors might be causes of a young person being NEET but at the same time, these factors might also be caused by being NEET. For example, low education levels might lead to becoming NEET and at the same time, being and remaining NEET at some point in time can also lead to low education levels. As a result, it is difficult to establish which of the personal, household and community-related factors are determinants of the youth NEET status. Accordingly, the bulk of the studies are not clear as to which factors are causes and which factors are correlates of youth NEET status (Farrington and Welsh, 2007; Stoneman and Thiel, 2010).

In this paper, we focus on the microeconomic correlates of NEET status among black youths in South Africa but with the same caveat regarding our (in)ability to indicate causality, as the one noted in the other existing studies. We use a Linear Probability Model (LPM) in which the probability of being NEET among black youths is represented as:

$$\Pr(\mathrm{neet}_i = 1; X) = \beta_0 + \sum_{i=1}^{k} \beta_i X_i + \varepsilon_i \qquad (1)$$

[11] While the QLFS data is the most recent dataset, its major drawback is that it only collects individual information. However, the GHS collects both individual and household information, giving us more information on the possible factors associated with being NEET among black youth.

Where $\mathrm{neet_i}$ is a binary outcome variable equal to one, if the individual youth is NEET, and zero otherwise; $\mathrm{X_i}$ is a set of i individuals, household and community-related characteristics likely to influence the probability of being NEET for a given black youth. $\beta_i$ is a set of parameters to be estimated and $\varepsilon_i$ is the random error term.

To estimate equation (1), our choice of control variables is guided by existing literature and the descriptive statistics presented in the previous section. For individual factors, we include age, gender, marital status, education level and health status. For community factors, we account for residence location by including a rural-urban dummy and provincial dummies. For household factors, we include household size, number of kids under 7 years in the household, household income and household employment. Tables 11 provides the definition of these variables.

**Table 11: Definition of the key variables.**

| **Components of vector $X_{ij}$** | **Nature of the component** |
|---|---|
| NEET | Dummy variable equals 0 if the individual is in education, employment or training (EET) and 1 if the individual is not in education, |
| Age group | Categorical variable with three values, 0 if the individual is aged 15-19, equals 1 if the individual is aged 20-24 and equals 2 if the |
| Gender | Dummy variable equals 0 if the individual is male and 1 if the individual is female |
| Marital status | Dummy variable equals 0 if the individual has never been married and equals 1 if the individual is married or the individual is living in together. |
| Health status | Dummy variable equals 1 if the individual reported good health and 0 if reported good health. |
| Place of residence | Dummy variable equals 0 if the individual lives in a rural area and 1 if the individual lives in an urban area. We also include 9 provincial dummies |
| Education | Dummy variable equals 0 if the individual has matric or less education and 1 if the individual has any tertiary education. |
| H/h employed person | Dummy variable equals 0 if the individual lives in a household with no employed person and 1 if lives in a household with an employed person |
| Household size | Continuous variable indicating the number of people in each youth's household. |
| Children under 7 years | Dummy variable equals 0 if the individual lives in a household with no children under the age of 7 years and 1 if lives in a household with children under the age of 7 years. |
| Household income | Continuous variable indicating the monthly income per capita of a household where a youth lives |

Notes: In our regression analysis for dummy and categorical variables, the reference group is the category equals 0.

## Empirical results

We present two sets of results commencing with various linear probability models describing the individual and community-related correlates of being NEET among black youths; the second set of results extends the initial analysis to include household-related controls (estimation of logit models did not find significant differences results from those revealed by the LPM). In all regressions, robust standard errors are reported as we corrected for heteroscedasticity which is a common problem in all linear probability models.

In Table 12, we present results for individual and community-related correlates of being NEET among black youths. The first regression is for the full sample (pooled male and female), while the second and third regressions present results for males and females separately. The fourth, fifth and sixth regressions add provincial dummies to the first three regressions.

In the first regression, all factors apart from marital status (being married) are statistically significant and are signed according to our expectation. With respect to age, the older age groups are positively associated with being NEET. The results show that youths aged 20-24 and 25-29 years are more likely to be NEET compared to youths who are 15-19 years. In particular, 20-24 and 25-29-year olds are 42.8 and 40.4 percentage points more likely to be NEET compared to 15-19-year olds. This result is expected given that the older youths are less likely to be in school compared to the younger ones. The association between education and the probability of being NEET is also very much as expected, with more education associated with a lower probability of being NEET. The results show that youths who have any tertiary education are 14 percentage points less likely to be NEET than youths with a matric or less education.

With regards to health status, having poor health is associated with a higher probability of being NEET. More precisely, our results show that youths with poor health are 43.1 percentage points more likely to be NEET than their counterparts with good health. The analysis also shows that being NEET has a gender dimension as female youths have a higher chance of being NEET than male youths. Young women are 10.3 percentage points more likely to be NEET than their male counterparts. This result is consistent with other findings in the literature (Wickremeratne and Dunusinghe, 2018; Cabral, 2018). Finally, where a young person resides also matters as living in urban areas reduces the probability of being NEET: youths residing in an urban area are 7.5 percentage points less likely to be NEET compared to other youths living in rural areas[12].

In column 2 and 3, we unpack the gender dynamics of being NEET by estimating equation (1) for males and females separately. The analysis shows that as with the full sample, age and having poor health are positively associated with being NEET for both males and females while having any tertiary education and residing in urban areas have a negative association. However, several gender-based differences emerge from these regressions. First, the size of the estimated coefficients from these factors differ between males and females. For example, the association between age and 'NEET-hood'

[12] Given that our descriptive analysis show that the majority of NEET youths reside in urban areas, this finding seems counterintuitive. However, the negative association between NEET youth status and residing in urban areas suggests that once we isolate the importance of individual factors, residing in urban areas is associated with a lower probability of being NEET.

is stronger among females, with 20-24 and 25-29-year-old females respectively 45.7 and 45.2 percentage points more likely to be NEET than their 15-19-year-old counterparts. On the contrary, 20-24 and 25-29-year-old males are respectively 39.6 and 36.2 percentage points more likely to be NEET compared to 15-19-year-old males. Furthermore, the association between education and being NEET is also stronger for females. While female youths with any tertiary education are 18.2 percentage points less likely to be NEET compared to their counterparts with a matric or less education, male youths with any tertiary education are only 8.1 percentage points less like to be NEET compared to male youths with a matric or less education.

