

What happened to the talisman?

Chapter Two

IDENTIFYING THE NEEDS OF SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH: THE RELEVANCE OF YEP

The first step in evaluating a programme is to determine whether it meets the needs of its target group. In this chapter a needs analysis of South African youth will be conducted and the relevance of YEP to those needs will be investigated in order to answer the first question of the study:

What is the relevance of YEP to the needs of South African youth?

The discussion will focus on the relevance of YEP to:

- the youth problematique in South Africa;
- factors contributing to the youth problematique;
- the educational needs of South African youth; and
- the goals of outcomes-based education in South Africa.

2.1 Relevance of YEP to the youth problematique in South Africa

2.1.1 Introduction

Reflecting upon the youth problematique in South Africa as introduced in Chapter One, the immediate question that comes to mind is *What happened to the talisman of South African youth and why?* To answer this question it is important to

determine the state of the South African youth problematique and the factors that contributed to it. Such an investigation will provide information about the types of problematique and the social and historical background that had to be taken into consideration in the design of YEP.

In order to determine the state and extent of the youth problematique in South Africa, it was necessary to access statistics about various types of problems confronting youth. However, it was extremely difficult and time-consuming to access the relevant sources and accurate figures; in some cases the required information did not exist. As a result, I had to rely on newspaper reports and various official and unofficial sources. Therefore, the statistical figures presented in this chapter need to be viewed as estimates trying to paint a broad picture of the problematique rather than a definite, up-to-date presentation of the state of affairs.

The study of the youth problematique in this chapter will be limited to:

- teenage pregnancy;
- alcohol and drug abuse;
- violence;
- suicide; and
- HIV/AIDS.

2.1.2 Teenage pregnancy

- It is estimated that in 1999, 11 per cent of terminations of pregnancy were on women under 18 years of age (Dickson-Tetteh & Ladha, 2000:397).
- By the age of 19 years, 35 per cent of all South African teenagers have been pregnant or have had a child (Dickson-Tetteh & Ladha, 2000:397).
- Teenagers are becoming sexually active at earlier age. Trends show they are not using protection, are falling pregnant and are keeping their babies (*Independent on Saturday*, 4 March 2000).

- In just one year, 17 000 babies were born to mothers 16 years of age and younger. Of that number, 4 000 babies were born to mothers under the age of 14 (*City Press*, 16 April 2000).
- The sharp increase in unwanted pregnancies from 43 per cent in the 1998/1999 financial year to 56 per cent in 1999/2000 has been described as alarming in view of the devastating HIV/AIDS epidemic (*The Daily News*, 4 May 2000).

2.1.3 Alcohol and drug abuse

- Teenagers in Cape Town spend about R14 million per year on alcoholic drinks (*Die Burger*, 28 September 1998).
- Grade 11 pupils in Cape Town spend about R22 million a year on cigarettes, alcohol, dagga and mandrax (*Sunday Times*, 17 October 1999).
- Over a quarter (28 per cent) of Grade 8 learners in Durban secondary schools consume alcohol regularly (Parry, quoted in DoE & DoSS, 1999:31).
- Teenagers are the biggest group addicted to drugs. About 400,000 school pupils in Western Cape between the ages of 13 and 20 are addicted (*Die Burger*, 13 July 1998).
- The use of drugs is the main reason for deaths in the 16-24 year age bracket; 40 per cent of all teenage deaths are drug and alcohol related (*Rapport*, 10 May 1998).

2.1.4 Violence

- One study of secondary schools in Cape Town in 1993 showed that of the total sample of 7 304 learners, 11 per cent reported that they had physically injured another learner at school within the previous year, and 11,7 per cent reported that they had injured someone outside the school. Nearly half (43,3 per cent) of the sample said that they had been physically injured in the past 12 months, while 19,9 per cent were injured in the school by other learners or members of staff (DoE & DoSS, 1999:8).

