

 *life choices* ANNUAL REPORT | 2015

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**INVESTING IN YOUTH TO  
TACKLE INEQUALITY**

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## OUR ETHOS

# WE BELIEVE IN YOUTH

## OUR VALUES

- **LEADERSHIP**  
We are up to a good challenge. We tackle inequality.
- **LOVE**  
We believe the solution to inequality to be a “matter” of the heart. Youth must not only be loved, but know that they are loved.
- **EXCELLENCE**  
We strive for excellence in every department of the organisation. We have the courage to change.
- **PARTNERSHIPS**  
We try hard to be leaders in our sector. We know this can only be achieved by learning from others and working together.
- **ACCOUNTABILITY**  
No excuses, 100% responsibility.
- **SUSTAINABILITY**  
We believe in the value of the non-profit sector we work in. Yet, we understand that only by running ourselves as a business can we serve effectively.
- **RESILIENCE**  
When we get knocked down, we get up and try again. We learn from our mistakes and we love the challenge.



## THE CONTENTS

- 2** Message from the Managing Director
- 3** A Focus on Youth
- 6** Family Affairs
- 13** Health4Life
- 19** Leaders' Quest
- 25** New Ventures Studio
- 33** Annual Financial Statements
- 35** Partners
- 37** Long-Term Sustainability Strategy



“Since I joined Life Choices they made me want to strive for more, every day I want to do more. When people believe in me so much, I can believe in myself.”

## MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the Salesian Life Choices 10th Annual Report to you.

If I look back at 2015, two events stand out that summarise the year. We celebrated the bicentenary of our founder St John Bosco. It was a jubilee year for the entire Salesian Movement which spans across 132 countries. A year of reflection on Don Bosco's charisma, spirituality and efforts for the good of the young, especially those who are most in need.

Looking at Salesians' history and their present, we were humbled and inspired not just by Don Bosco's life but by the thousands of people, locally and overseas, that work towards this movement in the most extreme conditions.

We re-committed ourselves to the Salesian's charisma; dedication to understanding the social situations involving youth and continue working with the most vulnerable, believing in their capabilities and unlocking their potential so that they can determine their own destiny.

The second event was the first step of Salesian Life Choices to become a social enterprise. We believe we can only maximise our social impact if we transform from an unsustainable non-profit approach to a business centric model. We began re-inventing ourselves and we established our first long-term income generating activity - New Ventures Studio.

With this report I wish to acknowledge and thank everyone who has been involved with Salesian Life Choices for the past year and has supported us on this journey.

Together we invested in youth to be able to make choices that can change the world.

Because we are crazy enough to know that one step at a time, one person at a time, we can tackle inequality.

Sofia Neves

# A FOCUS ON YOUTH AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISRUPT INEQUALITY

Young people in South Africa experience multiple dimensions of deprivation and the need to intervene in this crucial stage to disrupt the intergenerational transmission of poverty is critical.

In South Africa - Africans, females, children and youth are over-represented among the poor. Sixty-five percent of children and 59% of young people are living below the upper-bound poverty line, while only 43% of the adult population fall below this line.

However, poverty is not only experienced in the form of financial deprivation but also through limited access to public goods such as (good quality) education, health care, clean water, sanitation, "proper" housing, and so on.

Poverty is about deprivation in many dimensions, dimensions (or "vulnerabilities") that are often interrelated: for example, ill health can compromise educational outcomes, which in turn determine employment chances and income. Similarly, low income may affect mental well-being, which may influence one's ability to work, and income. All are key mechanisms in the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

These poverty dynamics if left unchecked, are likely to have a negative influence on the lives of the next generation because they will be transmitted from one generation to the next. This happens as older generations transmit different "capitals" to the younger ones, such as:

- **Financial Capital:** assets, but also debt, land, cash & so on.
- **Human Capital:** levels of education, but also health or illness coping strategies.
- **Cultural Capital:** knowledge of systems such as education and the labour market.
- **Social Capital:** networks between individuals and groups that allow people to collaborate.
- **Symbolic Capital:** status, place in society.

Transfer of these capitals is influenced by a complex set of factors, both within and outside an individual's household.

At an individual level, physical and mental health, for instance, may be transmitted across the generations through various mechanisms. In South Africa for example, African women are particularly vulnerable to depression as a result of the combination of high levels of poverty, unemployment and violence. If left untreated, their adolescent children too may suffer from mental disorders, and depression increases also the risk of drop-out amongst school going girls.

At the household level, resources play a significant role. A child born in a poorer family is more likely to have restricted opportunities throughout his or her life, compared to a child born in a wealthier household. The latter will have better access to services, resources, knowledge and support, all of which impact on the kinds of choices and decisions the



family and the child can make about his or her life – for example, what schools they can attend and their approach to schooling. Assets (or debts) accumulated within a household also influence this kind of decision-making.

Outside of the household, broader social determinants of the intergenerational transmission of poverty include a shortage of jobs driven by slow economic growth, and discrimination on the basis of race, class, gender, or disability. It is clear that past inequalities have created imbalances not only in terms of income or personal well-being, but also in terms of other kinds of capital that enable or impede progress for youth today.

Youth from lower-class backgrounds may thus lack the necessary kinds of "capital" to enable upward social mobility.

They may lack knowledge and information ("cultural capital") about the educational and labour market that they need to make informed choices. Youth from poorer environments may also lack the financial means ("economic capital"), the status or prestige ("symbolic capital") and the networks ("social capital") that would provide them with the leverage needed to enter better educational institutions.

Policies and interventions aimed at breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty therefore need to extend beyond a focus on income and help young people access a range of different kinds of "capital".

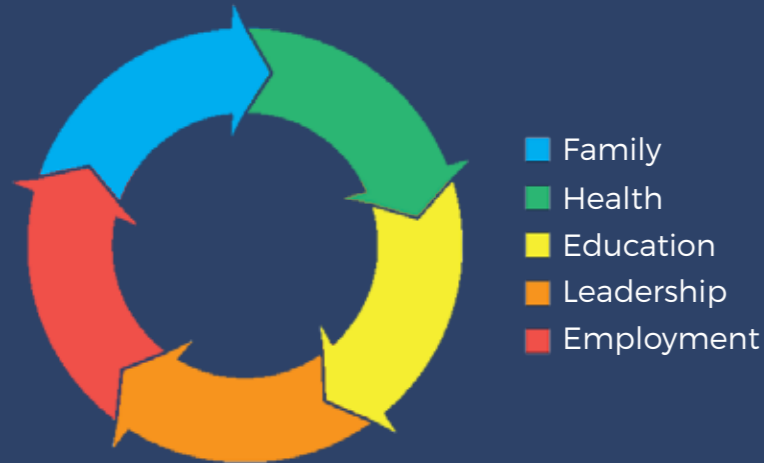
Failure to act will threaten democratic gains, as it would mean a failure to fulfill young people's constitutional rights. It would lead to lower levels of physical and mental well-being among the current youth cohort, and continue to feed the intergenerational cycle of exclusion and poverty.

TEXT HAS BEEN ADAPTED FROM THE 2015 CHILD GAUGE FROM UCT AND CHILDREN'S INSTITUTE.

# SALESIAN LIFE CHOICES MODEL

We believe that inequality is at the heart of the majority of social ills faced by young people today. For this reason, we have made tackling inequality the core objective of our organisation.

We understand the problem is complex and that we can only start to break the ground with a combination of effective interventions working hand-in-hand.



Salesian Life Choices provides services in these five dimensions. We are determined to find solutions that really work.

We embrace the fact that failure is a crucial part of the learning cycle because we know that it is the only way we can truly improve. We are committed to reflect on our shortfalls and to continue challenging ourselves by always asking tough questions because only in this way can we achieve social transformation.



# TRANSMISSION OF POVERTY FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT

Evidence suggests that parenting remains critical to young people's sense of belonging, constructions of their sexuality, their interface with wider society and to their emotional and physical safety.