**Table 12: Factors associated with the probability of being NEET among black youths**

| | (1) Full | (2) Male | (3) Female | (4) Full | (5) Male | (6) Female |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 20 – 24 years | 0.428*** | 0.396*** | 0.457*** | 0.429*** | 0.397*** | 0.456*** |
| | (0.008) | (0.012) | (0.012) | (0.008) | (0.012) | (0.012) |
| 25 – 29 years | 0.404*** | 0.362*** | 0.452*** | 0.403*** | 0.361*** | 0.451*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.013) | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.013) |
| Any tertiary education | -0.140*** | -0.081*** | -0.182*** | -0.138*** | -0.078*** | -0.182*** |
| | (0.017) | (0.026) | (0.023) | (0.017) | (0.026) | (0.023) |
| Married | -0.009 | -0.213*** | 0.102*** | -0.004 | -0.203*** | 0.103*** |
| | (0.012) | (0.019) | (0.015) | (0.012) | (0.019) | (0.015) |
| Poor health | 0.431*** | 0.388*** | 0.476*** | 0.423*** | 0.366*** | 0.479*** |
| | (0.061) | (0.098) | (0.045) | (0.062) | (0.099) | (0.046) |
| Female | 0.103*** | | | 0.103*** | | |
| | (0.007) | | | (0.007) | | |
| Urban | -0.075*** | -0.060*** | -0.086*** | -0.080*** | -0.063*** | -0.093*** |
| | (0.007) | (0.010) | (0.010) | (0.009) | (0.012) | (0.012) |
| Eastern Cape | | | | 0.076*** | 0.112*** | 0.031 |
| | | | | (0.021) | (0.029) | (0.029) |
| Northern Cape | | | | 0.077*** | 0.124*** | 0.027 |
| | | | | (0.029) | (0.041) | (0.039) |
| Free State | | | | 0.088*** | 0.113*** | 0.059* |
| | | | | (0.023) | (0.032) | (0.031) |
| KwaZulu-Natal | | | | 0.087*** | 0.115*** | 0.055** |
| | | | | (0.020) | (0.028) | (0.028) |
| North West | | | | 0.112*** | 0.121*** | 0.098*** |
| | | | | (0.023) | (0.033) | (0.032) |
| Gauteng | | | | 0.065*** | 0.080*** | 0.046* |
| | | | | (0.019) | (0.027) | (0.027) |
| Mpumalanga | | | | 0.051** | 0.069** | 0.030 |
| | | | | (0.022) | (0.031) | (0.030) |
| Limpopo | | | | 0.010 | 0.014 | 0.004 |
| | | | | (0.021) | (0.030) | (0.030) |
| Constant | 0.126*** | 0.158*** | 0.195*** | 0.065*** | 0.074*** | 0.159*** |
| | (0.007) | (0.008) | (0.008) | (0.020) | (0.028) | (0.028) |
| Observations | 15,771 | 7,757 | 8,014 | 15,771 | 7,757 | 8,014 |
| R-squared | 0.170 | 0.143 | 0.203 | 0.174 | 0.149 | 0.205 |
| F | 565.5 | 246.7 | 439.6 | 275.8 | 115.0 | 192.8 |

Robust standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Another important observation is that while marital status is not significant for the full sample, it has a significant and differentiated association with NEET status for young males and females. Whereas married male youths are 21.3 percentage points less likely to be NEET than male youths who are not married, married young females are 10.2 percentage points more likely to be NEET than female youths who are not married. The observed results might indicate the gendered nature of caregiving in the country or might be picking up cultural norms and expectations for married women.

Next, we re-estimate the models reported in column (1) to (3) incorporating provincial dummies[13]. The results show that the inclusion of provincial dummies hardly changes the significance of the initial estimates for individual factors and the urban dummy. In addition, the point estimates of these factors remain quantitatively similar to those reported in column (1) – (3). Turning to the provincial dummies, apart from Limpopo (full sample) all the other dummies are positive and statistically significant, suggesting that youths in these provinces (Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, North West, Gauteng and Mpumalanga) are at greater risk of being NEET compared to youths in the Western Cape Province. Although the estimates of a few more provinces are insignificant in the male and female regressions, those that are significant continue to show a positive association.[14]

In Table 13, we present results that include household-related factors captured in the GHS, mainly: household size, number of children under 7 years in the household, household income and household employment. The main insight from the results is that the inclusion of household-related factors changes the magnitude and significance of the individual and urban factor estimates. The results for the full sample show that while age, education, poor health and being female maintain the same significance, the estimates of age have increased in size, while they decrease for education, poor health and being female. In addition, marital status is now significant with a positive association, while urban is now insignificant. This suggests an indirect effect of marital status and residing in urban areas on NEET status operating through household-related factors.

Looking at young black men and women separately, we also see that while age, education and poor health have maintained the same sign and significance, the size of the estimates for age have increased and for education and poor health have decreased. In addition, education and residing in urban areas now have a differentiated association with being NEET status for males and females. Whereas female youths with any tertiary education are 8.4 percentage points less likely to be NEET than female youths with a matric or less education, there is no difference between male youths with any tertiary education and those with a matric or less education. Residing in an urban area is slightly significant and positively associated with being NEET among male youths: male youths residing in an urban area are 1.8 percentage points more likely to be NEET compared to other male youths living in rural areas. Taken together, these results highlight the need to account for household-related characteristics in understanding correlates of NEET-status, as failure to do so can lead to biased individual and community-related estimates.

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[13] The provincial dummies are aimed at capturing the effects of regional economic differences and we use the Western Cape as the reference province. Western Cape and Gauteng are the major economic centres in South Africa and we expect greater education and job opportunities for youths in these provinces.

[14] To validate the robustness of our results reported in Table 12, we ran a similar model using the 2017 QLFS, Q4. Results remain consistent and are reported on in addendum 1, table 14.

**Table 13: Factors associated with the probability of being NEET among black youths**

| | (1) Full | (2) Male | (3) Female | (4) Full | (5) Male | (6) Female |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 20 – 24 years | 0.442*** | 0.406*** | 0.465*** | 0.443*** | 0.407*** | 0.465*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.012) | (0.012) | (0.009) | (0.012) | (0.012) |
| 25 – 29 years | 0.421*** | 0.401*** | 0.445*** | 0.421*** | 0.401*** | 0.444*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.013) | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.013) |
| Any tertiary education | -0.045*** | 0.015 | -0.088*** | -0.045*** | 0.015 | -0.089*** |
| | (0.017) | (0.026) | (0.023) | (0.017) | (0.027) | (0.023) |
| Married | 0.050*** | -0.159*** | 0.157*** | 0.051*** | -0.154*** | 0.156*** |
| | (0.012) | (0.017) | (0.015) | (0.012) | (0.017) | (0.015) |
| Poor health | 0.399*** | 0.349*** | 0.451*** | 0.391*** | 0.337*** | 0.447*** |
| | (0.073) | (0.109) | (0.065) | (0.074) | (0.110) | (0.066) |
| Female | 0.082*** | | | 0.082*** | | |
| | (0.007) | | | (0.007) | | |
| Urban | 0.007 | 0.018* | -0.001 | -0.005 | 0.008 | -0.015 |
| | (0.008) | (0.011) | (0.011) | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.013) |
| Household size | 0.018*** | 0.030*** | 0.011*** | 0.018*** | 0.030*** | 0.010*** |
| | (0.001) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.001) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Household income | -0.066*** | -0.064*** | -0.068*** | -0.067*** | -0.065*** | -0.068*** |
| | (0.004) | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.005) | (0.005) |
| H/h employed person | -0.143*** | -0.154*** | -0.128*** | -0.143*** | -0.154*** | -0.129*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.012) | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.012) |
| Children under 7 years | 0.022** | -0.054*** | 0.085*** | 0.024*** | -0.053*** | 0.088*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.012) | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.012) |
| Eastern Cape | | | | 0.033 | 0.055* | 0.002 |
| | | | | (0.021) | (0.028) | (0.029) |
| Northern Cape | | | | 0.047* | 0.087** | 0.011 |
| | | | | (0.027) | (0.038) | (0.038) |
| Free State | | | | 0.039* | 0.057* | 0.024 |
| | | | | (0.023) | (0.031) | (0.031) |
| KwaZulu-Natal | | | | 0.026 | 0.039 | 0.010 |
| | | | | (0.020) | (0.027) | (0.028) |
| North West | | | | 0.078*** | 0.087*** | 0.066** |
| | | | | (0.023) | (0.031) | (0.032) |
| Gauteng | | | | 0.033* | 0.042 | 0.022 |
| | | | | (0.019) | (0.026) | (0.027) |
| Mpumalanga | | | | 0.031 | 0.049* | 0.011 |
| | | | | (0.021) | (0.029) | (0.030) |
| Limpopo | | | | -0.034 | -0.031 | -0.038 |
| | | | | (0.021) | (0.029) | (0.030) |
| Constant | 0.483*** | 0.477*** | 0.544*** | 0.468*** | 0.451*** | 0.543*** |
| | (0.026) | (0.037) | (0.036) | (0.033) | (0.046) | (0.045) |
| Observations | 14,064 | 6,775 | 7,289 | 14,064 | 6,775 | 7,289 |
| R-squared | 0.256 | 0.243 | 0.281 | 0.259 | 0.247 | 0.283 |
| F | 542.9 | 239.5 | 388.6 | 327.3 | 141.9 | 221.1 |

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. In the table household size is in levels; Household income is log household monthly income per capita and H/h employed person is a dummy indicating the proportion of employed individuals in a household were a youth lives in.