- Youth themselves are the major perpetrators of violence against their peers. A study by the Child Protection Unit in 1995 suggested that children under 19 years old carried out 18,5 per cent of reported cases of violence against children. Children under 21 years of age constituted 28,6 per cent of these cases (DoE & DoSS, 1999).
- Violence against girls mostly takes the form of rape. In 1996 and 1997, girls aged 17 and under constituted approximately 40 per cent of all reported rapes nationally (DoE & DoSS, 1999).
- It has been estimated that the average age of people committing crime is reducing: where it was 22 years in 1988, by 1990 it had dropped to 17 years (RSA, 1997:16).

A cursory comparison of the juvenile convictions in South Africa with that of several other countries around the globe indicates that the state of violence and crime among South African youth is more severe than that of many other countries (see Table 2.1, but note that the comparison is limited to a few countries and is therefore not conclusive).

Table 2.1
Comparison of juvenile convictions in 1986 and 1990 with the total number of people convicted

Year	Country	Total Juvenile Conviction	Total People Convicted	Juvenile as % of Total Conviction
1986 1990	Botswana	97	5 834	1,7
		84	5 713	1,5
1986 1990	Japan	569	76 306	0,7
		420	58 603	0,7
1986 1990	Swaziland	879	59 988	1,5
		992	65 737	1,5
1986 1990	England and Wales	48 006	381 756	12,6
		24 570	339 675	7,2
1986 1990	South Africa	98 979	380 094	26,0
		95 397	364 518	26,2

Source: United Nations 2000 <http://www.uncjin.org/stats/jconvict.html>

2.1.5 Suicide

- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), a study in 1990 showed that South Africa's teenage suicide rate was the eighth highest of 33 countries, with six suicides for every 100,000 teenagers. More recent research indicated that suicide rates in South Africa range from 6 to 19 for every 100,000 teenagers (*Sunday Tribune*, 6 July 1997).
- Most teenage suicides happen in the 16 to 24 year old group, and about 40 per cent of all teenage suicides are related to drug and alcohol abuse (*Rapport*, 10 May 1998).

2.1.6 HIV/AIDS

Even though Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a disease, it also represents a certain lifestyle, one that in many cases lacks moral boundaries.

- Over four million people – about one in every eight adults – are HIV positive. The prevalence rates are highest among young people, especially teenage girls (UNAIDS, July 2000, cited by Coomb, 2000:8).
- Between 1997 and 1998, HIV infection rates among young people almost doubled (Dickson-Tetteh & Ladha, 2000:393).
- The 1998 national ante-natal sero-prevalence survey revealed that HIV prevalence among South African women less than 20 years old was 21 per cent. This is close to double the 1997 figure of 12,7 per cent, and by far the largest increase in any age group (Dickson-Tetteh & Ladha, 2000:396).

Considering that approximately 44 per cent of the total population of South Africa are under the age of 20 years (Dickson-Tetteh & Ladha, 2000:393), it is clear that a vast section of the South African population is at risk and therefore needs urgent protection and assistance.

2.1.7 The relevance of YEP

The first motif behind the creation of YEP was an educational reaction to the youth problematic in South Africa and an attempt to combat it. The chosen themes (see Table 2.2) were included in YEP in order to address the youth problematic in an effective manner.

Considering the prevalence of teenage pregnancies, dealing with personal and family responsibilities was believed to be an important theme relevant in any life skills intervention programme. Themes such as *Self-discipline, Peer Pressure, and Marriage* were included to emphasise the importance of respect for oneself and one's body. The themes *Alcohol Abuse, Drug Abuse, and Health and Healing* in YEP aim to address the problem of substance abuse. The findings on violence among youth indicate that many youth have problems sustaining a relationship and resolving conflicts peacefully. Themes such as *Relationships, Communication and Relationships* and *Resolving Conflicts* relate to this shortcoming. Strategies to deal with stress and disappointments in life are among the skills that South African youth seem to lack. The YEP themes of *Tests and Difficulties* and *Joy and Happiness* aim to address this need.

Table 2.2
Aspects of the youth problematic and related themes in YEP

Youth Problematique	YEP Theme
Teenage pregnancy	Peer Pressure, Self-respect, Marriage
Alcohol and drug abuse	Alcohol Abuse, Drug Abuse, Health and Healing
Violence	Communication and Relationships, Resolving Conflicts, Obedience to Law
Suicide	Tests and Difficulties, Joy and Happiness
HIV/AIDS	AIDS, Self-discipline

2.2 Relevance of YEP to factors contributing to the youth problematique in South Africa

Two sets of factors seem to contribute to the youth problematique in South Africa – namely, South African factors that affect it directly, and global factors that impact on South Africa. These are discussed below.

