

**THE FEASIBILITY OF A YOUTH  
CENTRE FOR PINETOWN:**

**A SURVEY EVALUATION OF YOUNG  
PEOPLE'S ASPIRATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS**

**ROBIN RICHARDS  
VALERIE MØLLER**

1990

**CENTRE FOR SOCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES  
UNIVERSITY OF NATAL  
DURBAN**

The Centre for Social and Development Studies was established in 1988 through the merger of the Centre for Applied Social Science and the Development Studies Unit. The purpose of the centre is to focus university research in such a way as to make it relevant to the needs of the surrounding developing communities, to generate general awareness of development problems and to assist in aiding the process of appropriate development planning.

ISBN NO: 0-86980-710-2

## *PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS*

Formerly leisure was regarded as merely a peripheral issue; something which people undertake after work or school. Today there is growing recognition that leisure is central to human development and social relationships. Leisure with its many facets has become a field of study in its own right. It encompasses a wide variety of activities ranging from the purely recreational to the educational, from solitary to relational. Most leisure will combine a mix of these elements.

The boundary between work, education and discretionary time is very tenuous in urban society. Just as there are leisure moments within the school setting, there are also many opportunities for further education, skills training and personal growth outside of work and school time. The dividing line is especially thin in the case of unemployed youth.

Leisure plays a particularly important role in the formative years. For young people creative use of leisure and spare time offers opportunities for self-identification and social integration. Thus, leisure makes essential contributions to shaping young people's personalities.

The Youth Centre Project (YCP), established in the Centre for Social and Development Studies in 1988, has identified leisure for young people as its main concern, with particular emphasis on the recreational and training opportunities existing for black youth in the Durban metropolitan region. The aim of the three-year research and development project is to collect basic information on the leisure needs and constraints in the region with a view to improving young people's opportunities to use leisure time constructively.

The most distinctive ingredient in leisure is an element of choice. Choice concerning any aspect of leisure, such as the time, the place, the activity or the lack of it, and the social and physical environment. It is therefore fitting that young people should be involved in major decisions which will affect the scope of their leisure opportunities.

This report is concerned with the need for youth centres in the Pinetown area, a suburb of Durban. The Youth Centre Project undertook the study reported on here as part of its research programme in the field of youth and leisure. The specific research task was set by the Pinetown YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) which commissioned the study. The Pinetown YMCA Committee is currently in the process of establishing a youth centre to serve the young people in its area. The Committee required the researchers to identify the vital ingredients which would make the youth centre "work".

The study reported on here inquires into the way young people would like to spend their leisure time. It addresses specific questions such as: What do young people in the Pinetown area actually do in their spare time relative to what they wish to do; where they wish to spend their time, in whose company, and in what kind of environment and ambiance.

The inquiry covered many practical issues. The report sets out which facilities the Pinetown youth centre should feature and the activities which it should offer to its members. It also includes recommendations concerning spatial layout and technical details. More importantly, it addresses intangible issues which may be very difficult to plan for. An attempt is made to define matters of style and ambiance which would attract young people. The young people participating in the survey were adamant that this would be the stuff which would make or break a youth centre.

An important finding emerging from the study is that youth in the Pinetown area have many leisure interests in common which include a mix of "fun", relational (i.e. socialising and fellowship), and educational activities. However, the emphasis on educational leisure pursuits appears to depend upon differential access to opportunities for skill development in other settings.

New ground has been broken in this inquiry by inviting a wide range of individuals and groups to participate. Ideas and opinions were solicited from youth clubs and groups attached to schools, churches, and specific interest groups, as well as from individuals and concerned parents and community leaders in the wider Pinetown region. In future, community centres will be serving people regardless of their group affiliation. It was therefore considered important to review the expectations and aspirations of a wide spectrum of people in the region. According to the survey results the younger generation feels the time has come to share facilities and they are willing to try to make a multiracial centre work. However, their parents appear to be less confident of success with such a venture. The report discusses the concerns of both generations and their recommendations for establishing viable non-racial youth centres in their area. At the same time, the inquiry also revealed that the success records of multiracial ventures in the region are poor. For this and other practical reasons the Pinetown YMCA Committee may not be in a position to realise the ideal immediately. If this is the case, it is nevertheless hoped that the recommendations, and the survey findings on which they are founded, will provide useful pointers for the future.

YCP research has established that there is a dearth of youth centres and suitable places where young people can meet, not only in the Pinetown region but possibly in the entire metropolitan area. A major finding emerging from this study is that a youth centre means different things to different individuals and groups. This is reflected in the young people's own perceptions of the ideal youth centre. The inquiry revealed that the image of the youth centre was modelled on the church or community centre.

The report identifies three main functions of a centre:

1. Young people need a place where they can meet and socialise on a more casual basis;
2. They also require scheduled events which occur regularly with additional highlights in the form of special events to break the routine of ordinary leisure;
3. Certain categories of young people who have developed special interests need a supportive environment in which to cultivate their skills.

Ideally, there should be a venue which caters for all three functions, since according to survey findings they are considered reasonably compatible. However, meeting such diverse needs would very likely place a severe strain on all but the largest youth centre. Therefore the Pinetown YMCA Committee centre may need to seek a compromise solution for the centre. Its jurisdiction includes not only the municipality of Pinetown proper but also the outlying areas which have very few recreational facilities for Indian, coloured and African youth. The suggestions coming from the survey participants, who were very aware of the acute shortage of facilities in their areas, may be useful in devising interim solutions for meeting their leisure needs in stages.

Given the dearth of facilities in the Pinetown area, there is likely to be pressure on any new centre to operate as a multipurpose venue. The reference model would be the community centre which is open to all age groups and caters for a wide range of leisure needs from purely recreational to skill development and educational ones. The young people in the survey, especially black youth from areas with few public leisure facilities, appeared to be aware of possible future demands to share their centre.