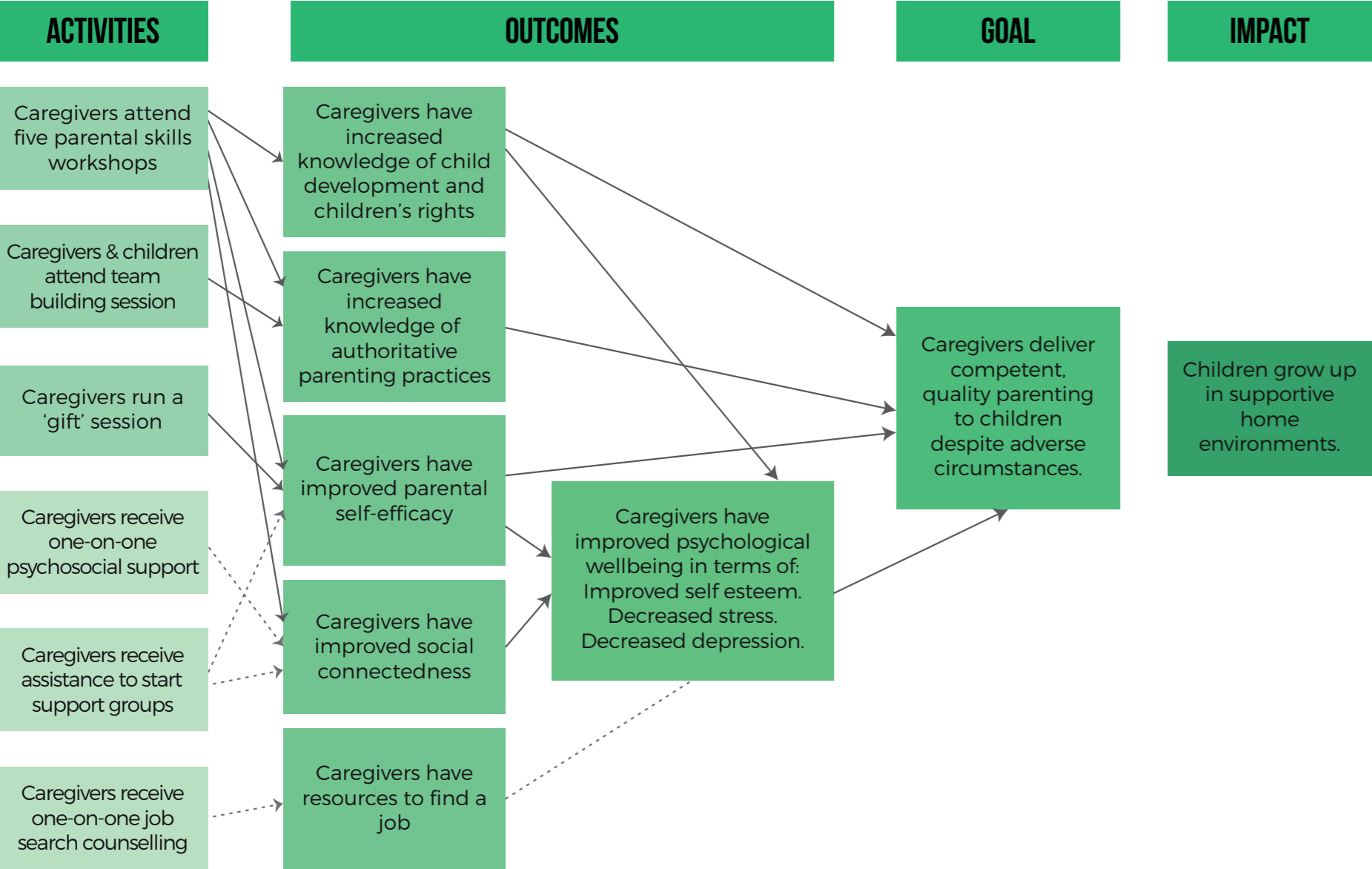
But poverty can make parenting a very difficult task - for instance, poverty increases the stress that parents experience when trying to provide for and protect their children. This makes emotionally distant, harsh and inconsistent parenting more likely - which in turn leads to poor health and risk behaviours in children negatively affecting the child/youth's ability to self-manage, perform well at school and find employment.

## FAMILY AFFAIRS THEORY

While the risk factors for unhealthy child development are high in areas such as the Cape Flats, it is still possible for children to thrive in these conditions. One major protective factor that can improve child outcomes is that of **parental resilience** which is defined as "the capacity of parents to deliver competent, quality parenting to children despite adverse personal, family, and social circumstances" (Gavidia-Payne, Denny, Davis, Francis, & Jackson, 2015).

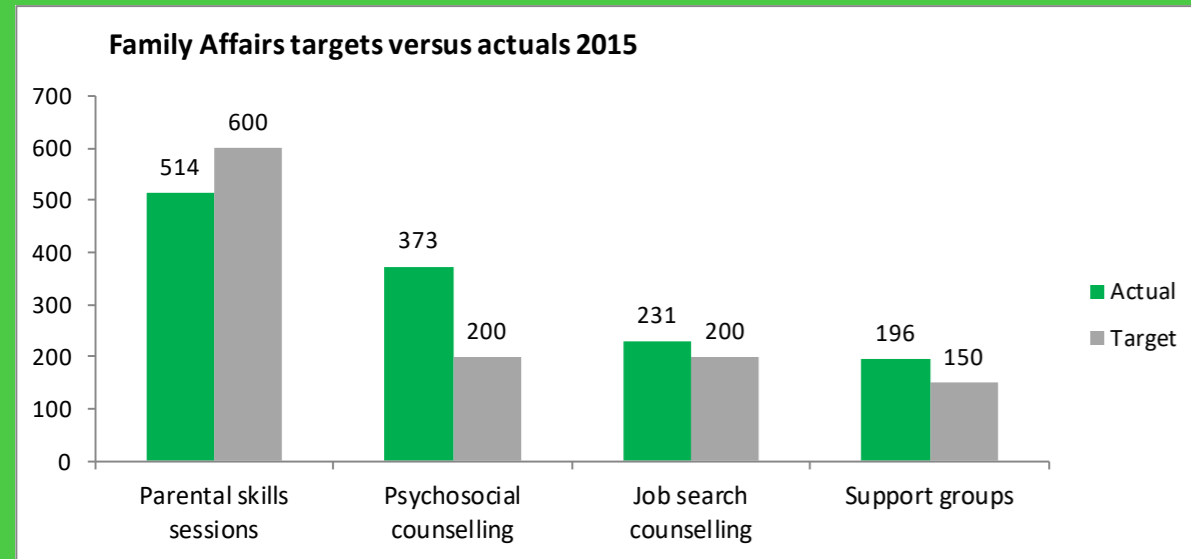
THEORETICAL TEXT HAS BEEN ADAPTED FROM THE 2015 CHILD GAUGE FROM UCT AND CHILDREN'S INSTITUTE

# HOW WE DO IT

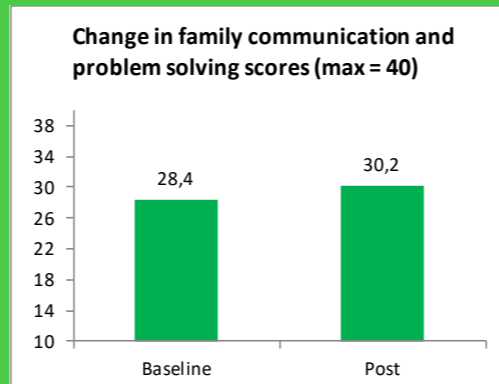
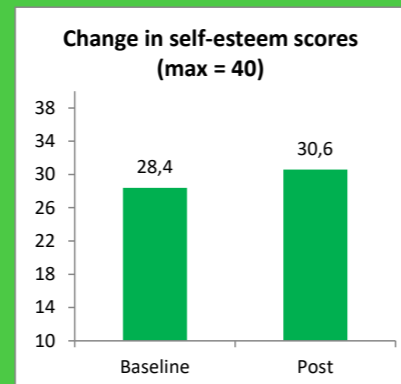
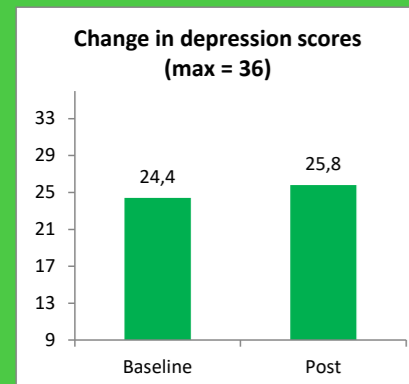


“I have a different way of communicating with people these days, whereas I used to be a very arrogant type of person in the past, but not anymore. I am also communicating simpler and more effectively with my children and that has minimized conflict tremendously.”

# FAMILY AFFAIRS: 2015 RESULTS



**Outcome evaluation:** In order to determine the outcomes of Family Affairs, baseline and post-surveys as well as focus groups were conducted with a sample of parents participating in the programme. Parents showed statistically significant improvement in their self-ratings of **depression, role satisfaction, self-esteem, family communication, and problem solving.**



## SUCCESS STORY: UNDERSTANDING BEFORE JUDGING

Throughout her life Akhona Nkumbi (25) had no idea what love was, she dealt with rejection most of her childhood. She says that only after she joined Salesian Life Choices was she able to heal her wounds and in the process became a better parent.



Akhona heard about Salesian Life Choices from a friend who was attending the organisation's Family Affairs programme, a programme dedicated to up-skill parents to deliver competent and quality parenting to children despite adverse circumstances.

