

## **Youth, Unemployment and Peri-Urbanity in Zimbabwe: a snapshot of lessons from Hatcliffe**

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### **ABSTRACT**

That young people, particularly those who have left school are in danger if they cannot be given regular work (Alheit, 1994) is undoubted. The youths' consequent attitudes and behaviour are generally affected. This paper, achieved through using the case of community assets management by youth in the peri-urban residential suburb of Hatcliffe in Harare, Zimbabwe, explores the options and opportunities that are available for peri-urban youth in the context of vulnerability to the vagaries of unemployment. The procedure will be first to consider the theoretical underpinnings of the peri-urban youth problems before dwelling on a number of cases that illustrate the options available towards advancement of the youth agenda in peri-urban areas. Recommendations will be given drawing from the cases so as to assess how viable solutions can be obtained to solve the problems by and problems of the unemployed urban youth. For the purpose of this paper qualitative research methods were used focusing primarily on observations, focused group discussions and key informant interviews. It was found that the unemployed peri-urban youth in their quest for survival through the use of various strategies can both be progressive or aggressive in their approach to life and as manifested in community assets management this has a wide range of effects on the youth themselves and on the communities in which they operate. Policy efforts for the unemployed urban youth should therefore focus on checking detrimental behaviour while at the same time harnessing potentialities and progressive efforts by the youth.

**Key words:** unemployment/livelihoods/poverty/community assets/urbanism/opportunities

## **INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW**

The past two decades have seen an uneven trend in the economic terrain of Zimbabwe. There has been a gradual turnaround of fortunes from the heydays soon after the country's independence from British colonial rule in 1980 to an economic crisis that reached its climax in the years 2006-2008 and that had far-reaching effects into almost every sector of the economy. As borrowed policies the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) of 1990-1995, failed to take significant effect and as 'home-grown solutions' as enshrined in policy documents such as the Zimbabwe Programme of Economic and Social Transformation, (ZIMPREST), the Millennium Economic Recovery Programme (MERP) and the New Economic Revival Programme (NERP) failed to ameliorate the situation the country has been plunged into, that of an economic crisis whose effects include inflation, erosion of real wages, alteration of livelihoods and unemployment. All these challenges were ripple effects of the change in government policy beginning around 1998 when Zimbabwe resolved to seize former white-owned farms in the country.

Although various age and social groups have been hit in varying scales and degrees, it seems that the unemployed youth were one segment of the population hardest hit. Specifically those in peri-urban areas should have been at the worst end of the stick given the urbanist nature of these areas where the conditions of living are not well-developed to be urban but the demands of the city are heavy and immense. Faced with a threat to their mere survival the youth have employed various strategies to reinstate themselves on the social and economic scene. According to Alheit (1994) unemployment represents a complex set of inter-related social variables characterised among youth by an additional burden of a conflict-laden status passage in the transition from the educational to the employment system or biographically speaking from the youth phase to adulthood. Unemployment in youth is therefore a form of deprivation which robs youth of the benefits of work and represents a dark era in personal and social development of youth.

Before getting further down with the discussion it is important to lay some definitions of the key terms here used. Very simple definitions are applied where the youth is taken to refer to the population in the age group 14-30 years of age, usually unmarried, out of school and/or in search of employment. Youth is

a transitional phase of one's life cycle, between childhood and adulthood. Unemployment refers to a situation whereby those who are willing and able to work find themselves deprived of such opportunities in the existing job market. On the contrary, underemployment refers to the existence of a bulky labour supply in an inelastic existing job market. The discourse speaks of the management of community assets by the youth of which these are taken to refer to facilities owned collectively by a group of people. Normally community assets would include social amenities such as schools, clinics, churches, open spaces and roads. The spatial context of the paper is the peri-urban areas of which peri-urbanity is taken to mean the state of being located on the outskirts of an urban area with special reference to the social, economic, environmental, political and developmental setup of such areas which distinguishes them from other areas nearer to the city-centre.