The study focusses on the Pinetown area. However, many of the findings will not be specific to this area only. It is hoped that the survey recommendations will find useful applications by other organisations and agencies concerned with the provision of recreational and leisure opportunities for young people in South Africa.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Research of this nature typically involves the assistance and cooperation of many people. It is not possible to mention all persons and groups by name and only a few will be singled out for specific mention here. Firstly, the authors wish to thank the Pinetown YMCA Committee for initiating the research and for their continued support throughout. Grateful acknowledgment also goes to all the persons who gave very generously of their time to participate in the survey. Thanks are due to colleagues in the Centre for Social and Development Studies who assisted in various ways: Theresa Mthembu, community organiser with YCP, Trudy Coughlin, Thembonjani Mzimela, and Maswazandile Shabalala assisted with the data collection; Francie Lund commented on drafts of the report; and Deborah Boertje, secretary for YCP, and Lyn Simpkin processed the report. As is customary, full responsibility for the reporting rests with the authors alone. Lastly, the authors wish to acknowledge the Konrad Adenauer Foundation's sponsorship of the Youth Centre Project.

August 1989

Robin Richards  
Researcher  
Youth Centre Project  
Centre for Social and  
Development Studies.

Valerie Møller  
Project Leader  
Youth Centre Project  
Associate Professor  
Centre for Social and  
Development Studies.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
	i
<b>PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	
<b>1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	1
<b>2.0 INTRODUCTION</b>	3
<b>3.0 METHODOLOGY</b>	4
<b>3.1 Notes on the report</b>	6
<b>3.2 The study area</b>	7
<b>4.0 FINDINGS</b>	8
<b>4.1.0 General findings</b>	8
4.1.1 The need for additional youth venues in the Pinetown area	8
4.1.2 Popular meeting places for young people	9
4.1.3 Typical recreational pursuits in the Pinetown area	10
<b>4.2.0 Youth attendance</b>	13
4.2.1 Categories of youth which would use the Centre	13
4.2.2 Age limits/Restrictions	14
4.2.3 Factors affecting youth attendance	15
a) Social factors	15
b) Practical issues preventing attendance	17
c) Differing youth perceptions	19
4.2.4 Attendance patterns	19
<b>4.3.0 Youth centre management issues</b>	20
4.3.1 Reasons for youth involvement in Centre affairs	20
4.3.2 Level of youth involvement in the establishment and management of the Centre	21
4.3.3 Degree of parental involvement in youth centre affairs	22
4.3.4 Preferred management style at the youth centre	23
4.3.5 Personnel required at the Centre	24
a) Permanent - adult staff	24
b) Temporary - youth staff	25

	c) Consultants	26
<b>4.4.0</b>	<b>The functioning of the Youth Centre</b>	<b>27</b>
4.4.1	Youth perceptions of residents' reactions to the establishment of the youth centre in their area	27
4.4.2	Local residents' reactions	28
4.4.3	Opening and closing times at the Centre	29
4.4.4	Membership registration and membership dues	31
4.4.5	Visitors to the Centre	32
4.4.6	Alternatives to membership cards	32
<b>4.5.0</b>	<b>Centre activities and facilities</b>	<b>32</b>
4.5.1	The need for educational and recreational activities	32
4.5.2	Youth preferences regarding centre activities	33
4.5.3	Youth preferences regarding centre facilities	35
4.5.4	The most important ingredient of a youth centre	37
4.5.5	Utilisation of Centre equipment	38
4.5.6	Activity schedules and programmes	39
	Programme concepts:	
	a) Formal or set programme of events	39
	b) Informal programme	41
	c) Special interest groups and the booking system	41
	d) Mixed concepts	42
<b>4.6.0</b>	<b>The proposed youth centre for Pinetown</b>	<b>43</b>
4.6.1	A unique concept	43
4.6.2	The Centre's name	45
<b>5.0</b>	<b>SECURITY AT THE YOUTH CENTRE</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>TOWARDS A MULTIRACIAL YOUTH CENTRE</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>PERCEPTIONS OF OTHER YOUTH VENUES IN THE PINETOWN AREA</b>	<b>50</b>
	a) Corporate Body	50
	b) Old Mill Club	51
<b>8.0</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>53</b>

	a)	General findings: Popular recreational facilities and leisure pursuits	53
	b)	Youth attendance	54
	c)	Centre activities and facilities	55
	d)	Youth programmes	56
<b>8.1</b>		<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>TABLES</b>			
	Table 1	Popular spare time activities	12
	Table 2	Desired opening and closing times at the youth centre	30
<b>FIGURE 1</b>		<b>Map of the areas under study</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1</b>			
	a.	Table a: Most preferred youth centre activities	63
		Table b: Most preferred youth centre facilities	64
	b.	Group interview guideline	65



## 1.0 **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- o The YMCA Committee in Pinetown commissioned a study to assess the feasibility of operating a youth centre in the Pinetown area.
- o Evidence was collected in focus group interviews and individual interviews involving over 200 persons, mainly teenagers. Respondents were contacted in the Pinetown municipality, including Mariannridge and St. Wendolins, and in the outlying areas of Wyebank, Clermont, and Shallcross.
- o The results of the survey confirmed the urgent need for meeting places and recreational venues for youth living in the region.
- o Major recommendations emerging from the inquiry include the following points:
  - 1) Youth should be encouraged to attend the Centre as individuals or in organised groups.
  - 2) The Centre should cater for different age groups and should be open to Christians as well as persons with no strong religious affiliation.
  - 3) A grand opening and a mix of activities and events should be arranged to ensure continued popular response. Attention should also be paid to intangible factors such as atmosphere and ambiance.
  - 4) The Centre should cater for a mix of recreational and educational activities. Celebrities and experts in different fields should be invited to give presentations from time to time.

- 5) The scheduled programme, devised in consultation with members, should be sufficiently flexible to meet a wide range of needs for fellowship, recreation and development of special skills and group interests.
- 6) Measures should be taken to prevent overcrowding at popular events such as disco evenings.
- 7) Transport should be provided where possible to assist equal participation of members.
- 8) A democratic style of management is recommended, featuring youth representation at management level and participation in the day-to-day running of the Centre.
- 9) Adult supervision and/or parental involvement should be kept to a minimum.
- 10) Permanent core staff at the Centre should include a manager and a caretaker.
- 11) Every consideration should be given to opening the Centre to all youth in the Pinetown area. A number of solutions are suggested to carry out this ideal.

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

The Pinetown branch of the YMCA submitted a request for research services to the Centre for Social and Development Studies (CSDS), University of Natal, in December 1988. The Pinetown YMCA required research to be conducted into what youth living in the Pinetown region would want in terms of activities and facilities in a new youth centre to be established within the municipality of Pinetown. This Centre is situated on the corner of Harvey and Lello Roads and is very close to the Lahee Park sports grounds. The Youth Centre Project (YCP) within the Centre for Social and Development Studies accepted the research brief which fitted in well with current research into perceptions of youth centres and spare time pursuits of young people living in an urban environment.