We turn to household-related factors. For the full sample, the results show a positive association between household size and the probability of being NEET. An additional household member increases the probability of being NEET by 0.02. The analysis also shows that a higher household income is negatively associated with being NEET, suggesting that a 1% increase in household income decreases the likelihood of being NEET by 6.6 percentage points. This result is in line with findings by Noh & Lee (2017).

In addition, youth who live in a household with at least one employed individual have a lower probability of being NEET. The results show that a young person who lives in a household with an employed person is 14.3 percentage points less likely to be NEET. This finding relates to that of other studies that have highlighted the importance of household networks and connections as an employed individual in a household can provide information about job search and potential employment opportunities for young people (Mlatsheni, 2014). On the other hand, living in a household with a large number of children under the age of 7 years increases a young person's chance of being NEET. The results show that an additional child under the age of 7 years increases the probability of being NEET by 2.2 percentage points.

Looking at the gender dynamics, however, having a child under the age of 7 years in the household has a differentiated effect for males and females. Male youths living in a household with a child under the age of 7 years are 5.7 percentage points less likely to be NEET compared to male youths in households with older children. In contrast, young females in a household with children under the age of 7 years are 8.2 percentage points *more* likely to be NEET, compared to female youths in households with older children. The other factors (household size, household income, and employed person in a household) continue to have the same sign and significance as in the full sample. Household size is positively associated with being NEET for both male and female youths, while household income and having an employed person in the household are negatively associated. However, the magnitude of their estimates differs between males and females. Whereas the estimates for household size and living with an employed person in a household are larger for males, household income has a larger estimate for females.

Taken as a whole, the results confirm that individual factors like age, gender, education and marital status as well as household factors such as household size, number of children under the age of 7 years, household income and employment of a household member are key factors associated with being NEET among black youths in South Africa. Of these factors, age, health status and employment of a household member exert greater association on the probability of being NEET. Separate regressions by gender again point to important underlying differences between male and female NEET youth groups, driven by specific individual and household characteristics.

For robustness checks, a number of sensitivity tests were carried out. First, a continuous education level variable (its levels and a squared variable to capture experience) was used, and the results continue to show that higher education reduces the risk of being NEET. Rather than using household income per capita, we also used a binary variable indicating household income poverty status and the results again show that youths in income-poor households have a higher probability of being NEET compared to youths in income-rich households. Instead of using the reported health status variable, we also estimated models using a perceived health status variable. Our results continue to show that poor health increases the probability of being NEET.

## Conclusions

This study provides the first in-depth profiling of the NEET youth cohort in South Africa. It also includes an analysis of the microeconomic correlates of being NEET among youths. Our analysis indicates that South Africa's NEET youth population is a heterogeneous group that is faced with multiple, intertwined, individual and household factors.

Descriptive analysis shows that South Africa's NEET youth population is predominantly female, black, urban, and consists mainly of slightly older youth (20-29-year-old). The majority of these young NEETs are unemployed (searching or discouraged) and have less than, or only a matric or matric equivalent. 60% of unemployed young NEETs indicate that they are searching for work, but that they had never worked before, and within that group, the vast majority has been searching for employment for at least one year. This indicates the risk of a scarring effect caused by long term exclusion from work opportunities while wanting to work and underpins the urgency of looking into ways to support these young people in their search for (re)connection.

Analysis of GHS data further indicates that almost 70% of young NEETs live in households with an income of less than R1183 per person, per month. Inactivity among NEET youth is noticed predominantly among young women providing care to others in the household.

The multivariate analysis looking into correlates of being NEET among black youth confirms that individual factors like age, gender, health and education are key factors associated with the probability of being NEET among this group. Ensuring that young people reach higher levels of (quality) education seems pertinent then, in the design of an intervention that would support them.

Further, the analysis indicates that living in households with a higher income and with an employed person significantly reduces both young men and women's probability of being NEET. It might thus be useful to explore the provision of financial support for young NEETs to alleviate household poverty while looking for alternative ways to provide the social and cultural capital that would otherwise be provided by employed people in their households.

The gender dimension that stands out in both the descriptive and multivariate regression analysis points at the double burden of care and poverty on young women and requires further attention in the design of an intervention that aims to avoid 'disconnection' among youth. Ensuring access to higher levels of education may serve as protective factors against 'NEET-hood' for young women.

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## Appendix 1 - Comparability of data in different surveys in South Africa

The profiling of NEET youths depends critically on the availability of comprehensive surveys that collect labour market information. While such surveys are highly limited in most African countries, South Africa is one of the few exceptional cases where a number of national surveys collected by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) have been available since the end of apartheid. Among these surveys is the October Household Survey (OHS), which was conducted annually between 1993 and 1999, and the Labour Force Survey (LFS), which was conducted bi-annually between 2000 and 2007 as a replacement of the OHS. The LFS was further replaced by the Quarterly Labour Force Surveys (QLFS), which was conducted from 2008. The other surveys collected by Stats SA include the National Population Censuses for 1996, 2001 and 2011, the Community Surveys (CS) for 2007 and 2016, the General Household Surveys (GHS) conducted annually from 2002 and the Income and Expenditure Survey (IES) conducted after every 5 years from 1995. Another survey collected by the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU), is the National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS), which has been collecting longitudinal information – including labour market details – since 2008, with waves of data collection taking place every 2 years.

From these surveys, we utilise the population census, the QLFS, Q4 and the GHS[15]. For any initial picture on the NEET youth group, we use the 2011 population census which provides the foundation of all the other household surveys collected by Stats SA. The 2011 census information is used to create the master sample that is utilised by other household surveys administered by Stats SA (Stats SA, 2015; 2016). The resulting master sample allows for comparability of the information from the 2011 census and other household surveys collected by Stats SA. Thus, in the absence of a consistently collected survey over time, the 2011 census provides a good starting point for a trend analysis aimed at understanding the changes of the NEET youth group over time in South Africa. For triangulation purposes, we compare the 2011 census with the 2011 QLFS, Q4 and 2011 GHS. For a more recent picture of the NEET youth group, we turn to the 2017 QLFS, Q4. Using the QLFS is important as it allows our analyses to be comparable to the European Commission studies that also employ annually collected labour force survey data to build profiles of young NEETs in various European Union memberstates. We compare the 2017 QLFS, Q4 with the 2017 GHS.