Frese and Volpert (1980) cited in Alheit (1994) outline some of the benefits of employment by showing an individual's relationship to work. They observe that:

- The adult spends a large proportion of his life at his place of work.
- The meaningful involvement in society's interaction with nature takes place at the place of work.
- Work permits the expression and satisfaction of productive needs through the production of socially useful products.
- An individual's capacity for action only reaches its fully developed form in work.
- Work provides a fixed temporal structure for the day and indeed for life.
- Work and the pay received from it enables the satisfaction of material needs for the greater part of the population.
- One's social worth is to a greater extent determined by the status of one's work.
- A significant proportion of the social interaction of adults occurs within the sphere of work.
- An entire system of norms and social positioning is mediated through the sphere of work.

In light of these attributes of the individual-work relationships it can be noted that such prerogatives are a dreamland for most urban youth particularly those in peripheral locations. Young people's reactions to this form of deprivation driven basically by the economic crisis and the conditions they find themselves in have been both aggressive and progressive. An underlying factor for these reactions is that although youth have no access to work, they attempt to obtain the benefits of work by employing their own strategies such as community assets management (or mismanagement).

Community assets management by youth in the context of unemployment can therefore be viewed from two angles; first: an analysis of how young people have been involved in the management of community assets and the resultant effects; and, discussion of proposals relating to how community assets management can be to solve the problems by and the problems of the unemployed youth in peri-urban

areas can be attempted drawing from both theoretical contributions and the situation on the ground. In this context, this discourse spells out these issues, expounding and exploring the dynamics in peri-urban development and management with youths being agents for community assets management in the context of unemployment.

## **PERI-URBAN SETTLEMENTS IN ZIMBABWE: GROWING CHALLENGES**

Zimbabwe like most developing countries has experienced rapid rates of urbanisation since independence. As colonial anti-urban in-migration policies were lifted after independence and as the rural economy continuously failed to meet the material and income needs of the population, there has been a huge influx of people into the country's urban centres. Whereas in 1980, twenty percent of the population lived in cities in 1992 the figure had grown to thirty-three percent (Chikanza, 2002). This rapid urbanization has had its own effects. Firstly social services provision and the existing infrastructure in the major towns are not equipped to deal with large masses of people. Health, sanitation, drinking water and education provision are severely under threat (Chikanza, 2002). Secondly, the depth of the economic crisis has led to a condition of primacy as the capital city Harare has by far outgrown all other urban settlements. The employment base in the major towns is also shrinking implying that a large proportion of the country's poor people now reside in urban centres. Lastly, the dualised economy inherited at independence has translated into polarised growth in urban centres with on the one hand an affluent area of high income earners (known as Low density areas- LDAs) and huge pockets of relatively poor areas (known as High density areas). The government has been under pressure to provide enough housing for the poor and this has been attempted through expansion of the present HDAs as well as development of new sites for low income housing. Schemes such as Tynwald, Westlea, Kuwadzana and Hatcliffe were developed after independence in Harare.

### **Hatcliffe Low-Income Suburb: Location and Conditions**

Hatcliffe is the only Northern district HDA in Harare, the suburb is found about twenty-two kilometres from the city centre. It borders the LDA suburbs of Philadelphia and Hodgety Hill. The suburb is about fifteen kilometres from Domboshava, a rural growth point that has of late become a satellite of Harare. Hatcliffe is also ten kilometres from the famous Sam Levy's Village in Borrowdale, an affluent commercial node which absorbs a significant proportion of the area's labour force. Hatcliffe was initially designed to meet the housing needs of a very small population. However as pressure for housing land

increased the suburb is continuously expanding to such an extent that such expansion has outpaced service and amenity provision until some houses have been constructed where there are no surfaced roads, no electricity and no piped water. Further expansion has led to a situation where people stay in temporary structures in slum-like conditions on planned stands as they look for adequate resources to construct permanent houses.