The researchers from the Youth Centre Project set out to find out more about preferences regarding activities that should be catered for at the Centre, what facilities and amenities youth would most want in such a Centre, how the Centre should be managed, and which groups of youth should be catered for.

The target population for the study included youth from all population groups living in the greater Pinetown region. The working definition of youth adopted for purposes of the study referred to young people within the 13 - 20 year age bracket.

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

No attempt was made to draw a sample which would be representative of all the youth living in the Pinetown area. A convenience sample was utilised to cover the main areas which the Pinetown youth centre could serve.

In order to gain a "feel" for what youth desired in their Centre the researchers invited young people to discuss their views in a group situation. The focus group method was considered a particularly appropriate method for eliciting this information. A focus group consists of a small number of participants, usually six to twelve, from a target population who, under the guidance of a moderator, discuss topics of importance to the particular inquiry. Although the moderator covers topics according to predetermined guidelines, the discussion is essentially open-ended. There is flexibility in the order in which topics are covered and leeway in following up leads which may prove germane to the issue under study. It is standard practice to select participants for particular sessions who are relatively homogeneous in respect of characteristics which might otherwise inhibit the free flow of discussion. That is, participants should feel at ease to reveal their true feelings concerning the more sensitive aspects of the topic covered in the sessions.

The groups contacted for the Pinetown youth centre study met the above description. Interviews with young people were arranged and organised through a network of contacts, which included schools, church groups and youth clubs. In most cases the participants were well known to each other.

The fieldwork for the study was completed in approximately three months between January and April 1989. The total number of group interviews conducted was sixteen. Six group interviews were conducted among black youth, five in Clermont, and one in the St Wendolin area; three among coloured youth in Mariannridge; five among white youth in

the central Pinetown area and one among Indian youth in Wyebank. A further group interview was carried out among parents in Mariannridge. In addition to group interviews, an article was placed in the Highway Mail and Uma-Africa newspapers. Youth who were interested in contributing their ideas regarding the proposed Centre were invited to write in or telephone researchers at the Centre for Social and Development Studies. Eight young people contacted the Centre telephonically. Letters were also received from the Old Mill Club and the Department of Education and Culture. Individual interviews were conducted with a number of young persons in Shallcross, and with young persons and their parents living in flats within the municipality of Pinetown, and with local residents living in the immediate vicinity of the Centre. Data from informal meetings with officials at various youth venues contributed additional insights. In all, over 200 persons were interviewed in connection with the study. Some four-fifths of the number were young people.

A standard guideline was devised for conducting the group interviews (see Appendix 1). The items in the questionnaire schedule used to interview individuals were based on the themes and issues raised in the group interviews.

Two researchers were present at each group interview. One person guided the discussion and probed salient issues where necessary while the other took notes and recorded the responses of the participants. The interview protocol which was compiled after each group discussion provided the database for the analysis. The transcripts from the group interviews and the responses obtained in the interviews with individuals were content-analysed and interpreted by the authors. Assessments made on the basis of focus interview data are by design impressionistic. However, attempts were made to quantify where appropriate.