"I joined the group after my friend told me how happy

it was making her. At the time I was unemployed and doing very little with my life. I lived in a shack in my aunt's backyard and every morning after taking my daughter (8) to school I would go home and look for work. So, when I heard about the workshop I was interested because it gave me something to do. I hoped that it would help me find a job and learn more things about being a better mother. I'm a single parent and I always worry if what I'm doing as a mother is the best thing for my child."

Family Affairs parental skills workshops are offered to groups of parents over a seven week period. Each week, parents are exposed to an interactive three-hour session where different topics are discussed. Topics include a self-reflection first session - that deals with parents' childhood, self-worth and nurturing gratitude - to other sessions were children's needs, temperaments, stages of development and self-esteem are discussed. Parents are also guided on how to communicate and listen to their children, identify risky behaviour and learn more about children's rights, among other topics. For Akhona, who was raised by her grandmother, the first session of the workshop made her aware of feelings toward her mother that she had been harbouring for years.

"My first session was great, the Family Affairs facilitator, spoke to us about self-reflection - something I knew nothing about. She also encouraged us to share our life stories. I remember looking at a paper with the word mother on it, and being asked what the word meant to us. It was the

first time I had thought about the role my mother played in my life. I didn't know her because I was raised by my grandmother. When I thought about her all the hatred came to me. I found it to be a sad but exciting day because it was the first time I thought that I was not alone and that I was part of something. Everybody shared a part of their lives. I remember when I began speaking I got really emotional and began to cry, but I was told to take my time, and that we were all there for each other."

"In the end of the first session we were all given a task – to wake up every morning, look at ourselves in the mirror and say "I love you". This was the first time in my life that I said that to myself. I was amazed by how much better I felt about myself. Today I continue to say it during the morning, afternoon and evening. The best part is that I am sharing my experience with my daughter and encouraging her to love herself."

As part of the intervention, Akhona received one-on-one psychosocial support from the organisation's counsellor.

"Before the counselling I would have negative thoughts and I didn't realise they were controlling my life. Challenges like dealing with my parents, it wasn't easy to talk about it – I wanted to just forget about it. But the counsellor made me open up about it. He made me realise that the anger towards my mother would affect my life. He made me write down all my emotions, at first I just laughed about it. But when I did it for a few days, I just began to cry. The counsellor told me to burn the paper and throw it away. This really helped me let go. I never thought it would, but it has really helped me change my thoughts from negative to positive."

Today, Akhona has a better relationship with her mother and father.

"Before I hated them for rejecting me, but now I am more focused on getting to know them. I got the courage to talk to my mom but I don't want to rush things. I want to know about her childhood first and get to know her better before I ask her why she left me. I just want to understand her story."

As part of the Family Affairs intervention, parents are also offered one-on-ones with a job search counselor. Aiming at addressing Akhona's goal of employment, she was invited to meet with the organisation's job counsellor who assisted her in drawing up her first curriculum vitae (CV).

"I knew about CV's but I never knew how to get or make one. The counsellor would ask me about my goals, and I told him I wanted to be independent and then we began working on a strategy that would lead to my independence."

Akhona says that she has never thought about her future as she does today.

"I failed my exams when I was in matric (Grade 12) and for the first time I am determined to write the supplementary exams. This year I am working as a cashier at Checkers and I am focussed on saving money for my matric exams." Akhona's present day story is very different to her past one. She has reconciled with her mother after having no contact for years, she has begun teaching her daughter about self-love and practicing daily affirmations with her and she has secured full-time employment.

"I feel like a different person after being part of Family Affairs. I am happier and inspired to turn my family's life around."



**"When it came to grasp children's behaviour, especially my son's, I couldn't understand him. Now I know what is going on and where it's going wrong, I know what steps to take."**

# YOUTH HEALTH & WELL-BEING: WHY IT MATTERS

WHO estimates that 70 percent of premature deaths in adults worldwide are the result of behaviors begun in adolescence.

Adolescence and young adulthood are times of rapid physical and psychosocial change and development. They are stages in which parental influence decreases and the influence of peers and media increases. As a result, these stages are often associated with a rise in experimentation and exploration, a search for identity, and a consequent increase of risky behaviour, alcohol and substance use and abuse, possible sexual and reproductive health (SHR) problems, violence and mental illness. In addition, growing up in poverty creates specific challenges for a large proportion of the country's youth.

In South Africa, the leading causes of death among young people differ by gender, race and income status. Currently, the burden of disease among youth is high, with tuberculosis (TB) and HIV emerging as the leading causes of death among all youth in the country, along with violence and traffic accidents for young men.

Improving the health and well-being of youth is crucial for their well-being today, and for their future economic productivity, because behaviour and health developed during these stages of life are key predictors of the adult burden of disease, and because health – like education – is

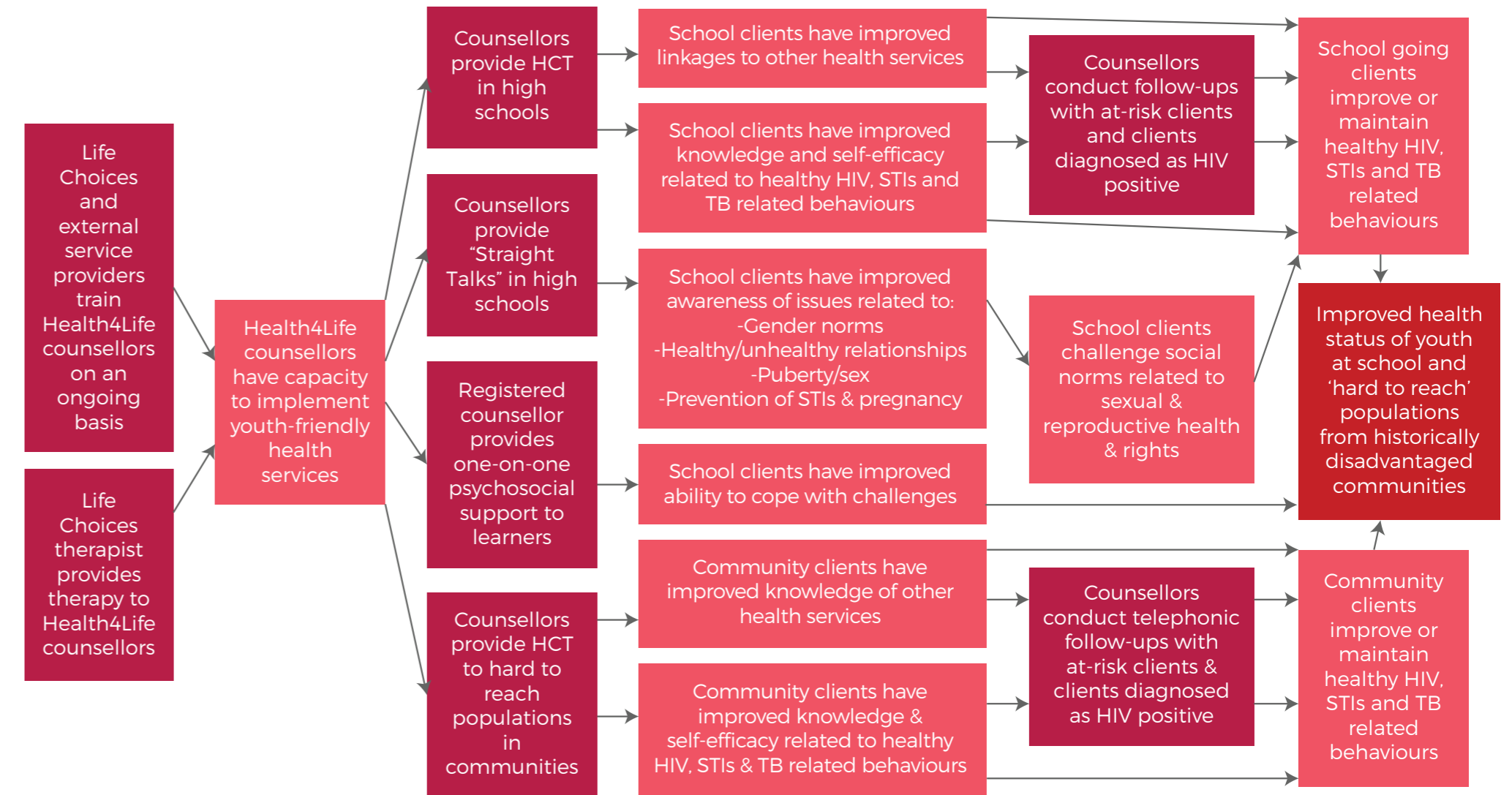
a key factor in the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

## HEALTH4LIFE THEORY

With a growing population of youth in South Africa (over 19 million), there is a big need for more youth friendly services – services that do not alienate this important population group. South Africa requires services that will get young people excited about their lives and their health.