2.2.1 South African factors

Factors unique to South Africa are discussed under two headings – the apartheid era and the post-apartheid era.

2.2.1.1 the apartheid era

During the apartheid era, the majority of South African youth were negatively affected by the country's political ideologies. The word 'apartheid' itself literally means *apart-ness*. In the apartheid period, people were separated and classified according to their racial groups – white, coloured, Indian and African. The philosophy behind apartheid was segregation of races. It believed that different races had different cultures which needed to be kept separate. Policies of apartheid touched the lives of the South African people in various ways:

- the impact of apartheid on social life**

During the apartheid period, non-whites were considered to be second-class citizens. They were forced to live in designated reserves called Bantustans or homelands (Davenport, 1987:519). At various times, Africans, Indians and coloured people were evicted from their lands and placed in the Bantustans (Davenport, 1987: 445-449). The migration of African males to mines and towns had a severe impact on the family structure and normal life of African families. Some families disintegrated as their members moved to cities to earn a living (Cross, 1992).

The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (RSA, 1949) and the Separate Amenities Act (RSA, 1953) further limited the social integration of the various racial groups. As a result, members of one racial group seldom had the opportunity to associate freely with the members of other groups and learn about them in normal social circumstances. Thus racial estrangement and disunity among different racial groups resulted.

- **the impact of apartheid on the economy**

Great inequity in employment opportunities and economic conditions prevailed among different racial groups during the apartheid era. According to the statistics from 1997, households in the bottom expenditure quintile of the population (largely black South Africans) spent 3 per cent of the total average annual expenditure, while households in the top quintile spent up to 61 per cent of national expenditure (DoE & DoSS, 1999:23). The big gap in the economic conditions of the different race groups led to differential access to material resources and wealth. The majority of the South African people lived in poverty and endured a low quality of life.

- **the impact of apartheid on education**

With the passing of the Bantu Education Act in 1953, the education of most South African learners changed (Davenport, 1987:374). The curriculum for Africans emphasised the learning of African languages throughout primary school and the simultaneous introduction of English and Afrikaans. Poorly-paid and poorly-qualified teachers, a high pupil-teacher ratio, overcrowded classrooms, and a lack of textbooks and equipment contributed to defective education for Africans (Cross, 1992:202).

Many years of fighting for freedom further affected the quality of education among young African learners, as activists often used schools to fight for their

cause. Education came second to political freedom, as is visible in the slogan *Liberation before Education*.

- **the impact of apartheid on moral, emotional and spiritual well-being**

Probably the most devastating effect of apartheid was on the moral, emotional, and spiritual domain of the South African people. Labelling and categorising people according to the colour of their skin, removing and chasing families from their hometowns, restricting movement, and introducing inferior education negatively impacted on the self-confidence of many South Africans. Whites thought themselves superior; blacks were taught to think themselves as inferiors (Mayson, 2002:48). As Van der Westhuizen (1992:5) said, “*There is no way in which one can ignore, deny or minimize the effect apartheid had on the psychological well-being of South Africa's peoples*”. Nell (in Jettoo, 1997:6) added, “*Racist oppression gives rise to psychic mutilation of its victims*”.

Disrespect for morality, defiance of authority, dishonesty and sometimes deceit became strategies of survival (Cross, 1992:200). The Joint Framework Document (DoE & DoSS, 1999:41) describes the moral atmosphere of South African society as follows:

A society where violence is prevalent and powerful, where families are broken down with few strong institutions to take their place, where identity has been stripped, where manhood is equated with aggressive control, where positive role models are few, and where drugs and alcohol are rife, is a society which provides weak ‘moral’ grounding for young people.

Apartheid affected all South Africans – both white and non-white, although in different ways. As Bishop Tutu said during an interview on SABC television (14 November 2000), “*the perpetrators are harmed as much as their victims*”.