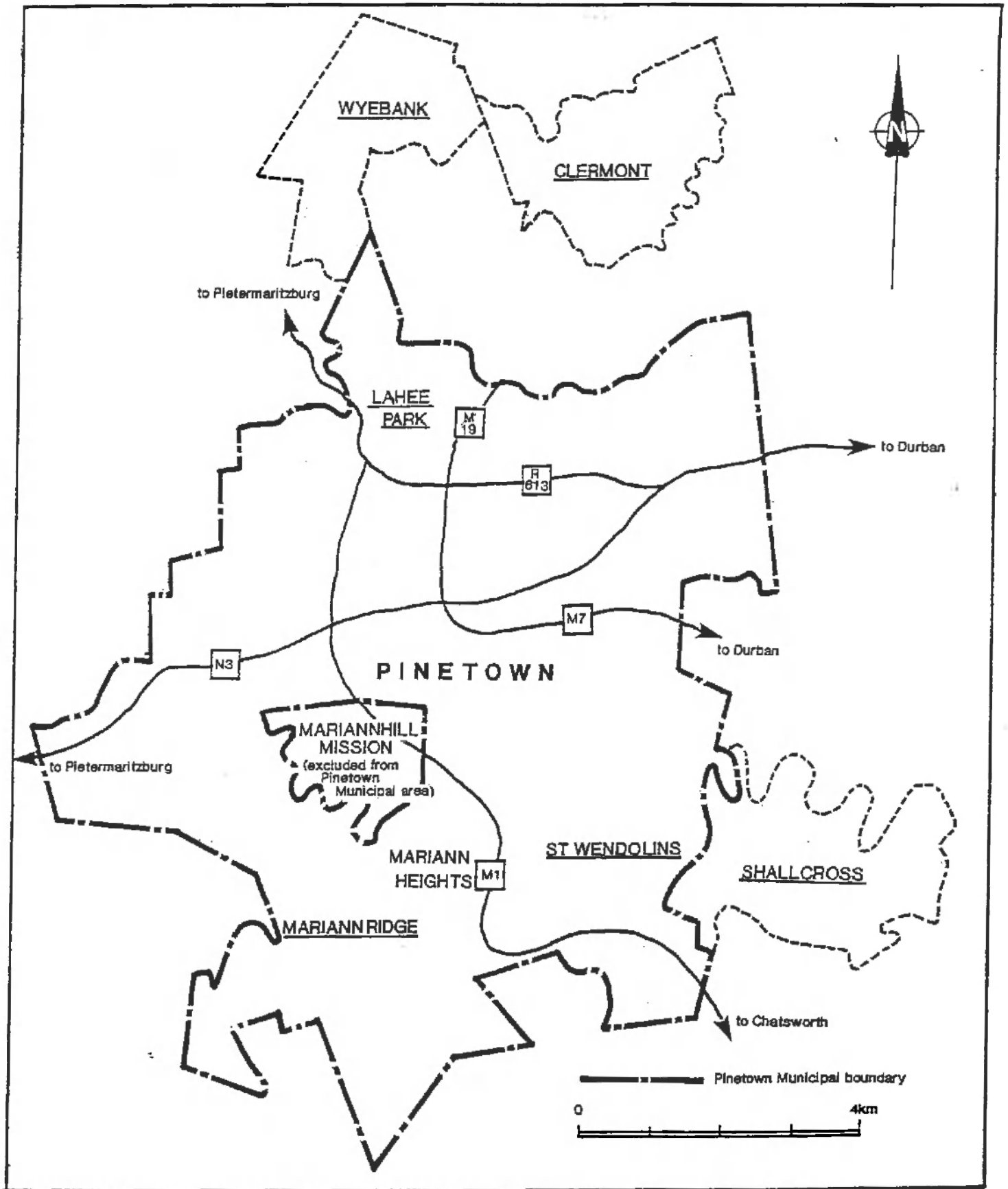
### **3.1 Notes on the Report**

In the report which follows frequent reference is made to the Corporate Body and the Sanlam Centre. These are venues situated within the municipality of Pinetown. Both venues are popular and serve as reference models for Pinetown youth. The Corporate Body is a multi-functional venue which caters for aerobics, body-building and has a disco. The Corporate Body disco is frequented primarily by young people living within the municipality of Pinetown. The Sanlam Centre is a major new shopping complex situated close to Pinetown's Central Business District. The Sanlam Centre has a "Milky Lane" kiosk which is a popular youth meeting place.

The report also refers to the Pinetown region. The region encompasses areas situated within the municipality of Pinetown as well as areas on the outskirts.

### **3.2 The Study Area**

The map overleaf shows the location of the study area (cf. Figure 1).



**FIGURE 1: MAP OF THE STUDY AREA.**  
 Group and individual interviews were conducted in the underlined areas.  
 The proposed YMCA Centre is situated in the vicinity of Lahee Park.

## 4.0 **FINDINGS**

### 4.1.0 **General Findings**

#### 4.1.1 **The Need for Additional Youth Venues in the Pinetown Area**

All respondents agreed that there was a desperate need for local meeting places for young people and for additional recreational facilities.

White youth wished to see popular facilities available in Durban duplicated in their own area. These included the ice rink, ten-pin bowling, putt putt and computer game arcades. As one person described the situation: "There's nowhere to go in Pinetown except Corporate Body." Respondents claimed they were tired of their standard venues and desired alternatives. In particular, there was a need for alternative Saturday night entertainment and a place to "hang out" with friends over weekends.

Youth living in outlying areas surrounding Pinetown indicated that there was a desperate need for additional halls where young people could meet in their own areas. In Mariannridge, for example, the hall used by most youth groups doubles as a day-care centre and clinic. In Clermont there was a growing demand for public venues and the two halls were not sufficient to provide for the entertainment needs of all age groups. One of these halls was situated close to the local police station so that some youth did not feel free to use it. In other areas the army presence under the state of emergency restricted youth from meeting in the open. Alternative safe places were therefore required.

Implicitly all respondents stated the need for additional "safe" venues for youth, places free from dangerous elements and harassment. Parents and youth alike volunteered that such a place would "keep youth off the streets".



Ideally halls were required in one's own area. However some, but not all, groups were of the opinion that a Pinetown youth centre would also serve their local needs. One group was adamant that a Pinetown Centre should not be seen as a long-term solution to the need for halls in outlying areas. All groups hoped that youth services would be decentralised in future. If the Pinetown Centre were successful, it could be used as a model for the provision of recreational services in other areas.

#### 4.1.2 Popular Meeting Places for Young People

The most popular meeting places for young people included discos, cinemas, community and church halls, shopping centres and cafes (especially those with amusement facilities), the beach and beachfront amusement facilities, local swimming pools and sportsgrounds. Parties and braais in public venues and in private homes also provided opportunities for social interaction.

All groups interviewed stated they used local facilities as meeting places, but ventured farther afield if transport was available. White youth indicated that they made frequent use of the wider range of facilities available at the Durban beachfront (the ice-rink, putt putt, the bowling alley and arcade games). Youth groups from Clermont included the Wild Coast Casino and Sun City on their list of venues. Coloured youth from Mariannridge and black youth from St. Wendolins tended to be more restricted in their movements than other groups. However, Mariannridge respondents indicated that young people in their area who are in wage employment could afford to hire taxis and go to cinemas in Pinetown and discos in Durban from time to time.

In Pinetown itself, the Sanlam Centre was by far the most popular day venue for white youth, while the Corporate Body disco was the most popular night spot on Saturdays. The

milkbar in the Sanlam Centre which has ample seating facilities is a favourite place for white teenagers to "hang out". These two venues provided reference models for the white youth in the survey. White youth tended to draw on their experience of these two reference venues, particularly the Corporate Body disco, when advancing their ideas for the proposed YMCA youth centre.

The swimming pool at Lahee park was regarded as a popular venue by Pinetown, Clermont and Wyebank youth. Wyebank youth reported that attractive venues in Pinetown included the library and the Sanlam Centre.

The Corporate Body disco is currently only accessible to white youth. However, the disco and to a limited extent its various equivalents in the township setting (hotels, bars and shebeens) served as reference concepts for all groups participating in the survey. Aspects of security, right of admission, social conduct, management, provision of facilities and services, and decor were reviewed in the light of personal or vicarious experience of popular discos.

#### 4.1.3 Typical Recreational Pursuits in the Pinetown Area

The groups and individuals were asked to identify the most popular spare time activities among youth in the area. All groups indicated that they participated actively in outdoor and indoor sports, social, cultural and religious activities and enjoyed commercial recreational pursuits.

Interests which were very popular and common to all groups included swimming, soccer, table tennis, watching television or videos, reading for pleasure and listening to music.

Among white youth, outdoor sporting activities were considered to be school activities rather than spare time activities. Similarly, handicrafts, such as sewing and cookery, were not necessarily considered to be activities one would choose to pursue in one's spare time. Emphasis tended to be on "go-to" activities and "exciting stuff". As not all recreational facilities were available in Pinetown itself, white youth tended to commute to Durban for many of their favourite leisure activities such as surfing, ice skating, movies and discos. "Most youth go to Durban over weekends. Everything is there. In Pinetown there's only the Corporate."

Other groups appeared to have less access to commercial recreation. Black and coloured youth, in particular, indicated that they provided much of their own entertainment. Participating in concerts, dance and drama events, fashion and beauty competitions were particularly popular pastimes among black and coloured youth. Many of these events appeared to be organised by churches and youth clubs. The coloured youth in Mariannahill relied mainly on film shows screened at their local shopping centre rather than commercial venues.