We believe in multi-systemic and varied approaches because preventative strategies rarely focus on the individual level when it comes to young people. In depth, individual counselling is a neglected approach when working with adolescents. The problem is that LifeSkills and Peer Education strategies focus on large-scale group interventions. We believe that large-scale interventions (though also playing an important role in changing cultural beliefs and gaps in health education) must be accompanied by more tailored individual level approaches because no two people are the same. Large-scale campaigns do not address individual needs and thought processes. They do not speak to the particular nuances of an individual's circumstances. Only individual counselling can address these issues. Health4Life uses a combination of two theories in its methodology - the Health Belief Model and Stages of Change.

# HOW WE DO IT

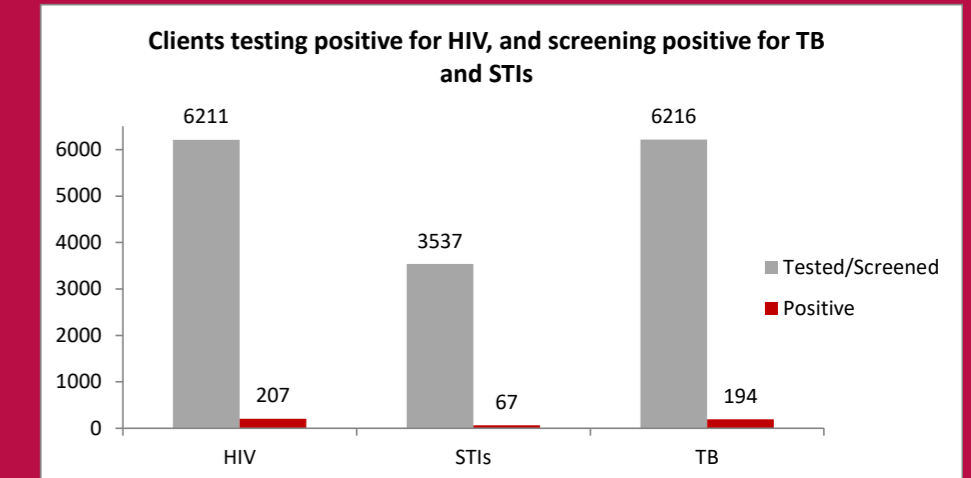
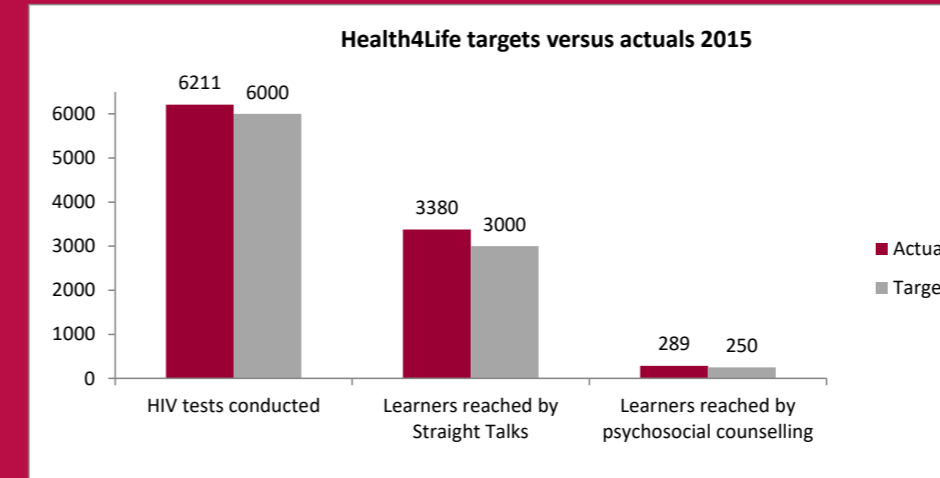


**KEY: ACTIVITIES OUTCOMES GOAL**

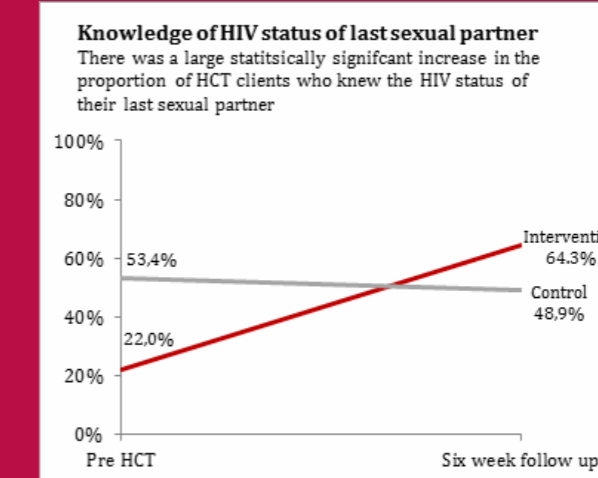
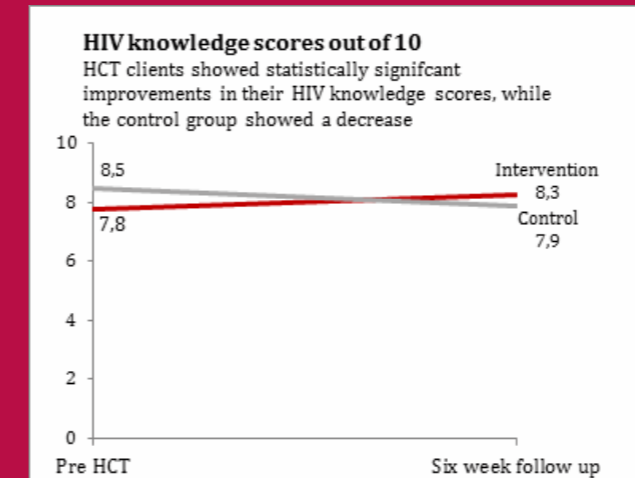


“I have learnt to accept everyone for who they are. Usually I would just look at people and judge them, not knowing how they are and why that is so. Since I joined Life Choices it’s almost like an eye-opener, I don’t look at people the same way I used to.”

# HEALTH4LIFE: 2015 RESULTS



**Outcome evaluation:** Life Choices conducted an evaluation of the community HCT component of the Health4Life programme in 2015. HCT clients and a control group were interviewed before HCT and a follow up interview was conducted six weeks after HCT. Health4Life clients showed statistically significant improvements in their HIV knowledge; knowledge of HIV status of last sexual partner; and use of condoms.



# SUCCESS STORY

**Anele Gamete, 19, was caught in a cycle of risky behaviour when he came across Health4Life at his school. He tells us the story of how he grew as a result of the intervention, from a struggling adolescent seemingly unable to find his way, to a determined young man.**



Tall for his age, Anele sits hunched in a school chair as he shares his life story of being raised by a grandmother who had good intentions, but who lacked the tools to raise a rambunctious young man. "I was born in Khayelitsha, my mom was only 17 years old and my grandmother thought it was better if she raised me. My childhood was not easy because my grandmother struggled financially, so I decided to drop-out of school and help her when I was 14."

"At the time I didn't see why school was useful, it wasn't helping anyone at home. I knew I needed to get money fast, so I joined a group of my friends and we would make money by robbing people. We would steal anything we could sell cell phones, laptops anything to make fast money."

Anele tells us that he would continue on this downward spiral for two years; how his choices led him to find misjudged freedom at the mouth of a drug pipe; and how a near-fatal fight propelled him to begin changing his life.

"I became used to a life of stealing, using drugs like tik and not really having any direction. One day, a group of taxi drivers caught me and my friends stealing and they beat us badly. I stayed at home for a week because I was too scared to go out, I realised that this was not a good way to live my life and I told my grandmother I wanted to go back to school."

Anele explains that his transition from out-of-school life to going back to school every day was not easy. He feels that he was lucky to encounter a support structure in his school that kept him focussed during this period.

"Even though I had decided to go back to school, it wasn't easy. I thought that going back would be a quick fix, an easy way out from the life I was living. But I was still not thinking about my decisions or my future. I didn't think it was important because my behaviour was no different to my friends. We were all doing the same things. I had never reflected about my life until I met the Health4Life counsellor."

Health4Life is a Salesian Life Choices intervention, dedicated to the physical, mental and social well-being of young people in schools. Once a week a Health4Life counsellor provides one-on-one youth friendly HIV counselling and testing services, and group talks on reproductive health. The intervention also offers one-on-one psychosocial support sessions with a therapist for learners with various social issues. Anele met the Health4Life counsellor when she gave a few talks to his class during Life Orientation periods.