Whilst these surveys are conducted entirely independently of one another, all of them are nationally representative and ask comparable questions for some domains. As a result, we expect to get a roughly similar descriptive picture across comparable core dimensions of NEET youth from these surveys. Apart from standard demographic information, the surveys collect information on whether an individual is currently attending an educational institution and information on individual employment status that enable us to derive the youth NEET rate.

[15] We did not use the Community Survey of 2016 as the data released to the public do not have information on individual employment status. While the population census is collected in October, the QLFS, Q4 is collected between October and December, the GHS is collected throughout the year from January to December in four quarters (Q1, Jan-Mar; Q2, Apr – Jun; Q3, Jul – Sep and Q4, Oct – Dec.

Table 15 in this appendix presents the statistics based on the 2011 census, GHS and QLFS, Q4, while Table 16 presents the statistics based on the 2017 GHS and QLFS, Q4. All the point estimates are weighted using personal weights[16]. Looking at demographic statistics, the census shows a total population of about 51 million, of whom around 15.1 million are youths aged 15 to 29 years (29.6%); the GHS reveal a total population of around 51.6 million, with roughly 14.7 million of this population being youths (28.5%) and the QLFS, Q4 shows a total population of around 51.8 million, of whom 14.7 million are youths (28.4%). While the census finds a lower total population compared to the GHS and QLFS, it finds a higher youth population than the two surveys. Over time, in 2017 the QLFS, Q4 reveals a total population figure of about 56.2 million, with roughly 15.4 million of this population being youths (27.3%). On the other hand, the 2017 GHS reveal a total population figure of around 56.5 million, of which 15.1 million are youths (26.8%). Looking at the two surveys we have for 2011 and 2017, the GHS and the QLFS, total population increased from about 51.6 million and 51.8 million to 56.5 million and 56.2 million. The youth population increased from about 14.7 million to more than 15 million. Over the 6-year period, these two surveys show that the proportion of youths to total population decreased slightly from more than 28% in 2011 to almost 27% in 2017.

Narrowing down to the sample of NEET youths in 2011, the GHS finds a higher figure of 5.6 million compared to QLFS[17], 5.2 million and census, 5.4 million. By 2017, the sample of NEET youth had increased to 5.7 million based on the QLFS and 5.9 million based on the GHS. Thus, all the surveys show that the number of NEET youths between the ages of 15 to 29 in South Africa is above 5.2 million and increasing. In addition, all the surveys reveal a NEET rate[18] that is persistently above 35%. The proportions for NEET youths by gender, race, location, age group and education level are also roughly similar across all the surveys. However, the proportions for NEET youths by unemployment status vary considerably across the surveys, especially for discouraged job seekers and inactive youths. With the exception of 2011 GHS, all the other surveys show higher proportions of inactive youths than discouraged job seekers. Interestingly, the proportions of unemployed NEET youths are comparable across the surveys with 42. 5% (census), 43.6% and 45.9% (QLFS) as well as 42% and 46.3% (GHS).

Thus, despite asking similar questions for some domains, the resulting estimates from these surveys vary. Stats SA acknowledges the existence of these differences and gives a number of reasons[19]. First, the sample sizes of the surveys vary considerably, with GHS having the smallest. Second, the reference period for collecting the information varies across the surveys. For example, whereas, the census uses a fixed reference period (the week before the census night), the GHS and QLFS employ a moving

[16] For more details on the weights see Stats SA census 2011 and QLFS 2011 and 2017 reports.

[17] To derive the NEET variable, we need the number of youths who are students/scholars. However, the 2011 QLFS does not have a question on current educational attendance, which enable us to know the number of students/scholars. We can get the number of students/scholars in the surveys by looking at the reasons why someone is inactive. The results show that about 40.9% of the youths aged 15-29 are students/scholars, a figure close to 38.4% based on GHS and 39.6% from the Census.

[18] The NEET rate is calculated by dividing the total number of youths who are not in employment, education or training (NEET Youth) by the total population of youths with information on education attendance and employment status (see Eurofound, 2012). The number of total youths used here is different from the Total Youth numbers reported in Tables 14 for Census and GHS as some youths in these surveys had missing information on current education attendance or employment status. Youths with missing information were 412 950 for 2011 Census and70 039 for 2017 GHS.

[19] We thank Niel Roux from Stats SA for giving us insights on the existence of the differences across surveys and the main reasons for these differences.

reference period (the week prior to the date of the interview) over a three-month period. As a result, while the GHS and QLFS, Q2 surveys include information for every month in the April - June quarter, the census only included information for the first week of October.

Finally, despite using the same master sample, some of the surveys by Stats SA like the census and GHS are not aimed primarily at collecting comprehensive labour market information. Rather than interviewing the actual individual, these surveys tend to use proxy respondents who may or may not have all the correct information on each of the household members. This might explain the considerable variation we found in the proportions of discouraged job seekers and inactive youths. While a household member can easily know that another household member is unemployed, it is more difficult for him or her to know whether that individual would be discouraged or inactive; in other words, this information is best provided by the actual individual. The QLFS is therefore considered the most reliable source of labour market information in the country (Stats SA, 2011): rather than using proxy respondents, the QLFS interviews the actual individuals on their labour market status. In addition, it uses a rotational structure, which assures that individuals give more accurate information as their households remain in the sample for a while. In contrast, apart from using proxy respondents, the sample of surveys like the GHS changes every quarter.

While acknowledging the variations in these surveys and the fact that QLFS is considered better than Census and GHS in determining labour market statistics, the surveys clearly show that the NEET youth group is predominantly female, black, urban, with a matric or matric equivalent, and is concentrated mostly in the older age groups. Overall, we considered the surveys comparable as they reveal roughly similar descriptive statistics and give roughly similar estimates of NEET youths in South Africa. The comparability of these surveys is also confirmed using a multivariate analysis that looks into the correlates of being NEET among black youths. In the analysis, we check whether we can reach similar conclusions as those reported in Table 12 using GHS data if we re-estimate equation (1) using 2017 QLFS, Q4 data and similar individual (age, education level, marital status, health status, and gender) and community (urban dummy and provincial dummies) factors.

The results based on QLFS data are presented in table 14. Those results show that except for the provincial dummies for Limpopo (which is now significant and negative), Free State and Gauteng (now insignificant), all the other estimates in Table 14 are signed similarly to those in Table 12. While the magnitude of the individual and urban factor estimates reported in the two tables differ, the differences fall within comparable ranges and do lead to similar conclusions. More specifically, for the full sample and separately for males and females, the results show that age and poor health are positively associated with being NEET, while education and residing in urban areas are negatively associated. Looking at the gender dynamics, as before, being female is positively associated with being NEET. The results further show a stronger association between NEET and age as well as NEET and education among females and a stronger association between poor health and NEET among males. Thus, whether we use GHS or QLFS, it is evident that for both males and females being NEET among black youths is associated with individual factors like age, education level, marital status, health status and gender as well as community factors (urban dummy and provincial dummies).