Dirwai (2000) has noted that the Hatcliffe Holding Camp comprises a collection of urban migrants with different of the groups having coming from different places in and Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe. One group came from Churu Farm, a former squatter camp created on the farm of the late veteran nationalist, Ndabaningi Sithole located near Glen View Township, a south western low-income suburb of the capital city. This group was resettled in Hatcliffe, by the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development, after the Government condemned the Churu camp as illegal. Another group of the Hatcliffe residents came from a squatter camp in Mbare near Mai Musodzi. These were removed at this site by the Harare City Council. The third group came from farms in the vicinity of Hatcliffe Holding Camp, most having been driven away by the farm owners (Dirwai, 2000). A total of 5371 households were estimated by Dirwai (2000) as the population of Hatcliffe in 2000. During the same period, the camp had 14 boreholes, of which only 6 were functioning. For sanitation, most households had same composite latrines, which, due to their shallowness and big family sizes in the area, tended to quickly fill up. As a result the health challenges have been noted as quite serious in the area (ibid).

Conditions in the suburb are improving as the recovery from the economic crisis is now evident through surfacing of roads installation of water and sewer reticulation services and the completion of a number of houses which had previously remained half-finished. The employment base in the suburb is however still very contracted and most residents survive on vending. There is also a significant proportion of unemployed youth in the suburb.

## **AN ANALYTICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Defining Youth**

Munchie (2004) asserts that there is no neutral English noun which can identify a period of youth with the same certainty and impersonality as child or adult. This statement echoes the difficulties that one can encounter when trying to define the youth cohort of any population. Thus whereas people are aware who is a child and who is an adult, it becomes hard for them to know who is a youth. Various definitions can

be applied with varying connotations and implications on the application of youth policies. Three definitions can be proposed here. These are youth as age, youth as a stage in personal development and youth as an emotive term. These definitions are complimentary to each other.

### ***Youth as Age***

An age related definition of youth seems from a first look to be a fairly easy task but analyzing how different societies and writers have approached this task will reveal how difficult it is to allocate a certain age group to the youth cohort of a population. A simplistic way is to divide the population into two groups; children and adults and then consider the term youth to be synonymous to children. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, for example, has stated that the term child be used to describe all those under the age of eighteen. The 18 years also coincides with the age of majority for the constitutions of most countries including that of Zimbabwe. The age of majority separates children from adults by giving voting and other rights to a person that has attained the age of majority. This has its own difficulties for instance such privileges are taken away by periods of training and education. It then becomes evident that the term youth cannot be restricted to children and should be used to mean people from both children and adults. The difficulty comes when considering how much of children and how much of adults should be taken to refer to youth. Various writers have used different categorisations. The British Crime Surveys Group in 1982 as quoted in Munchie (2004) made the following categorisations for offenders in Table 1.

***Table 1: Classification of young offenders***

<b>Age Group (Class)</b>	<b>Age (in years)</b>
Children	10-13
Juveniles	10-17
Young persons	14-17
Young adults	18-20
Adults	21 and above

The overlaps between different age groups can be noticed here showing the lack of precision of such definitions. Hearn (1994) defines youth as people between the age of 18 and 25 whilst Panayiotopoulos and Gerry (1991) consider the ages between 16 and 30 as an appropriate categorisation. Vasco (2002) considers the term to be synonymous to children under the age of majority. Other words usually denoted to mean youth include 'adolescents', 'young adults', 'the young' and 'juveniles'. For the purpose of this paper the term youth was used to mean all those between the ages of 14 and 30. Some difficulties of such a definition can be highlighted. First according to Munchie (2004) there are no precise moments when

childhood ends and adulthood begins. Panayiotopoulos and Gerry (1991) also point out that an age-related definition of youth is the most obvious and least satisfactory way of viewing youth.

