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Functions of a youth development centre to facilitate youth development: a case study of a centre in Johannesburg, South Africa

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ABSTRACT

Youth unemployment is a pressing socio-economic challenge facing South Africa in the post-democratic dispensation. Johannesburg, South Africa's largest city, attracts many young people who are in search of economic opportunities and as result there is high concentration of unemployed youth in the city. Lack of skills, training, and education and work experience have been identified as contributing factors to youth unemployment. Over the years there have been numerous strategies developed to address the problem of youth unemployment. The Youth Development Centre model is one such strategy that was introduced by the Gauteng Department of Social Development in early 2000 to address this problem-situation, as such centres provide training and youth development programmes. A qualitative case study of a youth development centre based in Johannesburg was conducted to investigate the functioning of the centre regarding facilitating youth development. Purposive sampling was used to select ten participants from the centre. Data were gathered using one-on-one, semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured research guide was the research tool used to guide discussions. Thematic content analysis was used to analyse data. The findings indicate that the youth development centre has a number of structures functioning very well in some areas and thereby facilitating youth development. However, challenges are also being experienced and these are having a negative impact on the functioning of the centre. Challenges faced included poor funding; training and skills development programmes provided by the centre are not being implemented effectively. The number of partnerships the centre is engaged in are also lacking. Recommendations made included the implementation of income generating projects and improved monitoring and evaluation frameworks.