**Table 14: Factors associated with being NEET, 2017 QLFS, Q4**

| | (1) Full | (2) Male | (3) Female | (4) Full | (5) Male | (6) Female |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 20 – 24 years | 0.369*** | 0.331*** | 0.405*** | 0.370*** | 0.332*** | 0.407*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.012) | (0.012) | (0.009) | (0.012) | (0.012) |
| 25 – 29 years | 0.432*** | 0.387*** | 0.482*** | 0.431*** | 0.386*** | 0.482*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.013) | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.013) |
| Any tertiary education | -0.133*** | -0.085*** | -0.182*** | -0.127*** | -0.078*** | -0.176*** |
| | (0.018) | (0.028) | (0.024) | (0.018) | (0.028) | (0.024) |
| Married | 0.003 | -0.236*** | 0.110*** | 0.007 | -0.230*** | 0.111*** |
| | (0.014) | (0.022) | (0.017) | (0.014) | (0.022) | (0.017) |
| Poor health | 0.509*** | 0.582*** | 0.421*** | 0.504*** | 0.573*** | 0.420*** |
| | (0.015) | (0.018) | (0.024) | (0.016) | (0.018) | (0.024) |
| Female | 0.109*** | | | 0.109*** | | |
| | (0.007) | | | (0.007) | | |
| Urban | -0.053*** | -0.038*** | -0.064*** | -0.078*** | -0.062*** | -0.086*** |
| | (0.007) | (0.010) | (0.010) | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.013) |
| Eastern Cape | | | | 0.057*** | 0.100*** | 0.024 |
| | | | | (0.021) | (0.029) | (0.028) |
| Northern Cape | | | | 0.079*** | 0.069* | 0.104** |
| | | | | (0.029) | (0.041) | (0.040) |
| Free State | | | | 0.032 | 0.044 | 0.028 |
| | | | | (0.022) | (0.031) | (0.030) |
| KwaZulu-Natal | | | | 0.038* | 0.072*** | 0.014 |
| | | | | (0.020) | (0.027) | (0.027) |
| North West | | | | 0.059*** | 0.088*** | 0.047 |
| | | | | (0.023) | (0.032) | (0.031) |
| Gauteng | | | | 0.063*** | 0.095*** | 0.037 |
| | | | | (0.019) | (0.026) | (0.026) |
| Mpumalanga | | | | 0.016 | 0.021 | 0.023 |
| | | | | (0.021) | (0.029) | (0.029) |
| Limpopo | | | | -0.053** | -0.028 | -0.064** |
| | | | | (0.021) | (0.029) | (0.029) |
| Constant | 0.095*** | 0.124*** | 0.172*** | 0.077*** | 0.080*** | 0.168*** |
| | (0.007) | (0.008) | (0.009) | (0.020) | (0.027) | (0.027) |
| Observations | 14,796 | 7,289 | 7,507 | 14,796 | 7,289 | 7,507 |
| R-squared | 0.186 | 0.162 | 0.212 | 0.191 | 0.170 | 0.217 |
| F | 864.5 | 587.7 | 512.5 | 415.2 | 251.1 | 226.7 |

Robust standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

**Table 15: Overview of NEET Youth in South Africa, 2011 Census and GHS**

| | Indicator | | 2011 Census | | 2011 GHS | | 2011 QLFS | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Total number | Percentage | Total number | Percentage | Total number | Percentage |
| **Total SA population:** | Total Population | | 50 961 621 | | 51 579 599 | | 51 839 217 | |
| | Total Youth (15-29 yrs.) | | 15 064 264 | 29.6% | 14 693 728 | 28.5% | 14 748 169 | 28.4 |
| | NEET Youth (15-29 yrs.) | | 5 443 036 | 37.2% | 5 648 065 | 38.7% | 5 246 834 | 35.6 |
| **Of those young people who are NEET:** | Unemployed | | 2 314 296 | 42.5% | 2 372 909 | 42.0% | 2 285 944 | 43.6 |
| | Discouraged worker seekers | | 746 921 | 13.7% | 1 786 583 | 31.6% | 1 228 164 | 23.4 |
| | Inactive | | 2 381 819 | 43.7% | 1 488 573 | 26.4% | 1 732 726 | 33.0 |
| | Gender: | Male | 2 392 353 | 44.0% | 2 495 472 | 44.2% | 2 279 961 | 43.5 |
| | | Female | 3 050 683 | 56.0% | 3 152 593 | 55.8% | 2 966 873 | 56.6 |
| | Race: | Black | 4 795 444 | 88.6% | 4 962 702 | 87.9% | 4 656 528 | 88.8 |
| | | Coloured | 429 521 | 7.9% | 482 743 | 8.6% | 400 321 | 7.6 |
| | | Asian/Indian | 76 124 | 1.4% | 72 097 | 1.3% | 68 333 | 1.3 |
| | | White | 114 533 | 2.1% | 130 523 | 2.3% | 121 652 | 2.3 |
| | Geo_type : | Rural | 2 137 473 | 39.3% | 2 443 696 | 43.3% | 2 255 544 | 43.0 |
| | | Urban | 3 305 562 | 60.7% | 3 204 370 | 56.7% | 2 991 290 | 57.0 |
| | Age category: | 15 -19 | 779 793 | 14.3% | 810 330 | 14.4% | 645 777 | 12.3 |
| | | 20 – 24 | 2 412 904 | 44.3% | 2 536 366 | 44.9% | 2 312 312 | 44.1 |
| | | 25 – 29 | 2 250 339 | 41.3% | 2 301 369 | 40.8% | 2 288 744 | 43.6 |
| | Education level: | Grade 9 only | 476 426 | 11.4% | 591 652 | 13.4% | 600 463 | 14.5 |
| | | Grade 10 and 11 only | 1 629 117 | 38.9% | 1 715 493 | 38.9% | 1 655 603 | 40.0 |
| | | Matric | 1 943 751 | 46.4% | 1 889 983 | 42.8% | 1 639 262 | 39.6 |
| | | Any tertiary [20] | 141 988 | 3.4% | 215 006 | 4.9% | 244 508 | 5.9 |

[20] Youth with "Any tertiary" education are those youths with at least 13 years of education; these youths have the following qualifications: 13 years - Certificate with grade 12/ STD 10, diploma with grade 12/ STD 10, N5/NTC 5, N6/NTC 6, Higher Diploma; 15 years - Post Higher Diploma (Masters; Doctoral Diploma), Bachelors Degree; 16 years - Bachelors Degree and Post Graduate Diploma, Honours Degree and 18 years - Higher Degree (Masters/Phd).

**Table 16: Overview of NEET Youth in South Africa, 2017 QLFS, Q4 and 2017 GHS**

| | Indicator | | QLFS, Q4, 2017 | | GHS 2017 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Total number | Percentage | Total number | Percentage |
| **Total SA population:** | Total Population | | 56 175 482 | | 56 521 948 | |
| | Total Youth (15-29 yrs.) | | 15 410 056 | 27.4% | 15 141 577 | 26.8% |
| | NEET Youth (15-29 yrs.) | | 5 677 914 | 36.9% | 5 927 101 | 39.3% |
| **Of those young people who are NEET:** | Unemployed | | 2 598 419 | 45.8% | 2 890 829 | 46.3% |
| | Discouraged work seekers | | 1 146 678 | 20.2% | 1 452 340 | 15.4% |
| | Inactive | | 1 932 817 | 34.0% | 1 450 946 | 38.3% |
| | Gender: | Male | 2 504 006 | 44.1% | 2 567 943 | 43.3% |
| | | Female | 3 173 907 | 55.9% | 3 359 158 | 56.7% |
| | Race: | Black | 5 009 979 | 88.2% | 5 283 194 | 89.1% |
| | | Coloured | 457 209 | 8.1% | 482 641 | 8.1% |
| | | Asian/Indian | 79 499 | 1.4% | 58 303 | 1.0% |
| | | White | 131 227 | 2.3% | 102 962 | 1.7% |
| | Geo type : | Rural | 2 340 726 | 41.2% | 2 455 184 | 41.4% |
| | | Urban | 3 337 188 | 58.8% | 3 471 917 | 58.6% |
| | Age: | 15 -19 | 644 622 | 11.4% | 688 165 | 11.6% |
| | | 20 – 24 | 2 423 326 | 42.7% | 2 610 215 | 44.0% |
| | | 25 – 29 | 2 609 965 | 46.0% | 2 628 720 | 44.4% |
| | Education level: | Grade 9 only | 543 171 | 11.5% | 601 498 | 12.1 % |
| | | Grade 10 and 11 only | 1 835 720 | 38.9% | 1 880 758 | 37.8% |
| | | Matric | 2 038 375 | 43.2% | 2 162 477 | 43.5% |
| | | Any tertiary [21] | 305 525 | 6.5% | 325 900 | 6.6% |