### ***Youth as a stage in personal development***

An alternative way to view youth is by considering it as a stage in the development of the person. According to the United States Commission for Children (1991) youth is the transition to adulthood. It is a time of significant change and adjustment, a time when physical development outpaces social and emotional maturity. It is a period when the individual becomes more independent from families, relies increasingly on peers for advice and approval and experiment in high risk behaviours. Hearn (1994) adds that youth refers to a particular stage in the development of an individual when the person starts to define new roles and relations in terms of friends, family and work. It is a time when the individual is starting to search for his identity and define his feelings. It is a time of transition from childhood dependence to adult autonomy where attitudes and values become anchored to ideologies and remain fixed in this mould in life (Munchie: 2004). Panayiotopoulos and Gerry (1991) also said that youth can be defined in terms of the stage or extend of their employment or preparation for employment including school, high-school or university students, graduates, first-time labour entrants or job seekers, the under-employed and those in full or part-time employment.

### ***Youth as an emotive term***

Munchie (2004) raises the argument that youth and adolescence is an emotive term which usually conjures up a number of emotive and troubling images. On the one hand youth is largely defined by what it is lacking, what it is not rather than what it is. It is associated with immaturity, deficiency, vulnerability, neglect and deprivation (Munchie: 2004). Panayiotopoulos and Gerry (1991) say that the two sides from which youth are viewed are first in terms of its great potential to act as agent for growth and secondly in terms of its destructive capacity. The United States National Commission for Children (1991) views these contrasting views as first the view of adolescents as self-sufficient young adults who no longer need adult support or secondly as idle, aimless and potentially threatening individuals. Whatever the view the most fundamental common denominator linking youth is subordination, that is, youth as subjects. Subordination itself is a function of the effect that non-youth institutions have on the young (Panayiotopoulos and Gerry: 1991). Defining youth in emotive terms will likely lead to the formulation and implementation of youth policies which are largely irrelevant to the youth.

## **Youth and Unemployment**

A discussion of the youth-unemployment construct can be premised upon three tendencies identified by Panyiotopoulos and Gerry (1991) which are:

- the tendency in developing countries for the youth cohort to grow as a proportion of the overall population,
- the tendency for youth unemployment rates to double or even treble the corresponding adult rates, and,
- the tendency for teenagers or first-time job entrants to experience even higher levels of unemployment.

Thus unemployment becomes a problem of youth and its effects are felt more by youth as compared to adults. Youth have a tense and complex relationship with unemployment. In his biographical analysis of youth unemployment Alheit (1994) came up with the following conclusions. He identified the social problems of unemployment as among others, disruption of social reference points, dramatic change in everyday habits or habits of a lifetime, loss of identity and mental depression. Hearn (1994) proposes that youth who are unemployed experience feelings of rejection and humiliation while the lack of financial resources prevents them from becoming independent. Alheit (1994) adds that the loss of work may be more than a smooth biographical discontinuity such the death of a close relative, instead it may be a chaining together of different discontinuity experiences which can be coupled with individually in different ways. These ways may be both aggressive and depressive such as in correcting minor mistakes such as an exam pass or redundantly overwintering a period of unemployment (Alheit: 1994). Some of the effects of unemployment on the social level include threat to identity, that is, disruption of wishes and self definition. This often leads to drug and substance abuse by youth. Unemployment can also facilitate the formation of youth groups either as youth gangs or as formal youth groups such as youth clubs. These are necessitated by the fact that exclusion from unemployment often leads to social exclusion hence youth are likely to form own groups in order to compensate for this exclusion. Such groups where they do not involve criminal activities are healthy to the personal and social development of the youth.

According to Hearn (1994) the lack of possibilities for study leads to frustration, because they cannot fulfil their potential and as a consequence have to accept boring and unfulfilling jobs. The conclusion from this statement then becomes that in some cases unemployment is not a result of few or no jobs on the job market but may be a result of fear of underemployment by youth, that is, youth avoiding unfulfilling jobs which do meet the investment they put in education and the resultant ambitions and desires shaped by such an educational system. Thus according to Alheit (1994) life patterns based primarily on the employment system are being replaced by others that are determined first and foremost by the school system. This becomes more visible where there is a tendency to prolong vocational training



and learning for youth. Such educational systems and typical jobs prevent youth from thinking in a formal rational way (Hearn: 1994). Thus unemployment as well as under-employment determine the behaviour of urban youth.