"Life Choices came to my class to give four talks around healthy decisions. There was a session where they showed us pictures of different sexual transmitted diseases, I think it was their third session and I became worried when I thought about my past. I lost my virginity when I was 13 and have had many girlfriends since then. We never used protection. The counsellor was young and friendly, so I decided to volunteer to have an HIV test; I felt I could trust her."

Fortunately for Anele, his results were HIV negative, but the time he spent talking to the counsellor about his life while waiting for the results gave him what he terms a "wake-up call".

"The Health4Life counsellor helped me see the dangers of my irresponsible behaviour. She spoke to me about the risks and what better decisions I can make. The experience of getting tested brought me back to reality. I knew that my life could have been very different had I tested positive. She explored with me the connection between drinking and using drugs and reckless behaviour. She motivated me to live a more responsible and healthy life."

"I could never have imagined that an HIV testing session would have such an impact in my life. For the first time I spoke about my past with someone and she understood me with no judgement. She also asked me what I wanted

to achieve in my future. At that time, I thought I wanted to own a taxi in the area after finishing school. I never thought about doing anything else. When someone would talk about studying after school I always thought that was for other people. The counsellor assisted me to explore my interests and encouraged me to talk to people about what they did after school. That is how I found out that I could join the navy and that is my plan now."

"The idea of goals was so new to me, to think about a different reality and share it with someone was amazing. During my second session, the counsellor assisted me to develop a plan in how to achieve those goals and asked to meet with me from time to time to check that things were going according to plan. I felt very positive and motivated."

Anele credits changing his life to the support he received from the programme.

"Today my life is very different. I'm sticking to my life plan and working very hard at school. I love each time I meet with the counsellor and share some progress, we both celebrate my small achievements. I have chosen to stop drugs and change my behaviour with my girlfriend. After sharing with her what I learned from Life Choices we've decided to be more careful."

"Life Choices has changed my life. A new world has opened up to me because I am making better decisions. Today I talk to my friends about how they can change their lives."

Understanding what better life choices are, Anele is trying to help his peers in whatever way he can, even if it's only being there as someone they can talk to. Because, as he says, "words from someone who took the time to care changed my life."

# POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION: BROADENING ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

The pre-conditions for a sense of belonging are largely absent in the rainbow nation. Mass structural unemployment, high rates of interpersonal violence, and fractured families and communities limit opportunities for young people to exercise personal agency and demonstrate their abilities in a positive self-affirming manner.

The majority of young people in South Africa do not enrol in post-school education. In the 2011 Census, for the 20-24-years-olds cohort, 16% remain in school, 12% are in post-schooling education, 21% in employment, and 51% are not in employment, education or training (NEET).

More than half of the young people are outside both the formal schooling system and the labour market, and live below a poverty line of R604 per month. This persistent poverty and inequality prevents the realisation of full citizenship for young people in particular.

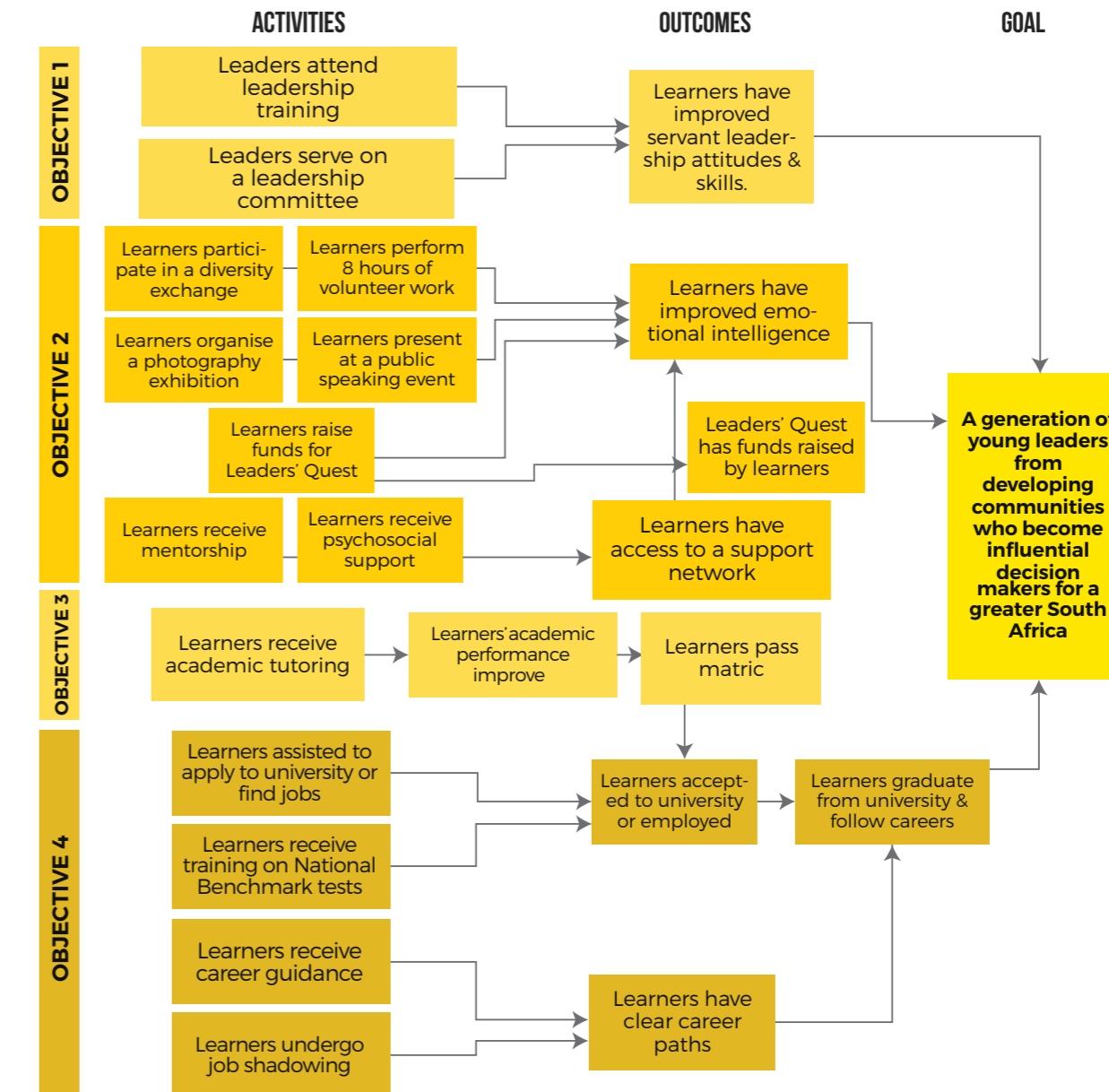
## LEADERS' QUEST THEORY

Post-school education has the potential to help break the intergenerational cycle of poverty by increasing young people's employability and earning potential.

Studies have showed youth with a college qualification are 14% more likely to be employed and those with a university qualification are 36% more likely to be in employment. Similarly, a college-qualified youth earns 60% more than someone with matric and those with a university qualification earn nearly 1.5 times more. For this reason, Leaders' Quest works towards strengthening participants school performance.

Over the four-year intervention (Grade 11, 12 and post-matric), Leaders' Quest implements different activities based on a mix of theories. The main ones being: personal resilience; emotional intelligence; and servant leadership. All activities use the learning cycle theory as the basis of their design and implementation.

# HOW WE DO IT





## LEADERS' QUEST: 2015 RESULTS

# 201

Learners reached with leadership training and tutoring.

# 120

Learners spent 24 hours with a peer from a diverse background (exchange).

# 105

Learners participated in two days of job shadowing.

# 122

Learners volunteered eight hours to a social cause.

# 68

Grade 12 learners were matched with professional mentors for 18 months

# 64

Learners were accepted in tertiary education institutions.

# 12

Photography exhibition projects.

## OUTCOME EVALUATION

**Outcome evaluation:** Grade 12 Leaders' Quest learners had the following successes in 2015:

- 87.5% passed matric, compared to 77.9% at their schools and 84.7% in the Western Cape
- 66.1% received Bachelors passes, compared to 33% at their schools and 42.3% in the Western Cape
- 61.6% were admitted to university or college in 2016.

### Leaders' Quest Alumni Results to date

Post-Matric Activity	Percentage	Numbers of Learners (two years)
Studying at University	52%	70
Studying at College	13%	18
Employed	19%	25
Re-writing matric exams	13%	17
Unemployed	3%	4

### Comparison with South African Youth Stats

	SA Stats	Leaders' Quest Stats
Post-schooling education	12%	65%
Employment	21%	19%
Unemployed	51%	3%
Re-Writing matric (schooling)	-	13%

# SUCCESS STORY: THE DREAM TEAM

There is much to learn from a group of \*Matriculants from Modderdam High School in Bonteheuwel, who are not only admired for their outstanding results but for taking a disadvantage and flipping it around to benefit not only their lives but that of their peers.



