

# Care-leaving Research in South Africa

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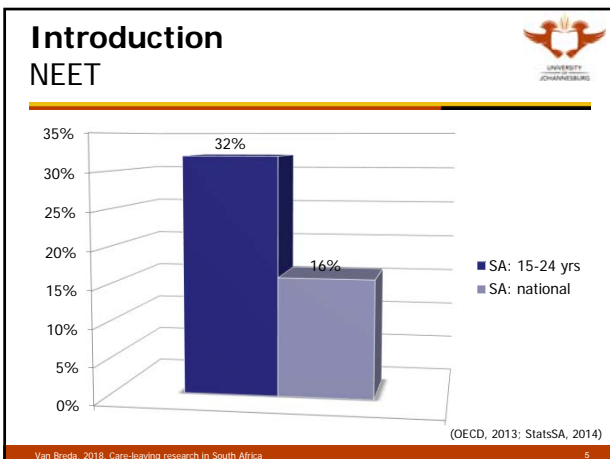
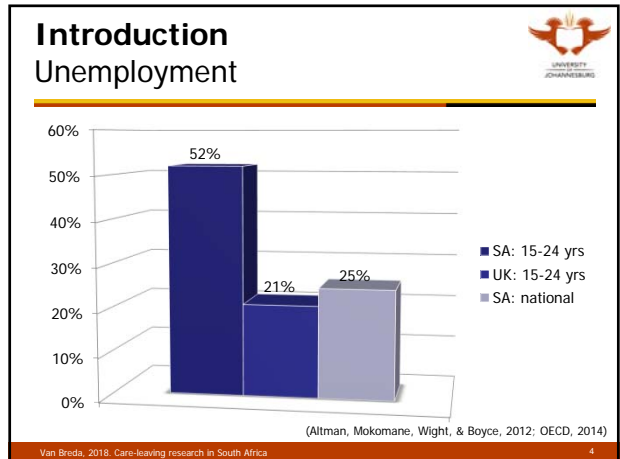
Open INTRAC  
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## Introduction

- ❖ Youth in South Africa
  - Poor quality education
  - High unemployment
  - HIV and Aids
  - Poverty
  - Inequality
  - Race and gender

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## Children and care in SA

- ❖ Population of 52 million,
  - of whom 36% (18.6m) are children,
  - of whom 21% (4m) are single or double orphans
- ❖ Traditional/indigenous social protection systems (African 'family'/clan) are fragmenting/exhausted
- ❖ 512k are in formal foster care (mostly kinship)
  - Probably mostly due to orphanhood
- ❖ 21k are in residential care
  - Probably mostly due to abuse or behavioural issues
- ❖ Very little administrative data, poor data integrity

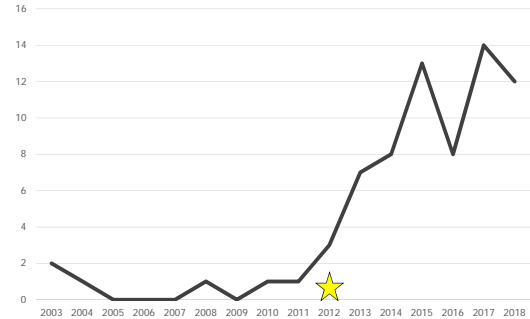
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## Care-leaving in South Africa



- ❖ Virtually no legislation or policy mandating or funding aftercare
- ❖ Virtually no legislation mandating or funding preparation for leaving care
- ❖ Until 2012, almost no research on leaving care in SA

## Care-leaving research outputs



## Primary SA research project



- ❖ Growth Beyond the Town (with Girls and Boys Town SA)
  - Rolling cohort longitudinal mixed methods study
  - Over 100 participants enrolled
  - Collecting six-year outcome data over the coming months
  - Baseline: resilience, history, readiness
  - Annual: independent living outcomes, CL narrative

## Research themes



- ❖ Care-leaving outcomes over time
- ❖ Resilience enablers of improved outcomes
- ❖ Contribution of possible selves to outcomes
- ❖ Gender comparisons
- ❖ Agency exercised by care-leavers
- ❖ Disability (intellectual)
- ❖ Managed opportunities for independence
- ❖ Development of ILPs

## SA findings



- ❖ Outcomes are not (much) worse than many other countries, e.g. NEET
- ❖ Personal agency and informal networks are key enablers, rather than formal services
- ❖ *Ubuntu* is an indigenous version of interdependence
- ❖ In the absence of aftercare and with limited options for extended care, intervention focus is on preparation for leaving care and building a bridge into the first year out of care

## SA research agenda



- ❖ Ongoing longitudinal and outcomes research
- ❖ Comparative studies using same methods/tools
  - Ghana, Zimbabwe, Nigeria
  - School leavers
- ❖ Design, testing and evaluation of interventions
- ❖ Greater engagement of youth in programme design & research
- ❖ More focused studies:
  - Foster care
  - Indigenous knowledge and practices

## Translating research into practice



- ❖ Gauteng Care-leaving Forum
  - Hosted by Girls and Boys Town SA
  - 70+ participants per meeting: social workers, child and youth care workers, managers
  - Exchange of research and practice
  - Developing practice guidelines
    - ▲ Based on practice wisdom
    - ▲ Triangulated with evidence and theory

## SA's regional contribution



- ❖ Africa Network of Care-leaving Researchers
  - [www.careleaving.com](http://www.careleaving.com)
- ❖ 39 members from 10 African countries
- ❖ Themed issue of *Emerging Adulthood* on care-leaving in Africa, in 2019
- ❖ Workshop for 25 African scholars in Jan 2019
  - In partnership with QUB and UJ
  - Building capacity for research and publication
  - Developing a research agenda for Africa
  - Conference: SA, Africa, Global North

## Partners



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