Black and coloured youth named indoor board games such as monopoly and chess as popular leisure activities. Card games were also favourites among blacks. It is worth noting that handicrafts, baking and cookery received only few single mentions and were not considered really popular in any group. All groups appeared to have some access to and enjoyed "arcade" type games: snooker, pool, computer games, etc. All groups indicated that they liked to participate in social activities in their spare time in a variety of settings in public venues and in private homes. Without exception, all respondents stated they enjoyed relaxing with friends and with music.

Table 1

**Popular spare time activities** (mentioned specifically by respondents)

	White	Indian	Coloured	Black
<b><u>Outdoor sports:</u></b>				
Swimming	x	x	x	x
Soccer	x	x	x	x
Football				x
Volleyball	x	x	x	
Tennis	x			x
Netball		x	x	
Cricket	x	x		
Hockey			x	
Badminton			x	
Cycling	x		x	
Jogging, running				x
Surfing	x			
Skateboarding	x			
Motor racing		x		
<b><u>Indoor sports</u></b>				
Gym	x	x		
Aerobics	x			
Squash	x			
Boxing				x
Karate				x
Ballroom dancing				x
Mapantsula dancing				x
Ice-skating	x			
<b><u>Indoor recreation</u></b>				
Table tennis	x	x	x	x
Pool, snooker	x	x		
Arcade games		x		
Tenpin bowling	x			
Card games				x
Board games (monopoly, chess)				x
Cinema, movies	x		x	x

table continued overleaf

	White	Indian	Coloured	Black
<u>Home based recreation</u>				
Listen to music	x	x	x	x
Listen to radio				x
Television, videos	x	x	x	x
Computer	x			
Read books, magazines, comics	x	x	x	x
Baking/cookery (with friends)	x			x
<u>Social events, spectator events, outings</u>				
Discos	x	x	x	x
Parties, braais	x			x
Youth clubs, camps	x	x		
Plays, concerts				x
Bars, shebeens				x
<u>Cultural activities</u>				
Music (Choirs, bands, gospel singing, etc.)	x			x
Speech and drama	x			x
Fashion and beauty shows				x
Handicrafts, hobbies			x	x
Educational films		x		
Going to the library	x			x
<u>Relaxation</u>				
Smoke		x		
Drink				x
Take drugs				x

#### 4.2.0 Youth Attendance

##### 4.2.1 Categories of Youth which would use the Centre

- o Christian respondents felt that they would attend the Centre providing that other youth attending the Centre also shared their Christian values and came from similar socio-economic backgrounds.
- o Afrikaans youth in the sample felt that they would attend the Centre providing it was bilingual and catered for them too.

- o The majority of black youth in the sample believed that all youth would and should be able to attend the Centre regardless of colour, language, geographical location etc. Black youth felt that the Centre would attract youth from neighbouring areas, especially since most of these areas did not have adequate recreational facilities.

#### 4.2.2 Age Limits/Restrictions

A clear distinction existed between the white and black youth on this issue:

- o White youth believed that people under the age of thirteen years and also youth over the age of twenty to twenty-one years should not be allowed to attend the Centre. It was felt that youth younger than thirteen years of age would be too "immature", whilst those over the age of twenty to twenty-one years would tend to dominate if not "take over" the youth centre. The majority of youth in the sample who said they would attend the Centre were between the ages 13-19 years.
- o Black youth in the sample were far less restrictive in terms of desired age limits or restrictions for youth centre attendance. Many of the respondents in group interviews actually believed that no age restrictions should be imposed. Respondents suggested that the minimum age of youth attending the Centre should be between 12 - 18 years whilst maximum age limits would range between 25 and 40 years.
- o Indian youth in the sample felt that the Centre should be limited to youth between the ages 14 - 21 years.

- o Amongst the coloured youth, the majority believed that no age restrictions should be imposed. If there were to be an age restriction, youth falling outside the defined age boundaries might be catered for in separate youth activity programmes. The parents of coloured youth in the sample believed that the youth centre should cater for youth between the ages of about 13 - 22 years.

#### 4.2.3 Factors Affecting Youth Attendance

##### a) Social Factors

Amongst the white youth in the sample the following most important issues were raised:

- o Youth over the age of twenty years old would not attend the Centre as they might become "bored" with the Centre's activities which would probably be aimed at younger people.
- o If smokers were allowed to smoke in the Centre non-smokers might not wish to attend.
- o Lack of sufficient security at the Centre would be another factor which might discourage the youth from attending.
- o If the Centre were biased with regard to the content of its activity programmes and types of facilities, for example, catering mainly for sports-oriented individuals, rather than for youth interested in more sedentary activities, some categories of the youth market might feel alienated and might not wish to attend the Centre.

- o If the Centre attracted too many youngsters, i.e. youth under the age of about thirteen, older youth would not wish to attend.
- o First impressions of the Centre were regarded as being very important and would determine to a large extent the popularity of the Centre in the future.
- o Strict adult supervision was perceived to be another factor which would curb youth attendance. This point was also raised by Indian youth.
- o Respondents believed that the Centre should not be too "Christian" in its approach to activities arranged and in its general outlook or policy guidelines regarding the functioning of the Centre. One respondent pointed out that:

"Pinetown's mostly a Christian community. But maybe non-Christians might feel a little put out. It might be quite a good thing if non-Christians come. It could be made known that the Centre is not just for Christian kids, it should be a non-denominational Centre."

- o A small number of respondents believed that the following issues might also discourage some youth from attending the Centre:
  - the mixing of race groups
  - the presence of drunks or drug addicts and if the Centre were associated with police raids
  - the general location of the Centre, that is, being close to African areas and being situated on the outskirts of Pinetown itself.

Black respondents raised the following negative issues which they thought might discourage youth from attending the Centre:



- o Illiterate people might not attend the Centre as they would feel inferior to better educated patrons.
- o The presence of "vandals".
- o The presence of Inkatha vigilantes would be regarded by the Clermont youth as being a factor which would discourage other youth from attending or joining the Centre.
- o Clermont respondents believed that if the Centre became affiliated to any political organisation, youth in opposing camps would not attend.
- o Other issues viewed as playing an important role in discouraging youth attendance were:
  - overcrowding at the Centre
  - inadequate security at the Centre
  - unfriendly staff members
  - bad treatment by staff members
  - strict regulations
  - shortage of parking space
  - fluctuating entry fees/charges
  - an untidy Centre

b) **Practical Issues Preventing Youth Attendance**

- o The lack of transport to the Centre was viewed by all groups, regardless of race, as being an important impediment to attendance.