The learners, Jamie-Lee Samuels, Monique Niekerk, Sereno Cupido, Rhonda Adams and Wafeeqah Mohammad are all stand outs in their graduating class, scoring a total of 10 distinctions (Rhonda: 2 distinctions, Jamie-Lee: 5 and Wafeeqa: 3) and all earning Bachelor Passes.

Their common thread to their success is when they all joined Leaders' Quest programme in Grade 11.

Leaders' Quest is a four-year intervention working with youth in Grade 11, 12 and post matric. It combines academic tutoring, leadership training and experiential activities. It aims at moulding a generation of young leaders from developing communities to become influential decision-makers for a greater South Africa.

Jamie, who has been accepted to study Dietetics, says that there is no secret to having a successful pass, "Just being committed and taking advice really helps. On Saturdays at Salesian Life Choices I always made sure I would ask questions in tutoring. I always had the thought of, what if what I'm asking appears in the exam? I wanted to be as prepared as possible. That's also something my Leaders' Quest coach taught me - always ask questions because you never know what the answer might mean to you one day."

For some learners like Sereno Cupido and Rhonda Adams, inadequacy at school had threatened their dreams of studying Computer Science and Accounting respectively. "For most of the year we had no Physics teacher, it was ridiculous. We would attend the Physics' tutoring at Salesian Life Choices, then go to school the following week and teach our classmates what we had learned. This helped us even more because we would learn while

we were teaching," says Sereno.

Rhonda, who scored 75% in Physics in her final exams, says knowing that she could rely on her tutor gave her confidence when she was preparing to write her exams, "I would not have been able to teach myself the work from the textbooks. It was only because of the tutoring that I believe I passed the subject. It also felt great that I could help my peers who didn't understand the work."

Leaders' Quest knows the importance of preparing youth for their future and all training is aimed at developing the youth holistically, so that they may be functioning, confident adults who thrive and not only survive.

As Wafeeqah, who is set to study a Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Human Anatomy & Physiology specializing in Genetics, says that even though she would still describe herself as shy, she believes that the exposure she received at the organisation has boosted her confidence. "The leadership training gave me a boost. I am a soft spoken person, so I would often shy away from talking among lots of people. But the leadership training assisted me in finding my voice and making my opinion heard," says Wafeeqah.

The Modderdam Dream Team as they've been called, are all ready to continue on the next stage of their life's journey.

Rhonda (Bcom Uct), Jamie-Lee Samuels (Dietetics UWC), Monique(Bsc UCT), Sereno (Computer Science UWC) and Wafeeqah (Bsc UCT) all agree that being part of the Salesian Life Choices family has instilled a desire to assist and uplift those around them, the same way they were uplifted by the organisation.

"We want to succeed and feel that we have the tools to do just that. But, we also want to take everything we've learned and use it to motivate, encourage and empower the youth in our communities," concludes Jamie.

\*Matriculants: youth who have passed the Grade 12 year of High School.

# YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA: UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGE

The first quarter of 2015, the official youth unemployment rate was 37% for youth between ages of 15 and 34 years (which equates to approximately 3,646,000 young people). The data also show that there has been an increase in discouraged work-seekers (8%) – young people that have given up looking for work. When this young people are included, the expanded youth unemployment rate goes up to approximately 45%.

Young women are more vulnerable to unemployment than young men. And African and Coloured youth are far more vulnerable to unemployment than their White and Indian counterparts. Just over 40% of African youth and 32% of Coloured youth are unemployed, compared to 23% of Indian and 11% of White youth. A range of reasons explain these differences, including the inequalities in the schooling system.

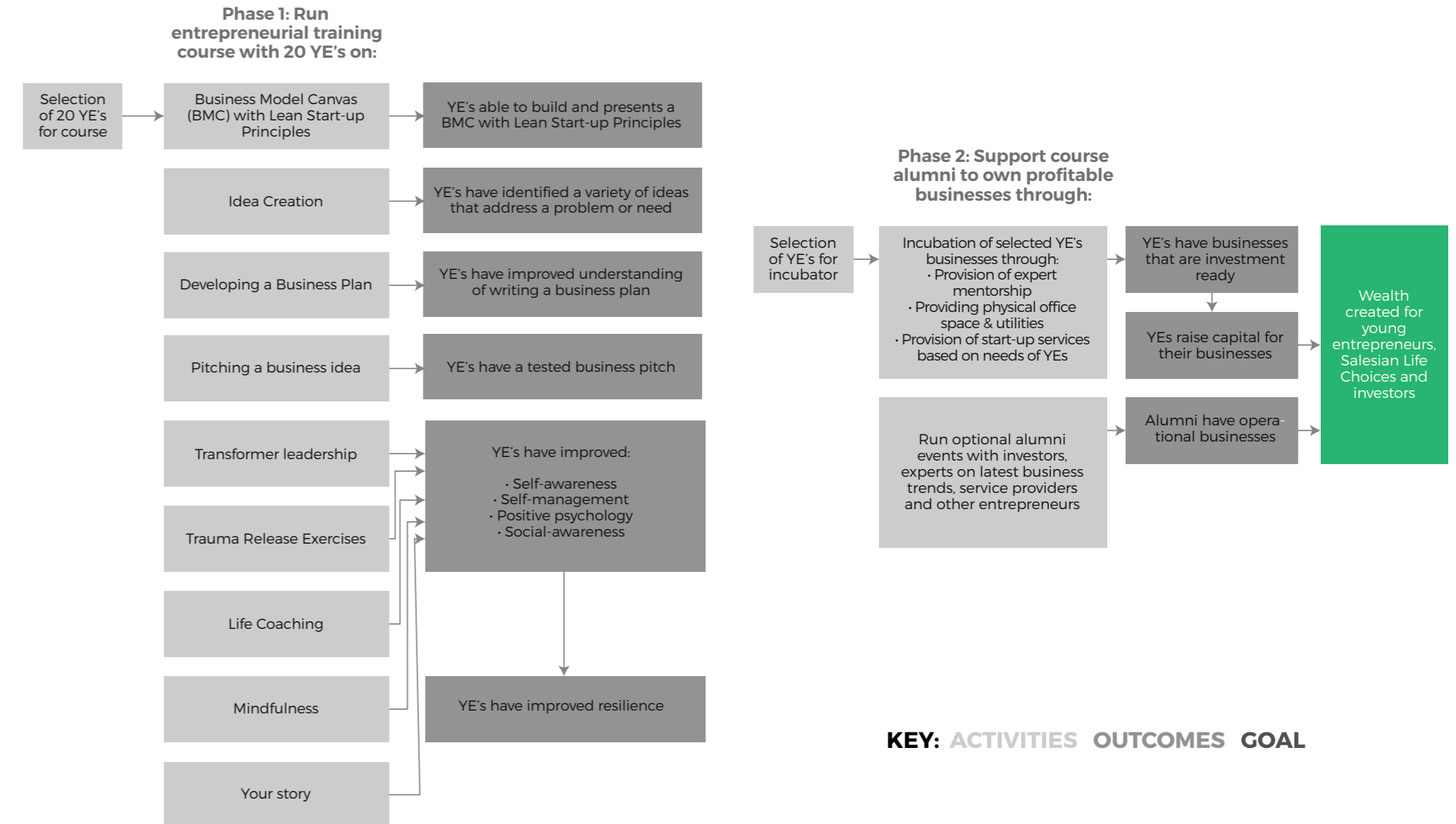
Young people are disproportionately affected by unemployment in South Africa because demand for labour is highest for skilled employees. Long-term unemployment and negative labour market experiences lead

to decreased self-esteem, depression and discouragement, which, in turn, have negative effects on the likelihood of an employer hiring you.

## NEW VENTURES STUDIO THEORY

In South Africa the majority of new jobs are created in companies under five years old. With hundreds of thousands of youth entering the national workforce every year, it is essential that we increase the number and survival rate of startups to accommodate the ever-growing demand of jobs as well as to nurture an entrepreneurial spirit among South Africans. New Ventures Studio aims at working with young entrepreneurs over a period of two months. The primary objectives of the programme are to improve young entrepreneurs' business knowledge and skills; and to facilitate their personal development using the personal resilience theory.

# HOW WE DO IT





“I feel like a different person to when I started this course. I am much more relaxed, negative things do not bother me.”