2.2.1.2 the post-apartheid era

Since 1994, South Africa has been going through a period of transition, a period which is characterised by transformation and fundamental changes. The following summarises the transformations that have taken place since 1994 and their impact on youth:

- **the impact of transition on politics**

Politically, South Africa became a democracy after decades of authoritarian government. For the first time in the history of the country, the rights of all people – regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, or language – were acknowledged and legislated. In spite of its advantages, the transition to democracy has its own challenges. One has been misunderstanding the concept of democracy. Johnson's (1987) work contains the notion that democracy has gone through changes. He believes that, in contrast to the classical view of democracy as "*the opportunity to realise one's humanity through commitment to something higher or transcendent, it reflects an individualistic view of life with the individual in complete control*" (1987:78). This description matches the behaviour of some South African youth, who seem to equate democracy with liberty without much sense of responsibility and commitment.

- **the impact of transition on social life**

An important aspect of the transition to democracy is racial mixing and freedom of association. The previously racially-segregated areas became open to all. Different racial groups found the opportunity to work, study and live side by side. However, in spite of legislative changes, many people – including the youth – still experience racial discrimination, misconceptions, mistrust, and ignorance.

- **the impact of transition on the economy**

Economically, South Africa has witnessed great changes since the dawn of democracy. As a result of lifting the sanctions against foreign investment, more opportunities have become available. Affirmative action has been introduced in order to make up for some of the inequalities of the past. However, as far as employment for the youth is concerned, lack of suitable education opportunities and adequate skills have put many African youth at a disadvantage. In October 1995, the overall unemployment rate for young men and women was 23 per cent (October 1995 Household Survey, quoted in National Youth Commission, 2000:12); the authors of the report expected it to rise to 37,6 per cent in 1998.

- **the impact of transition on education**

In terms of education, the transformation has been massive. The racially-divided departments of education were replaced with one national department of education and with one national education policy – outcomes-based education (OBE). However, many schools still suffer from a shortage of facilities and equipment. A number of African learners have moved to formerly-white exclusive schools. Although it appears that they receive satisfactory academic education, some experience racial discrimination and many find themselves in the need of cultural adjustment. Others suffer the consequences of their poor educational background and lack the coping skills for living in a society in transition.

- **the impact of transition on religion and morality**

In respect of religion and moral values, there have also been some changes. The closed and prejudiced policies of apartheid that advocated the ideologies of one religion gave way to policies, which are open and inclusive. Now all religions and belief systems, regardless of their origins, are practiced. Constitutionally, everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion. This has given the people of South Africa the opportunity to know about

various religions, on one hand, but on the other seem to have relaxed the sense of religious obligation and general morality. The teaching of moral and religious education in schools has been replaced by the teaching of values across the curriculum, which has not yet filled the moral gap satisfactorily.

- summary of paradigm shifts and their challenges**

The transition from apartheid to democracy – although initially political in nature – affected all aspects of the lives of the South African people and caused paradigm shifts in various arenas as discussed above. These shifts introduced new challenges and opportunities, that in turn affect the lives of South African youth. Table 2.3 presents a cursory summary of the shifts and the challenges that transition from authoritarian rule to democracy seems to have brought about.

Table 2.3
Summary of the impact of social and political paradigm shifts in South Africa and their consequences for South African youth

Paradigm	From	To	Consequences and challenges for the youth
political	apartheid; authoritarian	democratic; consultative	shared power; shared resources; freedom; democracy misunderstood
social	segregation; bilingual; unequal	integration; multilingual; equal	multi-cultural society; unresolved emotions; racial stigmas; lack of conflict management; racial misconceptions
moral	traditional values; Christian values	open to various ideologies and beliefs	freedom of choice; moral laxity; moral degeneration
economic	isolated; exclusive	integrated; inclusive	open opportunities; high expectations; unemployment
education	multiple departments of education; discriminatory; teacher-centred	one department of education; non-discriminatory; learner-centred	equal opportunities; uneven resources; disciplinary problems; cultural, language and racial conflicts

In spite of the transition to democracy, many symptoms of the youth problematique still exist. Being a recent and significant part of the lives of the majority of youth, apartheid has left them with a number of social, emotional, moral and spiritual scars that will take some time to heal. Considering the background of the South African youth, YEP as a life skills programme had to be cognisant of the special circumstances of its target group, and to include content and strategies that would help the youth overcome their problems. To achieve this, stories, scenarios, and case studies on the past and present environment of the youth have been included in the programme to motivate them to reflect on those issues and to evaluate their own reactions to them.