[21] Youth with "Any tertiary" education are those youths with at least 13 years of education; these youths have the following qualifications: 13 years - Certificate with grade 12/ STD 10, diploma with grade 12/ STD 10, N5/NTC 5, N6/NTC 6, Higher Diplodma; 15 years - Post Higher Diploma (Masters; Doctoral Diploma), Bachelors Degree; 16 years - Bachelors Degree and Post Graduate Diploma, Honours Degree and 18 years - Higher Degree (Masters/Phd).

**Table 17: Overview of NEET Youth (15 - 24) in South Africa, QLFS Q2 data for 2013 and 2018**

| | Indicator | | 2013 | | 2018 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Total number | Percentage | Total number | Percentage |
| **Total SA population:** | Total Population | | 52 892 224 | | 56 532 629 | |
| | Total Youth (15-24 yrs.) | | 10 194 202 | 19.3 | 10 311 140 | 18.2 |
| | NEET Youth (15-24 yrs.) | | 3 041 178 | 29.8 | 3 067 524 | 29.8 |
| **Of those young people who are NEET:** | Unemployed | | 1 355 525 | 44.6 | 1 331 226 | 43.4 |
| | Discouraged job-seeker | | 706580 | 23.2 | 759 892 | 24.8 |
| | Inactive | | 979 072 | 32.2 | 976 405 | 31.8 |
| | Gender: | Male | 1 236 504 | 44.8 | 1 403 113 | 45.7 |
| | | Female | 1 678 673 | 55.2 | 1 664 411 | 54.3 |
| | Race: | Black | 2 664 671 | 87.6 | 2 674 728 | 87.2 |
| | | Coloured | 268 842 | 8.8 | 277 700 | 9.1 |
| | | Asian/Indian | 36 993 | 1.2 | 39 147 | 1.3 |
| | | White | 70 671 | 2.3 | 75 949 | 2.5 |
| | Geo_type : | Rural | 1 278 123 | 42.0 | 1 329 828 | 3.4 |
| | | Urban | 1 763 055 | 58.0 | 1 737 696 | 56.7 |
| | Age category: | 15 -19 | 582 057 | 19.1 | 598 289 | 19.5 |
| | | 20 - 24 | 2 459 120 | 80.9 | 2 469 235 | 80.5 |
| | Education level: | Grade 9 only | 305 340 | 12.8 | 292 120 | 11.6 |
| | | Grade 10 and 11 only | 875 107 | 36.7 | 917 819 | 36.3 |
| | | Matric | 1 085 233 | 45.5 | 1 198 886 | 47.4 |
| | | Any tertiary [22] | 118 716 | 5.0 | 118 763 | 4.7 |

Notes: Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

**Table 18: Overview of NEET Youth in Western Cape, QLFS Q2 data 2018**

| | Indicator | | Total number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total SA population:** | Total Population | | 6 575 705 | |
| | Total Youth | | 1 664 022 | 25.3 |
| | NEET Youth (15-29 yrs.) | | 503 047 | 30.2 |
| **Of those young people who are NEET:** | Unemployed | | 372 080 | 74.0 |
| | Inactive | | 130 967 | 26.0 |
| | Gender: | Male | 204 836 | 40.7 |
| | | Female | 298 211 | 59.3 |
| | Race: | Black | 204 627 | 40.7 |
| | | Coloured | 271 807 | 54.0 |
| | | Asian/Indian | 2 192 | 0.4 |
| | | White | 24 422 | 4.9 |
| | Geo_type : | Rural | 18 025 | 3.6 |
| | | Urban | 485 022 | 96.4 |
| | Age category: | 15 -19 | 73 985 | 14.7 |
| | | 20 - 24 | 235 442 | 46.8 |
| | | 25 - 29 | 193 620 | 38.5 |
| | Education level: | Grade 9 only | 55 007 | 13.7 |
| | | Grade 10 and 11 only | 159 538 | 39.7 |
| | | Matric | 165 589 | 41.2 |
| | | Any tertiary | 21 550 | 5.4 |

[22] Youth with "Any tertiary" education are those youths with at least 13 years of education; these youths have the following qualifications: 13 years - Certificate with grade 12/ STD 10, diploma with grade 12/ STD 10, N5/NTC 5, N6/NTC 6, Higher Diploma; 15 years - Post Higher Diploma (Masters; Doctoral Diploma), Bachelors Degree; 16 years - Bachelors Degree and Post Graduate Diploma, Honours Degree and 18 years - Higher Degree (Masters/Phd).

**Table 19: Overview of NEET Youth in Eastern Cape, QLFS Q2 data 2018**

| | Indicator | | Total number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total SA population:** | Total Population | | 6 809 706 | |
| | Total Youth | | 1 918 747 | 28.2 |
| | NEET Youth (15-29 yrs.) | | 762 810 | 39.8 |
| **Of those young people who are NEET:** | Unemployed | | 559 587 | 73.4 |
| | Inactive | | 203 223 | 26.6 |
| | Gender: | Male | 373 377 | 48.9 |
| | | Female | 389 433 | 51.1 |
| | Race: | Black | 701 720 | 92.0 |
| | | Coloured | 47 707 | 6.3 |
| | | Asian/Indian | 2 327 | 0.3 |
| | | White | 11 056 | 1.4 |
| | Geo_type : | Rural | 481 678 | 63.1 |
| | | Urban | 281 132 | 36.9 |
| | Age category: | 15 -19 | 104 213 | 13.7 |
| | | 20 - 24 | 311 019 | 40.8 |
| | | 25 - 29 | 347 578 | 45.6 |
| | Education level: | Grade 9 only | 93 052 | 16.1 |
| | | Grade 10 and 11 only | 271 969 | 47.2 |
| | | Matric | 170 914 | 29.6 |
| | | Any tertiary | 40 868 | 7.1 |

**Table 20: Overview of NEET Youth in Northern Cape, QLFS Q2 data 2018**

| | Indicator | | Total number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total SA population:** | Total Population | | 1 211 385 | |
| | Total Youth | | 327 868 | 27.1 |
| | NEET Youth (15-29 yrs.) | | 138 977 | 42.4 |
| **Of those young people who are NEET:** | Unemployed | | 103 193 | 74.3 |
| | Inactive | | 35 783 | 25.7 |
| | Gender: | Male | 63 259 | 45.5 |
| | | Female | 75 718 | 54.5 |
| | Race: | Black | 81 278 | 58.5 |
| | | Coloured | 54 406 | 39.1 |
| | | Asian/Indian | 0 | 0 |
| | | White | 3 293 | 2.4 |
| | Geo_type : | Rural | 52 032 | 37.4 |
| | | Urban | 86 944 | 62.6 |
| | Age category: | 15 -19 | 21 370 | 15.4 |
| | | 20 - 24 | 57 551 | 41.4 |
| | | 25 - 29 | 60 055 | 43.2 |
| | Education level: | Grade 9 only | 16 880 | 16.1 |
| | | Grade 10 and 11 only | 42 824 | 40.9 |
| | | Matric | 39 363 | 37.6 |
| | | Any tertiary | 5 546 | 5.3 |