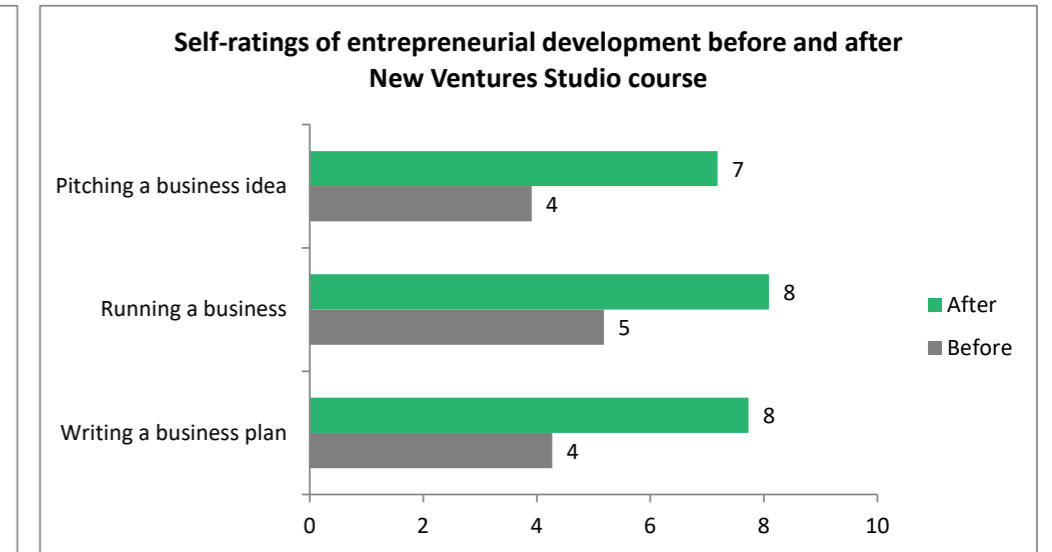
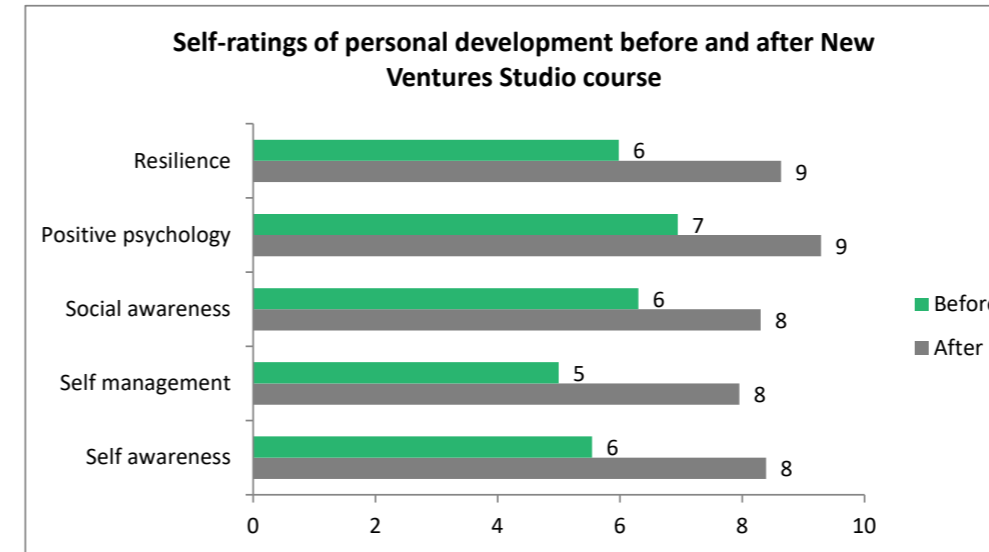
# NEW VENTURES STUDIO: 2015 RESULTS

# 21

Youth reached with entrepreneurship and self-development training over a two months period.

## OUTCOME EVALUATION

Programme outcomes were evaluated through self-administered questionnaires, interviews and focus groups at the end of the programme. In the questionnaires participants were asked to rate themselves on various items before and after the course. The perceived changes in outcomes are presented in the following two tables:



# SUCCESS STORY: NEW VENTURES STUDIO BEGINS

**At the end of 2015 the first New Ventures Studio class graduated. The group of 21 showed what can be created when a community of like-minded people, with common goals and attitudes (and many late nights), apply themselves. They represent the face of youth that South Africa desires – determined, resilient and hopeful.**



New Ventures Studio is the newest addition to Salesian Life Choices. It is an intensive eight-week entrepreneurship course combined with an incubator, its primary aim is to assist young entrepreneurs to move from an idea or early business stage to a well formulated business model ready to

be implemented. When asked what motivated the launch of New Ventures Studio, Sofia Neves, Life Choices Managing Director, answered “jobs are the cornerstone of economic and social development. The lack of jobs leads to poverty, crime and social instability. In South Africa, 25% of working age people are unemployed, of which 3.6 million are between the ages of 15 to 34. It is clear that there is a fundamental need for job creation, something government has desired to prioritise for the last three State of the Nation addresses. We have decided to join the government efforts in job creation in order to further our mission of investing in youth to tackle inequality.”

Ms. Neves added: “We chose the path of entrepreneurship, because entrepreneurship has been described as the backbone of several booming economies in the world. Studies show that many of the advanced markets were built on small and medium size businesses (SMME’s). In South Africa alone, SMME’s account for the employment of 60% of the workforce in the country. New Ventures Studio was developed to create wealth in partnership with young entrepreneurs, so that SA’s economy grows, jobs are created and wealth is distributed among the ones who need it the most.”

The stories of the New Ventures Studio participants, whose ages range from 18 to 32, represent possibility in action. Each of them have failed at some point in their lives, but knew that what truly matters is what they have learned and what they can do moving forward. Their common goal is their drive to succeed as entrepreneurs – which led them to New Ventures Studio.

The range of graduates include a media and communications enthusiast, a gardening aficionado, an education pioneer, a financial consultant, a telecoms expert and a shoe maker – to mention a few. For many of the entrepreneurs the eight-week-course gave them the guidance, push and clarity that they needed while developing or polishing their business ideas.

The entrepreneurship course has been structured to combine business and self-development modules. Participants are exposed to the lean-start-up methodology and they spent their first three weeks going out of the building to do customer discovery and develop a business idea that their customers would want. The second part of the course explores pure business concepts ranging from marketing, finances, operations to legalities and pitching.

Speaking about his experience in the course is Nick Adriaans, 25, business owner at Lawn in Order, a gardening services company. “During the course I developed a business plan and generated customers. The support I received, and am still receiving, has been great. Both professionally and personally I have grown. Throughout the different course modules, I have learned about how, I can grow my business while learning more about myself”, says Nick.

Another participant, Webster Kushata, 28, a dairy shop owner in low income communities, points out that the guidance he has received has shifted his mind-set and allowed him to visualise the future of his businesses from different angles. “I am totally different today, compared to the day I began this course. When I reflect back on my experience of starting my business on my own, I wish I could have been exposed to this course then. I personally regard this as a self-discovery and a learning tool to improve my service, resolving the problems my customers are facing in order to formulate a

viable business model.”

Representing the best in Cape Town, the entrepreneurs’ minds are filled with ideas to improve not only their own lives, but offer others opportunities as well.

For some entrepreneurs, like 31-year-old Luleka Ngxakata, joining the New Ventures Studio has allowed her to learn more about managing a business. She says that she had no idea of the growth that she and her event planning business would enjoy during the course.

“If I didn’t attend the course my business would never had transformed. When I started I was just planning baby showers and small parties. Now I’m organising safe and memorable nightlife events for groups of tourists in the township. Being exposed to different ideas and having the guidance and opportunity to do market research gave me the insight I needed to understand my market and what is needed in the industry. Seeing the gap in the industry gave me the motivation to change my business concept. Since then my business has grown and it has allowed me to uplift those around me in Gugulethu,” says Luleka.

After the 8-week course, entrepreneurs are invited to pitch to the New Ventures Studio Incubator. The incubator provides entrepreneurs with all they need in order to accelerate their business. Each incubatee is offered services to the value of R150,000. Each services package varies based on the business type and the entrepreneur’s maturity, however the end result is the same - to assist each incubatee to have an operational business, employing a minimum of 5 people, in the next 12 months.

Nick is one of the five participants who were selected to join the incubator. “So far the one-on-one intensity of the incubator

has been great. As a new business owner there are challenges that can be a minefield to deal with. In two months, the incubator has assisted me to register my company, develop a corporate identity, design marketing tools, create a financial system among other things, but mainly the incubator has provided me with support. I recently felt as though I had reached breaking point – where I felt stuck and had no idea what to do. I made my way to the New Ventures Studio where I received amazing support and motivation. We spoke about the problems I was facing and came up with a plan of action. I have never felt so supported and understood before,” says Nick.