### **Youth and Community Assets**

Livelihoods strategies by individuals and households depend on access to resources or assets (Coetzee, 2002). This bespeaks the integral role of assets in development. With respect to community assets, an individual's way of life and social well-being is dependant on how much access and use the individual has in community assets. This is more important for resource-less individuals such as unemployed youth whose only resources are those they own collectively with the community. To compensate for their lack of assets youth become more and more involved in community assets management (or mismanagement). For one to move from vulnerability through well-being to resilience assets are very important. These assets include financial, natural, human, as well as social capital including household relations (Brown, 2006). Trends such as employment changes act directly on livelihood assets which comprise of the five facets of capital; physical, natural, financial, human and social capital. There are transforming structures and processes that will in turn produce livelihood strategies with known livelihood outcomes. Unemployment thus represents the vulnerability context to youth. The successful disentanglement of youth from vulnerability then entails ensuring that youth have access to assets and the livelihood strategies that the youth will employ. The solution then becomes not that of simply creating more jobs for youth but to have a responsible youth who thinks in rational and productive ways and employs positive livelihood strategies to come up with viable solutions to their own problems. It is in this respect that various policies can be used to allow youth to manage community assets either voluntarily or for a reward so that youth can move away from the soft plastic balls of unemployment to the hard grilled facts of life. Youth learn at an early age how to manage assets so that in future when they have their own personal and private assets to enhance their resilience to the effects of shocks and trends in the social, political and economic environment.

Brown (2006) speaks of urban public space as an important element of community assets. These are defined as all space that has attained communal access or use rights whether in public, private communal or unknown ownership. They become a common property resource and include formal squares, roads, streets, vacant land, verges and other edge space. With legitimate claims and often ignored in a narrow policy focus on housing and shelter, urban public space becomes an essential resource for the poor who

cannot access private space which is too restricted and fragmented (Brown: 2006). These urban public spaces have become the new places of work for many of the urban poor, and are an essential element of physical capital used by poor urban households to support their livelihoods (ibid.).

## **PERI-URBAN DEVELOPMENTS AND THE YOUTH-EMPLOYMENT QUESTION**

Johnson (1974) asserts that changes in the edge of the city although less concentrated and involving less dramatic issues are of much greater importance due to among other things:

- The magnitude and quantum of land involved;
- The day to day lives of more people that are likely to be affected;
- The transfer of land from rural to urban purposes, this being fundamental alteration than many other land use changes which take place in urban areas; and,
- A reflection of more modern trends, portraying an urbanistic future more than the older parts of the city.

These characteristics are critical in the understanding of the dynamics in peri-urban areas and the essential issues that reflect day to day living of the populations. In this light, development at the urban fringe is mainly due to first a search for peace or secondly due to overspill effects from the town into the countryside (Thomas, 1974). The first reason usually leads to what is known as suburban development whilst the later results in peri-urban development at the urban-rural interface. Moonley (1999) views the later not simply as peri-urban but also as peripheral locations. Such areas are only partially assimilated into the growing urban complex. They are disconnected and marginalised from the main sites of business and commerce. Just like inner cities peri-urban areas become 'the other city'. However besides being social peripheries peri-urban areas also become locational peripheries.

Unemployed youth in peri-urban locations have to deal with two fundamental problems. Firstly they have to manage the inherent shortcomings of the area such as lack of employment. Secondly they have to deal with the locational disadvantages of the area which help to further marginalise both the area and the youth residing in such areas. Problems such as commuting including time and costs and the poorly developed links with the city centre have to be dealt with. Peri-urban youth therefore have limited access to both the city centre and to assets within the peri-urban settlement. Key issues for analysis include:

- The definitional elements of who youth are or are not;
- The kind of youth policies applied and extent of the effectiveness of such policies;
- The ratio and proportionality of unemployment between the youth and adults: generally, being higher among youth relative to the adults.
- The extent of the unemployment plague, deeper effects being associated with youth than adults.
- The reactive tactics of youth to unemployment; provision being to varied and diverse ways which may be either positive or negative to the health of the peri-urban space;

- The prevalence of underemployment is both a condition of youth and a cause of unemployment.
- The existence of community assets, which may be the immediate starting point for the youth crafting their livelihood strategies, in terms of managing such resources; and,
- The two-fold nature of problems that peri-urban youth has to grapple with: the problems of the location per se and then the offshoot challenges of peri-urban areas which act to marginalise them from the city.