**Table 21: Overview of NEET Youth in Free State, QLFS Q2 data 2018**

| | Indicator | | Total number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total SA population:** | Total Population | | 2 772 533 | |
| | Total Youth | | 773 939 | 27.9 |
| | NEET Youth (15-29 yrs.) | | 278 551 | 36.0 |
| **Of those young people who are NEET:** | Unemployed | | 229 618 | 82.4 |
| | Inactive | | 48 933 | 17.6 |
| | Gender: | Male | 129 619 | 46.5 |
| | | Female | 148 932 | 53.5 |
| | Race: | Black | 261 502 | 93.9 |
| | | Coloured | 12 387 | 4.4 |
| | | Asian/Indian | 1 867 | 0.7 |
| | | White | 2 795 | 1.0 |
| | Geo_type : | Rural | 32 633 | 11.7 |
| | | Urban | 245 919 | 88.3 |
| | Age category: | 15 -19 | 29 090 | 10.4 |
| | | 20 - 24 | 116 874 | 42.0 |
| | | 25 - 29 | 132 587 | 47.6 |
| | Education level: | Grade 9 only | 34 822 | 15.4 |
| | | Grade 10 and 11 only | 70 419 | 31.0 |
| | | Matric | 104 291 | 46.0 |
| | | Any tertiary | 17 302 | 7.6 |

**Table 22: Overview of NEET Youth in KwaZulu-Natal, QLFS Q2 data 2018**

| | Indicator | | Total number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total SA population:** | Total Population | | 11 025 159 | |
| | Total Youth | | 3 131 396 | 28.4 |
| | NEET Youth (15-29 yrs.) | | 1 234 197 | 39.4 |
| **Of those young people who are NEET:** | Unemployed | | 863 156 | 69.9 |
| | Inactive | | 371 040 | 30.1 |
| | Gender: | Male | 539 911 | 43.7 |
| | | Female | 694 286 | 56.3 |
| | Race: | Black | 1 155 682 | 93.6 |
| | | Coloured | 13 454 | 1.1 |
| | | Asian/Indian | 36 056 | 2.9 |
| | | White | 29 005 | 2.4 |
| | Geo_type : | Rural | 763 270 | 61.8 |
| | | Urban | 470 926 | 38.2 |
| | Age category: | 15 -19 | 116 819 | 9.5 |
| | | 20 - 24 | 569 667 | 46.2 |
| | | 25 - 29 | 547 711 | 44.4 |
| | Education level: | Grade 9 only | 90 780 | 8.5 |
| | | Grade 10 and 11 only | 427 909 | 39.8 |
| | | Matric | 491 599 | 45.8 |
| | | Any tertiary | 63 942 | 6.0 |

**Table 23: Overview of NEET Youth in North West, QLFS Q2 data 2018**

| | Indicator | | Total number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total SA population:** | Total Population | | 3 852 683 | |
| | Total Youth | | 1 054 903 | 27.4 |
| | NEET Youth (15-29 yrs.) | | 444789 | 42.2 |
| **Of those young people who are NEET:** | Unemployed | | 322 084 | 72.4 |
| | Inactive | | 122 706 | 27.6 |
| | Gender: | Male | 194 285 | 43.7 |
| | | Female | 250 504 | 56.3 |
| | Race: | Black | 431 270 | 97.0 |
| | | Ccoloured | 3 934 | 0.9 |
| | | Asian/Indian | 0 | 0 |
| | | Wwhite | 9 585 | 2.2 |
| | Geo_type : | Rural | 254 993 | 57.3 |
| | | Urban | 189 796 | 42.7 |
| | Age category: | 15 -19 | 54 418 | 12.2 |
| | | 20 - 24 | 216 519 | 48.7 |
| | | 25 - 29 | 173 853 | 39.1 |
| | Education level: | Grade 9 only | 43 510 | 12.7 |
| | | Grade 10 and 11 only | 129 612 | 37.8 |
| | | Matric | 146 931 | 42.9 |
| | | Any tertiary | 22 567 | 6.6 |

**Table 24: Overview of NEET Youth in Gauteng, QLFS Q2 data 2018**

| | Indicator | | Total number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total SA population:** | Total Population | | 14 054 363 | |
| | Total Youth | | 3 534 735 | 25.2 |
| | NEET Youth (15-29 yrs.) | | 1 201 852 | 34.0 |
| **Of those young people who are NEET:** | Unemployed | | 1 013 540 | 84.3 |
| | Inactive | | 188 312 | 15.7 |
| | Gender: | Male | 590 003 | 49.1 |
| | | Female | 611 849 | 50.9 |
| | Race: | Black | 1 089 594 | 90.7 |
| | | Coloured | 413 16 | 3.4 |
| | | Asian/Indian | 19 956 | 1.7 |
| | | White | 50 986 | 4.2 |
| | Geo_type : | Rural | 39 609 | 3.3 |
| | | Urban | 1 162 244 | 96.7 |
| | Age category: | 15 -19 | 97 642 | 8.1 |
| | | 20 - 24 | 474 046 | 39.4 |
| | | 25 - 29 | 630 164 | 52.4 |
| | Education level: | Grade 9 only | 59 394 | 5.4 |
| | | Grade 10 and 11 only | 398 597 | 36.2 |
| | | Matric | 587 083 | 53.3 |
| | | Any tertiary | 57 275 | 5.2 |

**Table 25: Overview of NEET Youth in Mpumalanga, QLFS Q2 data 2018**

| | Indicator | | Total number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total SA population:** | Total Population | | 4 389 147 | |
| | Total Youth | | 1 300 881 | 29.6 |
| | NEET Youth (15-29 yrs.) | | 497 482 | 38.2 |
| **Of those young people who are NEET:** | Unemployed | | 425 078 | 85.4 |
| | Inactive | | 72 404 | 14.6 |
| | Gender: | Male | 220 755 | 44.4 |
| | | Female | 276 727 | 55.6 |
| | Race: | Black | 485 820 | 97.7 |
| | | Coloured | 0 | 0 |
| | | Asian/Indian | 0 | 0 |
| | | White | 11 663 | 2.3 |
| | Geo_type : | Rural | 268 813 | 54.0 |
| | | Urban | 228 669 | 46.0 |
| | Age category: | 15 -19 | 57 118 | 11.5 |
| | | 20 - 24 | 234 639 | 47.2 |
| | | 25 - 29 | 205 725 | 41.4 |
| | Education level: | Grade 9 only | 43 421 | 10.3 |
| | | Grade 10 and 11 only | 141 274 | 33.7 |
| | | Matric | 210 827 | 50.2 |
| | | Any tertiary | 24 129 | 5.7 |