2.2.2 Global factors

South Africa is not alone in the problem of youth problematique – it is a worldwide phenomenon. Being part of the global community, South Africa and its youth are affected by factors that impact on the rest of the world. Furthermore, the youth problematique cannot be isolated from social, political, and economic factors. Various research studies (British Crime Survey, 2000; North Carolina, 2000; Sociology Central, 2000) have exposed the universality of factors contributing to the youth problematique. The most important are discussed below.

2.2.2.1 single parenthood

One of the factors that seem to affect the rise of violence and crime among youth is being part of a single-parent family. Broken families, even families of working mothers, are more at risk. Working parents who do not spend enough time with their children do not provide them with role models to protect them against crime (Ryan & McLean, 1987). Also, children and youth living away from home, far away from their families and acquaintances, seem to be more at risk (Sociology Central, 2000:2).

In modern societies, single parenthood is becoming more prevalent as the rate of divorce and unmarried families rises. In South Africa, single parenthood and

children living away from their families seems to be on the increase (DoE & DoSS, 1999:24). According to a 1996 study (Zuma, 2002), 42 per cent of children under seven years old live with their single mothers; the fathers to 333,510 children are untraceable and 24,300 children have untraceable mothers; 99 000 households are headed by children aged between 10 and 17. It is apparent that the normal family structure has been disturbed. According to the Moral Regeneration Framework (RSA, 2002:16), “*South African families are evolving into diverse structures – single parent, multigenerational, gay, teen-headed, adoptive and fostering. There is no normative family.*”

2.2.2.2 social transition

Fundamental changes in social systems and family structures are almost universally accepted as a major cause of juvenile problems around the world (Sociology Central, 2000:2). In South Africa, the transition from apartheid to democracy – although initially political in nature – affected all aspects of the lives of the South African people, and caused paradigm shifts in various arenas of their lives (see section 2.2.1.2). These shifts introduced new challenges and opportunities, which in turn affected the lives of South African youth. Shaw (1998:26) is of the opinion that “*political liberalization in South Africa brought a crime explosion*”. The youth problematic, therefore, must be interpreted and understood within the context of transformation.

2.2.2.3 unemployment and poverty

Another factor, which has had an impact on the youth problematic is poverty and unemployment (Easy Sociology Central, 2000:2). In South Africa, urban centres with the highest poverty level have experienced the highest crime rates (DoE & DoSS, 1999:37). These findings seem to confirm that there is a direct relationship between crime and poverty. However, other research findings contest this claim, saying that affluent communities are not crime-free and that poverty on its own does not cause crime (Juvenile Crime, 2000:2). Moreover, cases of

corruption among upper-class populations indicate that poverty aggravates the problem, but would not be the sole cause of it.

2.2.2.4 low self-esteem

Another factor, which seems to contribute to the youth problematic is low self-esteem (Easy Sociology Central, 2000:2). In South Africa low self-esteem is considered to be a contributing risk factor to crime among youth, largely due to the discriminatory history of apartheid (DoE & DoSS, 1999:35).

2.2.2.5 neglect of moral and spiritual education

Research shows that many juvenile crimes are committed by youth who come from dysfunctional families and who were not taught right from wrong (Easy Sociology Central, 2000:7). Moreover, a decline in the teaching of moral and religious education in schools seems to be another contributing factor for the dropping of moral standards amongst youth (Straughan, 1982:2).

The discussion so far demonstrated that South African youth have many challenges to face and various battles to win, as they must fight against the side-affects of apartheid, the inherent problems of the transition era, and the threats emanating from global factors. Almost all the risk factors for the social and moral problematic are present in South Africa. At the same time, the moral and spiritual standards are declining as not enough attention is paid to morality and moral education by the educational institutions and by the society at large. An effort to improve the situation seems too difficult. As McDaniel (1998) rightly believes, there are too many forces in the lives of youth that promote unethical, immoral, and self-serving behaviour, and this keeps them apart from their best, the state of *talisman*. The only way to help the youth is to educate them. As Nelson Mandela said:

No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate,

and if they can learn to hate they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite (ANC, 1998:4).