Mitchell Barker, a brands and telecoms entrepreneur, and an incubator participant, talks about the full New Ventures Studio journey. “The initial course was challenging, exciting, inspiring, demanding – and more! It made me question much of what I do today and has opened my eyes to a magnificent framework in all spheres of business. This has allowed me to retrace my steps and understand why and how I have managed to get to the point I am now at, and to identify what I needed to do to progress in my business – even if that meant taking a few steps back. As an all-round course I was extremely pleased with the structure, the content, the facilitators and the support from the team. It was also so rewarding to have experienced what I now believe are crucial fundamentals to one’s entrepreneurship journey. These include leadership training, mindfulness and TRE. I am a huge believer of the power of the mind and I was inspired to connect more deeply with myself on an emotional and spiritual level.”

“My experience with the incubator this far, is that if I thought the course was challenging the incubator is another league. I have been spending the past two months refining my business model. We all have agreed that we will only move

forward if we are 90% sure that it is a business model that can be scalable and replicable. We are getting industry experts to give input on the model before implementing.” Asked whether he would recommend others to join New Ventures Studio, Mitchell says: “Yes!” without hesitation. “I have discovered that entrepreneurship can sometimes be a lonely journey, and that there is no shortage of ideas in the world. The reason why these ideas are not turned into something material is due to lack of resources, support and know-how. With the combination of a strategically constructed course, and an environment that fosters entrepreneurial expertise and collaboration, this is the perfect setting and forum to help make your dreams come true.”

Today, the New Ventures Studio incubator is working with five entrepreneurs, and a new batch of entrepreneurs are currently busy with the eight-week course.

New Ventures Studio has become a think tank for entrepreneurs, a place where ideas are made tangible and contacts are turned into networks. The beginning stages have proven highly beneficial, with many entrepreneurs changing trajectories, questioning the status quo, and increasing their drive to succeed.

A photograph of two men, one with light hair and one with dark hair, both wearing plaid shirts. They are leaning over a laptop, looking at the screen with focused expressions. The background is blurred, suggesting an office or workshop environment.

“I learnt practical skills for idea generation. I actually went out of my comfort zone in terms of identifying a problem. I believe that this will help me as a start up to assess the value of my product offering earlier before wasting too many resources.”

# ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015

Income	2015	2014
Argon	100 000	-
Bristol Myers	531 416	531 416
Caritas - Germany	2 409 309	-
Claremont Rotary	49 000	-
Colour Run	-	8 297
Consolidated Power	100 000	100 000
Coronation Asset Management	5 000	-
De Klerk Foundation	50 000	-
Don Bosco - Swiss	546 030	289 291
Don Bosco Mondo	566 705	413 749
Flat Art CC	10 000	-
Future Growth	60 000	30 000
General Donations Received	135 594	102 629
Kids of the Cape	-	60 000
Leaders' Quest - Kids in Action	-	18 797
MLT Tech CC	10 000	10 000
MOL	-	5 000
Mandela Washington Fund	-	176 480
Master Builders Association - Development fund	120 000	-

Income	2015	2014
Misean Cara	743 292	696 744
Misereor	716 317	-
My School Card	5 737	3 504
National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund (Local)	-	582 810
Nedbank Private Wealth Educational Foundation	200 000	-
Pareto	-	868 889
Porticus Amsterdam (International)	377 920	-
Prudential	34 418	100 000
Quaker Services	20 000	24 200
Sabinet	30 000	-
Salesian Mission - JHB	10 000	10 000
Salesian Missions Madrid	337 691	-
Social Development Grant	402 724	436 558
Staff Donations	9 820	5 570
State Street	267 428	204 993
Strate	-	110 000
Walter & Louise Davidson	62 657	-
Zonke Monitoring Systems	20 000	-
Effects of transfers to and from deferred income	(905 554)	(601 482)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7 025 504</b>	<b>4 187 445</b>

# ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015

Expenditure	2015	2014
Accounting Fees	5 206	17 887
Advertising	6 251	-
Auditor's Remuneration	59 446	13 206
Bank Charges	29 760	28 384
Consulting Fees	87 314	-
Depreciation	87 462	17 643
Employee Costs	3 723 935	2 068 670
Evaluation	224 450	182 425
HR Officer	87 984	-
Materials	-	8 578
Printing and stationary	68 676	95 166
Programme Costs	1 470 150	1 363 096
Rent	102 368	83 192
Repairs and Maintenance	45 223	-
Staff Training	107 506	19 506
Telephone and Fax	48 728	40 619
Transport	440 132	301 310
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6 594 591</b>	<b>4 239 682</b>
<b>(Deficit) Surplus for the year</b>	<b>523 705</b>	<b>119 372</b>

Ongoing partnership with a range of different donors and partners is critical in ensuring that Salesian Life Choices is able to deliver on its mandate.

During the year under review, Salesian Life Choices raised:

Income	2015	2014	2013	2012
Income	R7 025 504	R4 414 539	R5 946 503	R6 832 543
International Fundraising	80%	55%	63%	48%
South African Private Sector	7%	23%	10%	1%
National Trust/Foundation	3%	10%	15%	-
South African Government	6%	10%	7%	44%
Individual Giving	2%	1%	4%	7%
Investment Income	2%	1%	1%	-

Salesian Life Choices would like to give a special thanks to all our donors. Each contribution received ensured that Salesian Life Choices was able to continue its work. Every donation, regardless of size, made a big difference.

We would also like to commend the Salesians' fundraising offices spread throughout the world who helped to raise some of the funds: Don Bosco Mondo, Don Bosco Swiss, Salesian Mission Madrid, Salesian Mission JHB and Salesians Ireland.

# PARTNERS MURAL: THANK YOU!

Thank you for all you do for the youth. We are continually inspired by the dedication and generosity of our donors. There is no way to fully express our gratitude for your support.



Walter and Louise Davidson Foundation



# LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

Since 2005 Salesian Life Choices has followed its passion of providing quality services to youth to tackle inequality. Driven by ambition and an unwavering self-belief, we have continuously overcome obstacles, primarily the raising of capital.

In fact, in 2013 with the world in economic turmoil, we were nearly shutdown. Through the experience and a period of self-reflection, it became clear that a new business model had to be developed. For the next year, we sought out free advice from various experts and identified potential strategies to move forward.

New Ventures Studio Incubator is now a profit making partnership made up of young entrepreneurs and Salesian Life Choices.

Salesian Life Choices invests in accelerating young entrepreneurs on a personal and business level. In return, the entrepreneurs offer 20% equity on their new ventures with these shares being reinvested, on the long run, into tackling inequality. Salesian Life Choices aims to generate 50% of its income in the next 10 years in order to continue furthering its social mission.

Salesian Life Choices invited young entrepreneurs to enter the incubator. The main criteria was to support impact businesses – businesses that aim at social impact combined with profit making.

The first three businesses in the incubator are:



## LAWN IN ORDER

Lawn in Order is an eco-friendly gardening service.

We offer quality and affordable services customized to client garden's needs in each season of the year. Lawn in Order operates in both residential and commercial properties in Cape Town. We commit to delight our customers with a complimentary outdoor service gift after each visit in addition to virtual gardening tips each month.

We are dedicated to care for the environment and care for you. We provide customers with peace of mind by making their dream garden a possibility.

The business has been operating in Cape Town for nearly two years and was founded by Nick Adriaans, a resident from Zeekoeivlei, whose very first customers were the neighbours in his street.

[www.lawninorder.co.za](http://www.lawninorder.co.za)



## BUY-HAND

Buy-Hand reimagines e-commerce platforms by using businesses (e.g. hotels, corporates, interior design firms, retail, country clubs and estates) to create new online distribution channels for local artisan products. We are a business-to-business e-market place that caters for the needs of both parties. A win-win situation - we build and grow commercial opportunities for local artisans and business partners.

Local artisans increase product exposure and sales by joining the online warehouse at no extra cost. Hosting businesses increase revenue streams, delight customers and create brand loyalty through our tailor made online shops and social media content.

By assisting local industries to grow, Buy-Hand advances its social impact of creating job opportunities for developing sectors within artisan industries.

[www.buy-hand.co.za](http://www.buy-hand.co.za)



# DENARII

Financial Management Specialist



## DENARII

DENARII is an outsourced Financial Management Specialist in Cape Town providing professional and cost-effective financial management services with a personal touch.

Our passion is to partner with small to medium businesses to insure increased profitability, long-term sustainability and growth.

Denarii objective is to shine the light on the finances of small to medium businesses. Firstly, revealing the true status of a business' currently financial condition, how it got there and where it is heading should it stay the current course.

Secondly, using the structures the business already has, and creating new ones where required, plotting the way forward to financial stability. It is also our mandate to educate people within each company to understand their financial systems to insure sustainability.

[www.denarii.co.za](http://www.denarii.co.za)



312 Imam Haron Road, Lansdown 7780  
PO Box 14290, Kenwyn, 7790, Cape Town, Western Cape  
+ 27 21 696 4157 | [www.lifechoices.co.za](http://www.lifechoices.co.za)

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