**Table 26: Overview of NEET Youth in Limpopo, QLFS Q2 data 2018**

| | Indicator | | Total number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total SA population:** | Total Population | | 5 841 948 | |
| | Total Youth | | 1 738 320 | 29.8 |
| | NEET Youth (15-29 yrs.) | | 568 474 | 32.7 |
| **Of those young people who are NEET:** | Unemployed | | 378 512 | 66.6 |
| | Inactive | | 189 962 | 33.4 |
| | Gender: | Male | 230 308 | 40.5 |
| | | Female | 338 166 | 59.5 |
| | Race: | Black | 559 833 | 98.5 |
| | | Coloured | 2 571 | 0.5 |
| | | Asian/Indian | 2 665 | 0.5 |
| | | White | 3 405 | 0.6 |
| | Geo_type : | Rural | 461 529 | 81.2 |
| | | Urban | 106 945 | 18.8 |
| | Age category: | 15 -19 | 43 633 | 7.7 |
| | | 20 - 24 | 253 479 | 44.6 |
| | | 25 - 29 | 271 362 | 47.7 |
| | Education level: | Grade 9 only | 57 096 | 12.1 |
| | | Grade 10 and 11 only | 200 537 | 42.5 |
| | | Matric | 168 580 | 35.8 |
| | | Any tertiary | 45 272 | 9.6 |

**Table 27: NEET Youth, New Entrant by age and education attainment**

| | | Total number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age Groups | 15-19 | 131 805 | 8.1 |
| | 20-24 | 818 097 | 50.3 |
| | 25-29 | 675 022 | 41.5 |
| **Subtotal** | | **1 624 924** | **100** |
| Education level | Grade 9 | 88 145 | 6.0 |
| | Grade 10/11 | 503 419 | 34.4 |
| | Matric/ matric equivalent | 728 527 | 49.7 |
| | Any tertiary | 145 223 | 9.9 |
| **Subtotal** | | **1 465 314** | **100** |

Note: Notes: Sample restricted to New Entrant NEET youths aged 15 to 29 years who are strictly unemployed (unemployed, searching unemployed). With a total number of 1 624 924 New Entrant NEET youths who are strictly unemployed, a proportion of these youths had missing information on education, leading to a lower subtotal of 1 465 314. Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

**Table 28: NEET Youth, New Entrant by age and education attainment**

| **Education level** | **15-19 years** | | **20-24 years** | | **25-29 years** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Total number** | **Percentage** | **Total number** | **Percentage** | **Total number** | **Percentage** |
| Grade 9 | 11 076 | 10.0 | 40 888 | 5.5 | 36 182 | 5.9 |
| Grade 10/11 | 22 359 | 20.2 | 268 947 | 36.1 | 212 113 | 34.8 |
| Matric/ matric equivalent | 75 473 | 68.2 | 369 837 | 49.6 | 283 217 | 46.5 |
| Any tertiary | 1 795 | 1.6 | 65 517 | 8.8 | 77 911 | 12.8 |
| **Subtotal** | 110 703 | 100 | 745 189 | 100 | 609 423 | 100 |

Note: Sample restricted to New Entrant NEET youths aged 15 to 29 years who are strictly unemployed (unemployed searching unemployed). With a total number of 1 624 924 New Entrant NEET youths who are strictly unemployed, a proportion of these youths had missing information on education, leading to a lower subtotal. Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

**Table 29: Youth NEETs, Inactive sub-groups**

| **Inactive Group** | **Total number** | **Percentage** |
|---|---|---|
| Voluntarily not working | 155 146 | 41.7 |
| Too young to work | 90 032 | 24.2 |
| Pregnancy | 39 859 | 10.7 |
| Lack of money to pay for transport to look for work | 86 634 | 23.3 |
| Total | 371 671 | 100 |

Note: Notes: Sample restricted to youths aged 15 to 29 years. Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

**Table 30: Youth NEETs Inactive sub-groups by age, sex and educational attainment**

| | 15-19 | 20-24 | 25-29 | Male | Female | Gr 9 | Gr 10/11 | Matric | Any tertiary |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Voluntarily not working | 22.2 | 44.7 | 33.0 | 55.9 | 44.1 | 24.9 | 42.2 | 30.6 | 2.3 |
| Too young to work | 68.0 | 27.2 | 4.8 | 45.3 | 54.7 | 9.9 | 46.9 | 43.2 | 0.0 |
| Pregnancy | 40.8 | 36.5 | 22.7 | 4.6 | 95.4 | 5.5 | 44.2 | 43.2 | 7.1 |
| Lack of money to pay for transport | 5.9 | 51.4 | 42.8 | 48.4 | 51.6 | 9.3 | 45.8 | 42.3 | 2.5 |

Notes: Sample restricted to youths aged 15 to 29 years. Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

**Table 31: Geographical distribution of Youth NEETs Sub-groups by Geo type (rural/urban)**

| | Rural | Urban | SA |
|---|---|---|---|
| Short term unemployed | 11.8 | 20.3 | 16.7 |
| Long term unemployed | 21.6 | 40.5 | 32.6 |
| Discouraged | 34.4 | 17.8 | 24.8 |
| Seasonal workers | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| Household reasons | 18.6 | 11.0 | 14.2 |
| Health reasons | 5.2 | 3.9 | 4.4 |
| Other Inactive | 8.0 | 6.1 | 6.9 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| % of NEETs | 42.1 | 57.9 | 100 |

Notes: Sample restricted to youths aged 15 to 29 years. The table shows the distribution of NEET youths by geo type by different unemployment and inactive sub-groups. Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

**Table 32: Overview of NEET Youth by household grant status, GHS data 2017**

| | Indicator | | Total number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total SA population:** | Total Population | | 56 521 948 | |
| | Total Youth | | 15 141 577 | 26.8 |
| | NEET Youth (15-29 yrs.) | | 5 927 101 | 39.3 |
| **Of those young people who are NEET:** | Receiving a grant | | 4 296 202 | 72.5 |
| **Of those young NEETs who receive a grant:** | Gender: | Male | 1 735 168 | 40.4 |
| | | Female | 2 561 034 | 59.6 |
| | Age category: | 15 -19 | 513 437 | 12.0 |
| | | 20 - 24 | 1 928 406 | 44.9 |
| | | 25 - 29 | 1 854 359 | 43.2 |
| | Education level: | Grade 9 only | 460 749 | 13.0 |
| | | Grade 10 and 11 only | 1 416 112 | 39.9 |
| | | Matric | 1 584 756 | 44.6 |
| | | Any tertiary | 88 114 | 2.5 |

Notes: Sample restricted to youths aged 15 to 29 years. Point estimates weighted using personal weights.

SALDRU

Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit

The Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) conducts research directed at improving the well-being of South Africa's poor. It was established in 1975. Over the next two decades the unit's research played a central role in documenting the human costs of apartheid. Key projects from this period included the Farm Labour Conference (1976), the Economics of Health Care Conference (1978), and the Second Carnegie Enquiry into Poverty and Development in South Africa (1983-86). At the urging of the African National Congress, from 1992-1994 SALDRU and the World Bank coordinated the Project for Statistics on Living Standards and Development (PSLSD). This project provide baseline data for the implementation of post-apartheid socio-economic policies through South Africa's first non-racial national sample survey.

In the post-apartheid period, SALDRU has continued to gather data and conduct research directed at informing and assessing anti-poverty policy. In line with its historical contribution, SALDRU's researchers continue to conduct research detailing changing patterns of well-being in South Africa and assessing the impact of government policy on the poor. Current research work falls into the following research themes: post-apartheid poverty; employment and migration dynamics; family support structures in an era of rapid social change; public works and public infrastructure programmes, financial strategies of the poor; common property resources and the poor. Key survey projects include the Langeberg Integrated Family Survey (1999), the Khayelitsha/Mitchell's Plain Survey (2000), the ongoing Cape Area Panel Study (2001-) and the Financial Diaries Project.

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