Awareness about various local and global factors that have affected and are still affecting the lives of South African youth is an essential ingredient for effective designing of a programme that aims to improve the behaviour of this age group. The study of YEP curriculum shows that youth problematique themes, contextualised questions, and life-related dilemmas that are contained in the programme to some degree reflect the social, economic, political and cultural background of South African youth.

2.3 Relevance of YEP to the educational needs of South African youth

The design of YEP has been based on the assumption that South African youth have multiple educational needs over-arched by the developmental characteristics of their age. Since this assumption is central to the planning of YEP, it had to be examined, as Steller (1983:75) pointed out, “*Assumptions are vital prerequisites in the process of curriculum planning*”.

Investigations on this assumption revealed the need for moral, spiritual, social and cognitive education. These are discussed below.

2.3.1 The need for moral and spiritual education

The African National Congress (ANC) document, *Ethical Transformation: Statement on the Moral Renewal of the Nation* (ANC, 1998:3) declared crime to be the “*outward forms of a diseased social climate*”. The very same document found the breakdown in the moral fibre of society responsible for crime and corruption in the society. Describing the depth and the seriousness of the problem, then Deputy Minister of Education Mkhatchwa (2000) called the moral situation

in the country “*a moral time-bomb*”. Jacob Zuma (2000), Deputy President of South Africa said:

Questions of right and wrong, good and evil – questions of ethical behaviour and moral values – are as pertinent for national survival as they were in the days of the Greek philosophers, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.

He also referred to the present situation of morality in South Africa as a “*moral crisis*”.

The importance of moral and spiritual values cannot be denied, as they are the motivating factor behind people’s choice of behaviour and conduct. Al Gore (cited in Miller, 2000:5) identified lack of morals and spirituality as the core of most problems in life:

The more deeply I search for the roots of the global environmental crisis, the more I am convinced that it is an outer manifestation of an inner crisis that is, for lack of a better word, spiritual.

A feeling of spiritual happiness and satisfaction is cardinal to the sense of contentment and wholeness. Without such satisfaction the young person would feel lost and aimless. Effendi (1973:86) writes:

How to attain spirituality is, indeed, a question to which every young man and woman must sooner or later try to find a satisfactory answer. It is precisely because no such satisfactory reply has been given or found, that modern youth finds itself bewildered... Indeed, the chief reason for the evils now rampant in society is a lack of spirituality.

Research has shown that defective moral and spiritual development in some cases promotes the youth problematic. Garbarino (cited in DoE & DoSS, 1999:34), in his research with young male murder convicts, found that violent young men were often philosophically *lost* and experienced *spiritual emptiness*. Kageyama (2000:5) believes that people with a psychological or spiritual sense of *empty self* seek to bury their void through criminal acts.

In response to the great need for moral awakening, the South African government initiated several national conferences on moral regeneration during the last three years. It called on various stakeholders to co-operate in tackling the moral problem in the country. Education Minister Kader Asmal commissioned a committee to investigate the place of values in outcomes-based education. After much deliberation, ten constitutional values were identified and reflected in the *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy* in August 2001 (DoE, 2001).

In spite of these initiatives it seems that the efforts invested so far do not match the great need of South African youth for moral and spiritual regeneration. The high incidence of drug and alcohol abuse, and of crime in general in South African schools, indicates that the moral and spiritual health of the youth needs attention and that the assumption about youth's need for the spiritual and moral education is a fact. Personal experience and observation of teaching and learning in schools have shown that very little moral and spiritual education is going on in the South African schools, as most educators spend their time teaching academic subjects.

As far as the moral and spiritual developmental characteristics of the youth are concerned, during the period of adolescence youth go through a moral and spiritual awakening. This is the period when they formulate their own code of ethics (Nelson, 1996:63) and shape their moral character. In this period in their lives they start questioning the value systems held by their family and compare it with that of their peers. They also start thinking and debating about philosophical and meta-physical issues. The spiritual and moral experiences of youth during this period in life will affect them permanently and will supply them with moral standards that give their lives purpose and depth (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1993:204).