- o Black and coloured youth in the sample believed that if the joining or attendance fees at the Centre were too high, some young people, especially unemployed youth, would not be able to attend. Coloured youth were in favour of not charging any fee to attend the Centre.
- o White youth in the sample felt that their parents might ban them from attending the Centre if the Centre was not controlled strictly or if the Centre developed a bad reputation due to misbehaviour of members.
- o Inadequate or insufficient advertising of the Centre's activities would prevent youth attendance.
- o Indian youth felt that if the Centre were only open during the weekdays, they would not be able to attend owing to school activities and their involvement in household chores.

c) Differing Youth Perceptions

Whilst most white respondents believed the youth centre would have some kind of a religious component associated with it, black respondents did not think this would be the case. The following excerpts from interviews highlight some of the black youths' perceptions of the proposed Centre:

"Some people feel that their Christian principles would prohibit them from using the youth centre unless the Centre concentrates on gospel music as well as religious programmes."

"Black conservatives would not attend because they associate any youth activities with violence." (Black conservatives in this context refers to youth having had a traditional upbringing. Attending discos and watching fictional videos has been reputedly associated with anti-social and crime-related behaviour).

4.2.4 Attendance Patterns

It was envisaged that young people would attend the proposed Centre in small groups of two or three friends or as members of their youth or interest group. Individuals might also meet up with friends at the Centre.

Respondents felt that initially young people might not feel free to simply "drop in" at the Centre on their own. In time, young people might feel sufficiently secure to attend without a partner. Some members of coloured youth groups felt individual attendance should be encouraged. The Centre should be a place where young people felt free to come and go on their own knowing they would be welcome. "If I feel lonely, I can go there alone." Spare time schedules often differed between friends. This necessitated individual rather than group attendance in some cases.

There were some indications that attendance in larger groups might upset the easy mixing in the Centre. Clermont youth felt that large groups might appear threatening to persons attending the Centre in smaller groups or as individuals. A Pinetown youth group also stressed this point. Although all groups should be made welcome, no group should "take over" and "swamp" minorities.

#### 4.3.0 Youth Centre Management Issues

##### 4.3.1 Reasons for Youth Involvement in Centre Affairs

The following reasons were listed by the youth for their involvement in all aspects of the youth centre. This would include their participation in the Centre's establishment and the management of the Centre:

- o The more youth contributed to the Centre's establishment, the more they would regard it as being their own Centre and would have a greater appreciation for its facilities and equipment.
- o Youth would take more pride in the Centre if they felt that they contributed towards its establishment.
- o Involving youth in the management of the Centre would ensure that activities and activity programmes at the Centre coincided with youth interests.
- o Youth would not feel alienated from management and would be able to contribute constructively in the management of the youth centre.

The following range of suggestions was put forward by the youth regarding their participation in management issues:

- o Youth should manage the Centre. The team of youth leaders who run the Centre should be in their twenties. Ordinary youth centre members would be represented on a subcommittee by the youth management team.
- o Centre-goers would also be able to put forward ideas and suggestions regarding Centre activities, facilities and management issues through the use of an ideas box. These ideas would be reviewed by the management team.
- o Youth should suggest the type of music to be played at the Centre.

#### 4.3.2 Level of Youth Involvement in the Establishment and Management of the Centre

The majority of participants in the survey believed that youth should have some involvement in the establishment and management of the Centre. This involvement would be in the following areas:

- o Helping with the renovations at the Centre, for example doing the painting. Some of the young people in the sample believed that they should be paid for assisting with the painting and decorating of the Centre.
- o Fundraising by means of arranging raffles (perhaps at schools) and lucky draw competitions.

- o Planning and having a say in the setting up of activity programmes and deciding upon Centre facilities.
- o The formation of a youth committee which would consist of representatives from different areas within the Pinetown region to contribute towards making decisions on how the Centre should function.

4.3.3 Degree of Parental Involvement in Youth Centre Affairs

- o Youth in the sample were almost unanimous in their belief that parental involvement in the youth centre should be kept to a minimum. Some youth expressed the view that they would feel embarrassed if their parents held any position at the Centre. Below is a sample of some young people's opinions on this issue:

"Parents should be aware of and know about the Centre's activities but their involvement should be kept to a minimum."

"Parents should drop us at the gate and go home; outsiders not parents should run the Centre. I wouldn't go if my father worked at the counter."

"No parental involvement, the idea is to grow as individuals, get away from home and dependence on parents... ."

"Parents should have no say about how the Centre should run its programme."

- o The few respondents who were in favour of some parental involvement expressed the following viewpoints:

"Some parental involvement would be necessary to prevent the Centre from becoming affected by the "grannies club" syndrome. The moment a venue opens and becomes popular amongst the youth, someone complains about it (perhaps being too noisy) and wants it closed."

"Parents should be involved because they will only allow their children to visit the Centre if they approve and are aware of the Centre's activities."

"Parents and adults could serve on a committee, but their involvement should be restricted. They should not be allowed or given greater power than the ordinary youth member. Adults should simply have normal voting rights."

#### 4.3.4 Preferred Management Style at the Youth Centre

The majority of respondents interviewed in the sample were in favour of a democratic style of youth centre management. The following ideas were put forward on the proposed democratic structure of the Centre:

- a. A management committee comprising youth representatives elected by the young people themselves. Some felt such a committee might comprise representatives from each school in the area.
- b. A management committee would be preferred as "youth would not want to attend a Centre where everything was done for them. Youth should have a say in the affairs of Centre management. There should perhaps be a youth committee with an adult chairman." Individual respondents pointed out that a democratic style of Centre management would avoid maladministration and "ensure that Centre leaders would run the Centre according to the will of the majority."
- c. The youth should form the committee themselves. This committee should be elected by the youth. This would not be done immediately, natural leaders could only be identified over a period of time.

In addition, a spokesperson should be appointed. This person would not only represent the youth belonging to the Centre in general but would also represent or speak for the youth committee at YMCA board meetings.