## **SNAPSHOT OF LESSONS FROM HATCLIFFE**

The study involved a qualitative analysis of the issues on the ground. In this regards the methods used for data collection are basically qualitative focussing primarily on observations. Interviews with key informants were also carried out in order to augment the data collected in the observations. Focussed group discussions were also used to broaden the view. The qualitative data collected has been presented as cases. The cases presented here summarize these efforts focussing on aspects like management of community assets by the youth including their maintenance and repair, safeguarding, cleaning and refurbishing. Mismanagement practices noted include vandalism and pollution. Thus, more management than mismanagement practices were observed amongst the youth the researchers interacted with.

### **Case 1: Criminal to be initiative!**

Jonah, a twenty-eight year old man is considered a young man by local standards. Although he has recently married and has a one year-old child, he does not own sizable assets to be considered rich. He survives on casual jobs. Recently he has found part-time employment as a manual labourer with the Harare City Council and his job includes road maintenance and installation of sewage pipes. This brings him some income but it is not enough for his daily household needs. He has to find other ways of surviving. Recently he found an opportunity in repairing boreholes within the Hatcliffe neighbourhood.

Water has been a problem in Hatcliffe especially at the height of the economic crisis in 2006. Water shortages in Hatcliffe become critical since it is a relatively new scheme and has not had full installation of water and sewage reticulation services. In the wake of the Cholera outbreak that hit the country in 2008 officials engaged alternative means to cater for the water needs of the Hatcliffe residents. Boreholes have been drilled in order to provide safe drinking water to the residents. The boreholes, Type B bush pumps (see photograph1) were drilled with the assistance of UNICEF and are each managed by a development committee. The water demand however is still very high in relation to the number of boreholes hence there are constant breakdowns. The development committees generally lack resources and accountability.

After one of the boreholes had a breakdown, Jonah, with the assistance of other youth, voluntarily

repaired it. However they soon realised they could generate some income from the activity. They formed a self-imposed development committee and started to collect funds from the residents under the pretext that they had replaced the borehole pump and that they needed to form a reserve fund for future repairs. Conflicts, however, arose with some members of the community over the authority of Jonah's committee. Jonah and his friends resolved the issue by occasionally using threats while at the same time soliciting support from some members of the adult community including members of the dormant development committee. Once they had found some backing the youth now occasionally resorted to disengaging the borehole pretending that it had a breakdown and then proceed to collect funds from the community. Jonah and friends however soon abandoned the activity after mounting pressure from the residents and fear of the police. Interestingly after they ceased the borehole had a genuine breakdown remained unrepaired for more than a month before the development committee took-over.

**Case 2: Pay or no pay, order is better.**

The high water demand and the scarcity of boreholes in Hatcliffe have resulted in long queues at the boreholes especially on days when the erratic piped water supply is out. The queues are often characterised by disorder and constant scuffles and conflicts by community members as they compete to get the precious commodity. Some group of youth in the community have found the opportunity in preventing the possibility of these conflicts. They have organised themselves so that:

- They orderly put drawers of water in queues;
- They give first preference to elderly people to pump water from the boreholes.

Although, they do not receive significant tokens from their appreciable duty, they youth have not received community recognition of respect and the same activities have also provided them with a window for avoiding downright idleness which is the chief cause for indulgence in criminal activities like robberies, mugging, rape and housebreaks.