Therefore, considering the urgent need of South African youth for moral and spiritual education on the one hand and their interest in moral issues on the other,

the designing of YEP – which primarily attempts to improve the moral and spiritual behaviour of youth – is relevant and timely.

2.3.2 The need for social education

Almost every social endeavour from building a house to solving conflicts requires some degree of co-operation and negotiation. The long-term success of every friendship, marriage, family relationship, partnership, community group, church, sport, and business is affected by the quality of inter-personal skills. Contemporary societies place a great deal of importance on their citizens' ability to work co-operatively with others (Jaques, 1991; Brandt, 1991). However, as Kagan *et al.* (1985:367) have rightfully identified, although learners generally do not work co-operatively in school, they are expected to do so when they leave school to enter the workforce. South African society, with its history of racial discrimination, has a greater social challenge to deal with. The prolonged period of racial and cultural separation during the apartheid years resulted in feelings of estrangement and suspicion between different racial groups in South Africa. In a study about racism in schools, conducted by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) on 1 729 black and white learners, 62 per cent said that there had been incidents of racism in their schools in the form of racial name-calling, racial harassment, and fights (*The Teacher*, January 2001). As the *Freedom and Obligation* document (DoE & SABC, 2000:11) says, youth have to be “*socially and morally rehabilitated*”.

In respect of the development of social skills and attitudes, investigations show that adolescence is a crucial period in the lives of individuals. During adolescence, youth spend most of their time at school with peers. At this age youth are vulnerable to the opinion of their peers and are easily influenced by them. The rapid and broad spread of the youth problematique among the youth can to some degree be attributed to this characteristic.

Moreover, the self-concept of young people is formed at this stage. The youth “*redefines, discovers new dimensions, modifies his self-image and emerges with*

new self-concept" (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1993:10) and is greatly influenced by how others treat them and how they perceive such treatment (Mwamwenada, 1996:363). Being labelled by others has a self-fulfilling prophecy effect – that is, the person tends to act as expected (Schlebusch, 1979:15). This situation especially applies to those South African youth who during the apartheid regime were racially discriminated against, labelled and stigmatised. As a result of such treatment some suffer from low self-image and lack of confidence. Having lived in segregated communities for years, many lack the knowledge and skills to live co-operatively with other racial and cultural groups.

Behr (1990:36) believes that youth experience various degrees of fear and anxiety during adolescence, especially when they are ridiculed, humiliated and rejected by their peers. In the case of South African youth, they carry an extra emotional burden as they suffer from the emotional turmoil of the past: "...many South African children were born, reared, have matured, and died in a violent environment" (DoE & DoSS, 1999:22).

The emotional health of adolescents impacts on their general well-being. Various studies indicate that emotions affect the academic performance of students and their general functioning (Goleman, 1996:262). This is because learning does not happen in isolation from learners' feelings. As Prescott (1992:6) said, "*Learning is an emotional as well as cognitive process*". The age of adolescence is a critical time for setting down emotional habits, and therefore is the appropriate time for intervention (Goleman, 1996:xiii).

Considering the social-emotional background of South African youth and the racial segregation they have experienced, it is understandable if some youth suffer from low self-esteem, are affected by racial stigma, and carry the social and emotional hurts of the past. A study of the proposed outcomes and the ground rules of YEP shows that improving the social and emotional behaviour of youth is an important aspect of the programme.

2.3.3 The need for cognitive education

The majority of South African youth have attended under-privileged and ill-equipped schools in the past. The teaching methods and strategies, which were used in these schools were, and in some cases still are, not conducive to development of critical thinking and rational reasoning. Lecturing and rote learning have been the dominant teaching and learning strategies for decades. The Bodenstein Commission (1986:9) said, “*...motivation of pupils is too often directed towards the memorisation of facts and acquisition of a certificate*”.