#### 4.3.5 Personnel required at the Centre

Three broad categories of personnel can be identified:

- a) Permanent - adult staff
- b) Temporary - youth staff
- c) Consultants

- a) Permanent - Adult Staff

All respondents were in favour of the following permanent personnel:

- o A centre manager/caretaker whose responsibility it would be to ensure the smooth functioning of the Centre and the maintenance of Centre facilities, amenities and equipment.
- o A nightwatchman or guard to care for the property during closing hours.
- o A counsellor or youth adviser. This person would or should be recruited from outside the youth centre. The counsellor should have at least some training in this field and should preferably be a young, "non-parental" figure.

Respondents believed that individuals running the activity programmes should be trained permanent staff. This core of permanent staff would ensure continuity in activity programmes (with regard to their content and format) and also continuity with regard to the general running and management of the youth centre. Youth believed that continuity would be difficult to maintain if management staff consisted only of temporary employees



who might perhaps only manage or organise Centre events when they arrived with their own particular youth group. Respondents also felt that permanent staff members would be more motivated than temporary staff members who would not be entitled to normal employment benefits. Permanent employees would feel more "part of" the organisation and consequently their attitudes would be more positive.

b) Temporary/Youth Staff

Most of the respondents in the sample were in favour of some youth involvement in the running of the Centre. The following suggestions were put forward by the youth:

- o A youth management team should be appointed. An uneven number of representatives should be elected onto this committee (to avoid tied votes). Youth centre attenders would be able to express their views through this management committee and thus make representations to the controlling body (the YMCA committee) regarding issues such as types of activities, content of activity programmes, management issues, etc. Membership of the youth-management sub-committee should be determined democratically and should be voluntary in nature. Some coloured respondents believed that two committees should be established, a youth committee and a parent committee. This would enable joint decisions to be made regarding youth centre management issues.
- o Responsible or senior Centre attenders who frequented the Centre regularly should be given the Centre keys to enable them to perhaps open and close the youth centre at awkward hours, for example, on evenings when discos were held.
- o Bouncers should be employed on disco evenings to screen people arriving and ensure no trouble occurred at the Centre. Black respondents emphasised the need

for protection against undesirable elements at the Centre and to prevent those who "assault innocent people" from attending.

- o Assistant youth supervisors who would be responsible to the Centre manager should be employed on a temporary rotational basis. These assistants (unlike the caretaker) would not sleep on the premises. Respondents believed that the supervisory assistants should be senior members of youth groups and should be appointed by the young people themselves. Black youth in the sample felt that the supervisors should be people the youth could trust and confide in. Temporary staff should receive a small salary or honorarium for their services.

c) Consultants

Youth in the sample believed that experts in different fields (for example career guidance counsellors or social workers) should be invited to the Centre to present either courses or lectures on specific topics (for example, motivational or educational courses).

#### 4.4.0 The Functioning of the Youth Centre

##### 4.4.1 Youth Perceptions of Residents' Reactions to the Establishment of the Youth Centre in Their Area

Respondents were asked about the possible reactions of local residents to the proposed youth centre. Some white youth stated they believed that the additional vehicles in the area used to transport people to and from the Centre might result in residents in the area becoming dissatisfied with increased congestion and lack of parking space available to them.

Whilst some respondents believed that there might be some negative reaction from residents in the area, others believed young people already lived in the area and consequently the presence of the youth centre would not increase the volume of noise dramatically. So long as the youth were busy doing things which they enjoyed, there would be no vandalism or anti-social behaviour. Some youth suggested the need for a groundsman to keep noise levels outside the youth centre building down to a minimum.

Black respondents in the sample believed that noise levels might disturb the residents and therefore during the week, the Centre should be closed by around 7.00pm. The Centre should, however, be open the whole night over the weekends. Most of the black youth believed that noise emanating from the Centre would cause problems and disturb the residents. Noise levels should be regulated through the employment of some kind of authority figure (supervisor) to control Centre activities.

Indian respondents believed that residents in the area would not be affected by Centre activities. Parents would be glad to get their children off their hands for a while.

Coloured youth in the sample believed that residents in the area might object to noise levels, especially on "disco night" evenings.

#### 4.4.2 Local residents' reactions

The local residents included in the survey reacted favourably towards the proposed youth centre. Surprisingly, people living in the vicinity did not share many of the concerns expressed by the youth. The majority of local adult/parent residents believed that:

- o The youth centre would help young people to make better use of their leisure time and would contribute towards the reduction of any anti-social or crime related behaviour.
- o Their neighbourhood would not become congested with additional vehicles as a result of the opening of the youth centre.
- o The youth centre would not attract the wrong element and result in vandalism.

The majority of neighbourhood residents in the sample believed that the youth centre was situated in an appropriate area. Below are listed some of their comments:

- "It is centrally situated near the flats and shopping areas."
- "It is accessible to most people."
- "There are lots of flats in this area .. it needs a recreation centre."
- "The Youth Centre is situated close to the Lahee Park swimming pool and soccer fields, the youth centre could make use of these facilities."

#### 4.4.3 Opening and Closing Times at the Centre

A clear distinction existed in the sample between black respondents on the one hand and coloured, Indian and White respondents on the other. White, coloured and Indian youth in the sample felt that the Centre should not interfere with their school or church activities. Opening times during the school term should therefore be restricted. On weekends, regardless of whether it was school vacation or not, Centre opening hours should not coincide with church activities and family "get togethers".

Coloured respondents believed that a compromise should be achieved on weekdays during the school term and that the Centre should only be open after school. A group of Mariannridge parents believed that if the youth centre were opened all day during the week, children would attend the youth centre rather than attend school (i.e. truancy would be promoted).

Some of the Indian respondents believed that the Centre should not be open on weekdays during the school term. Others, however, believed that it should be opened during the week but only after school hours.

In contrast black youth in the sample argued that many youth were not attending school or were unemployed and that such a youth centre would keep young people off the streets and give them something to do during the day. Respondents attending school believed that the Centre would help to "refresh their minds" after school and hence the necessity for it to be open during the week. Varying opinions regarding the exact opening and closing times of the Centre during the week were given.

Table 2 summarises the differing perceptions amongst youth in the sample.