**Case 3: Initiative to address educational needs in the community – cost-sharing tactics**

Sharon, Leah and Themba are graduates from one the universities in Zimbabwe and residents of Hatcliffe. Armed with their undergraduate degrees, they have unsuccessfully looked for work -jobs are difficult to come by these days .Sharon came up with an idea which all the three had a buy-in: to open their own community-based school, operating as a private college. After looking for funds and finding approval from the relevant authorities they started enrolling students. It was difficult to find premises to carry out their activities so they secured the services of a local church in a lease kind of an agreement where the church would let the college use their premises on week days in return for some rent payable to the

church. The college also helps to clean the building together with general maintenance of the premises as well as contributing to the repair and maintenance costs of the building. The problem of dividing the building into classrooms was solved by using removable timber boards so that the building could be used for school classes on weekdays and as a church hall on weekends. The college has since grown that it now has Advanced level classes. Other similar colleges, all of them operated by youth are mushrooming in Hatcliffe resembling the fashionableness of the matter. The problem when the supply of an activity grows in the face of a shrinking demand is that of non-viability of the venture. Now, Sharon, Leah and Themba have to work extra hard to prove to the community that they are the best tutors for this community. At least for them, the current engagement is transitional; if the official job market opens up for them, they will probably leave and join the formal employment sector.

#### **Case 4: The youth as eyes, ears and hands in community initiatives**

A large proportion of the residents of Hatcliffe depend on vending for an income and for augmenting their wages, at least when speaking of those that are in the formal employment sector. Vending is mainly practiced along streets, at the community shopping centre and in other urban public spaces. One of these public spaces vendors have 'invaded' is along the main road that links Hatcliffe with the city centre on one side and with the rural service centre of Domboshava on the other other end is the most flourishing vending space in Hatcliffe. This area is known by the locals as 'The Dust'. It offers a market for the vegetable and farm produce from surrounding farms and from Domboshava. It is also the market for different wares and groceries sold by the residents. There is however a constant war with the police as vending at the site is illegal. Youth activities at the informal market sites such as The Dust include:

- warning fellow vendors of approaching police,
- carrying wares in times of emergencies such as police raids or rain storms,
- general cleaning and
- guarding wares for those who spent the night with their wares at the market place,
- and recently the youth have helped by constructing makeshift toilets at the site.

#### **Case 5: Combining theatrics with practical community benefiting projects**

Bornfree is the name of a network of youth in Hatcliffe community. But on a more national level it has chapters in various localities. The club emphasises freedom for the youth. Its membership is voluntary. The youth have a platform for freedom of expression through drama, song and dance. In hatcliffe, it also provides a scene for interaction of youth in the community. Apart from its theatrical involvements, the Bonfree Hatcliffe chapter has also been involved in mantainance of community assets through cleaning of public places such as shopping centres and clinics and road mantainance projects. For its existence, the

network thrives on some intermittent funds from various non-governmental organisations working with youth.

## CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

This paper has indicated that there are various strategies employed by youth in peri-urban areas in order to evade the negative effects of unemployment, and also to shun away from vices that negatively affect community. As outlined, the strategies can be divided into four categories namely those which are individual efforts, those which are informal but collective, those which are formal and collective and those which are of a collaborative style which they engage adults or other non-youth partners. The underlying principle of these strategies as youth are employed in the management of community assets is the search for a 'reward' that would have otherwise been obtained from formal employment. Thus youth are engaged in voluntary efforts as long as they benefit either materially or career-wise. The article has, as a matter of fact, established that the youth with all the shortcomings they may have and all the negative images they may portray (liabilities) can still be a useful stakeholder in the management of community assets. Devising policy to fully engage the youth should focus primarily on positively affecting youth efforts and youth interactions whilst reducing the effects of unemployment to youth. Youth should also be encouraged to positively participate in the management of community assets. This instils a sense of belonging to the community they are established and brings with it a culture of place stewardship which is central to sustainable urban development. Peri-urban settlements being places in transition require such an investment as they are to expand but with a minimum of negative challenges.

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