Lack of critical thinking, problem solving, and reasoning skills have often been associated with rote learning as learners are seldom required to think and reflect on what they learn. They mostly imitate and follow without any questions (Slabbert, 1997:17). In this regard, the National Teacher Education Audit said:

'Talk and chalk' textbook-based, examination-driven, rote-learning methods dominate at present and must be changed to more active, co-operative, learner-centred approaches (Hofmeyr & Hall, 1995:92).

Hofmeyr and Hall (1995:74) also revealed that “*Methodologies are generally teacher-centred and emphasise the recall of content with little attention paid to developing of critical and analytical skills*”.

Development of cognitive skills also has an impact on the moral performance of youth. Garbarino (DoE & DoSS, 1999:34) believes that violent young people have a limited repertoire of answers and have defective problem-solving abilities. Education should produce people who are “*characteristically reflective, inquisitive and interested to understand their world*” (Nickerson, 1988:44).

Examining the cognitive development of adolescents, it has been reported that by the age of 16 the brain has reached adult size; youth at this age are able to think abstractly, deliberate on various social and political issues, and make logical inferences (Louw, 1997:12). They function at the Formal Operation Stage

(Piaget, 1969). At this level of cognitive development the young person is able to think beyond the concrete, and comprehend multiple points of view (Nelson, 1996:60).

Keeping in mind the ability of adolescents to think abstractly and to solve problems, the first section of all YEP themes presents questions and case studies on life-orientated topics, thus helping the learners to develop various cognitive skills.

Investigations about the educational needs of South African youth and the intended outcomes of YEP demonstrate that YEP aims to address three domains of development in youth, namely the moral/spiritual, social, and cognitive, all of which are areas in which South African youth need improvement and attention.

2.4 Relevance of YEP to the goals of outcomes-based education

The aims of any intervention programme should be in line with the aims of the educational system of the country. A study of the learning outcomes of outcomes-based education (OBE) demonstrates that the learning outcomes of YEP correspond to the following OBE outcomes:

2.4.1 Critical outcomes

The learning outcomes of YEP embrace the Critical Outcomes of the new curriculum (DoE, 2002:1). The Critical Outcomes related to YEP are:

- Identify and solve problems and make decisions using creative and critical thinking.
- Work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organisation and community.
- Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information.

- Communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in various modes.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation.

2.4.2 Specific outcomes

The following outcomes from the Life Orientation Learning Area for Grades 7 to 9 (DoE, 2002: 37-38) are relevant to the outcomes of YEP:

- The learner will be able to make informed decisions about personal, community and environmental health.
- The learner will be able to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to constitutional rights and responsibilities, and to show an understanding of diverse cultures and religions.
- The learner will be able to use acquired life skills to achieve and extend personal potential to respond effectively to challenges in his or her world.
- The learner will be able to demonstrate an understanding of, and participate in, activities that promote movement and physical development.

The agreement of the learning outcomes of YEP with the Life Orientation Learning Area in OBE demonstrates that the general goals and aims of YEP support the goals of the new education system in South Africa.

In light of new developments in respect of the forthcoming curriculum for Grades 10 to 12 – which makes Life Orientation a compulsory subject (*Pretoria News*, 2 October 2002) – programmes such as YEP become even more relevant.

2.5 Conclusion

The needs analysis of South African youth in this chapter shows that the especial social and historical background of South African youth and the youth

problematique make the educational needs of South African youth both multiple and urgent. The major educational gap that prevents the youth from achieving their *talisman* is moral and spiritual, compounded by the need for social and cognitive skills.

From the above discussion the following can be deduced:

- YEP targets a group of the South African population whose need for the development of moral, social and cognitive skills is grave.
- The age of adolescence is an appropriate time to launch an intervention programme.
- Some major youth problematique topics such as HIV/AIDS, drug abuse and alcohol abuse are included in YEP.
- YEP focuses on the educational domains where South African youth need special assistance.
- The developmental characteristics of youth – such as ability to think abstractly, an interest in working with peers, and talking about moral and social issues – are taken into consideration in the formulation of the questions and case studies.
- The intended outcomes of YEP are in line with the outcomes of the Life Orientation Learning Area in the OBE curriculum of South Africa.

Having discussed the relevance of YEP to the needs of the South African youth, it is important to identify the philosophical and theoretical principles that govern YEP. This will be discussed in the next chapter.