**Table 2**

**Desired opening and closing times at the youth centre**

a. White, Indian and coloured youth		
Holiday season (Weekdays)	School term (weekdays)	Weekends
<p>Daily: Open - 08h00 Close - 23h30</p>	<p>o All groups agreed that it should be opened after school hours only. o White youth felt the Centre should only be open on Friday after school and should close at around 24h00. Indian youth expressed similar views. o Coloured respondents believed that the Centre should close at around 03h00 on Saturday morning.</p>	<p><u>White respondents:</u> <b>Saturdays:</b> Opening - 08h00 Closing - 24h00 <b>Sundays:</b> Opening - 14h00 Closing - 18h00 <u>Coloured respondents:</u> <b>Saturdays:</b> Opening - 09h00 Closing - 24h00 <b>Sundays:</b> Opening - 13h00 Closing - 20h00</p>
b. Black youth		
Holiday Season (Weekdays)	School term	Weekends
<p>Opening - 07h30 Closing - 18h00</p>	<p>Opening and closing times same as holiday season times.</p>	<p><b>Saturdays:</b> Opening - 20h00 Closing - 05h00 on Sunday morning <b>Sundays:</b> times unspecified</p>

#### 4.4.4 Membership Registration and Membership Dues

A majority felt that membership should remain as informal as possible without jeopardising the good reputation and security of the Centre. "A membership system to eliminate the bad element could spoil such a facility." Membership models were based on participation in youth groups and disco evenings. Most youth were familiar with security checks at the entrance of recreation establishments and approved of them to ensure "safe" recreation. In some instances, on disco nights, security checks were considered a more efficient means of identifying members than a register or signing-on system. Some respondents felt membership registers were incompatible with the concept of an open Centre. "Membership cards put people off, it should be casual." Majorities approved of a joining fee and a monthly or half-yearly subscription. All agreed that fees and subscriptions should be affordable. Suggestions ranged from R1 to R10 for joining fees and R0,50 to R5 for monthly subscriptions. Groups which supported casual membership without a register, were nevertheless in favour of collecting such fees.

Alternative suggestions were free entrance or a nominal yearly membership fee of say R5. A fairly popular alternative to membership fees was payment at the door ("decent people will be prepared to pay R1.00") or payment for use of special facilities or equipment ("The go in free and if you play, you pay principle.") Entrance fees were regarded as consistent with the concept of casual membership.

Respondents in all groups implied that they would approve of reasonable fees over and above regular membership fees on special nights, say disco evenings or fund-raising events. Similarly, the "pay as you play" system might be applied to computer games. Entrance fees should be kept high enough to keep out antisocial elements but should be slightly lower than commercial recreation rates.

#### 4.4.5 Visitors to the Centre

If the casual membership system were adopted, respondents noted that there would be no problems in bringing guests and visitors to the Centre. If a membership register were kept, members might be requested to sign as visitors. It was envisaged that there would need to be provision for "holiday" membership.

#### 4.4.6 Alternatives to Membership Cards

Probes were made in all interviews to explore the acceptance of alternatives to membership cards, such as t-shirts with the Centre's logo, badges and other clothing items to identify members of the Centre. Respondents fancied Centre t-shirts and caps but not as a sign of formal membership. One parent pointed out the impracticality of the system; clothing was easily passed on to siblings and friends. Members of one youth group thought some of their peers might enjoy wearing a distinctive t-shirt, while others might not wish to wear a "uniform" in their leisure time. However, it might be a good idea to identify Centre assistants or members of the "helper" committee with special badges. One respondent commented that outward identification of members (for example, by wearing Centre t-shirts at specially arranged events) would serve to advertise the Centre.

#### 4.5.0 Centre Activities and Facilities

##### 4.5.1 The Need for Educational and Recreational Activities

Although there was mixed opinion on this issue, the majority of white respondents stressed the need for the programme content to be mainly recreational in nature. This category of young people felt the need to get away from a "school like" atmosphere. A



recreational/leisure environment was thus preferred. Some of the opinions expressed by white youth in group interviews are listed below.

"Emphasis of the Centre should be on relaxation, a place where youth can get together and socialise."

"The Centre should be mainly recreational in emphasis. A place to relax and forget about anything associated with school."

"The aim of the Centre would be to establish contact between the youth at different schools to socialise. It should not be educational, one should go there to relax."

Interestingly, however, those white youth who were interviewed on an individual basis suggested that the content of a youth centre programme should be spread evenly between educational and recreational activities.

The majority of black youth interviewed believed that the youth centre should have a stronger emphasis on educational activities than on recreational activities. A minority of black youth, and most Indian and coloured youth were in favour of a balanced set of activities with both recreational and educational components.

#### 4.5.2 Youth Preferences Regarding Centre Activities

A wide range of possible activities that the Centre could offer were listed by the youth in the sample.

Black youth in the sample indicated a strong preference for creative activities such as singing, dancing, music making and drama. This activity category also included discos.

Table tennis was also viewed by the majority as an activity that would prove popular. Educational training programmes and workshops were also listed as features which an activity programme should cater for. Indoor games such as chess, monopoly, Mlabalaba, and scrabble were also favoured by some. Other popular activities listed by this group were: talent competitions, volleyball, video games, basketball, karate, fashion shows, netball, bodybuilding, socialising, video or film shows, educational film shows, boxing and music rehearsals.

White youth interviewed in the sample placed a stronger emphasis on non-educational activities. Discos, parties and dances featured most importantly on the activity list of white youth in the sample. Table tennis and volleyball were the next most popular activities that the Centre should cater for. Pool, basketball, a beauty course (for the young women), competitions (such as lucky draws), socialising and skateboarding were also listed as popular activities which the youth centre should cater for. Other activities suggested by white youth were: video/film shows, aerobics, "fingerballs", "four-square", modern dancing, ten-pin bowling, ice-skating, video games, darts, boxing, bodybuilding, roller skating and tennis. Some of the above mentioned activities could obviously not be catered for at the Centre itself. The Centre management should perhaps consider the feasibility of hiring other facilities not catered for at the Centre so that youth centre members could attend these alternative facilities once a week, for example.

Indian youth listed the following activities which would prove popular at the Centre: Table tennis, pool, darts, slot machines/arcade games, "Carom" (board game similar to billiards), chess, netball, cricket, community work (this might include fundraising for the aged), video or film shows, and music.

Coloured youth suggested the following activities that the Centre should cater for: bodybuilding, drama/plays, socialising, film shows/videos, braais, educational training

programmes (one of the examples listed here was learning how to establish a newspaper), table tennis, a leather craft workshop, disco, volleyball, music competitions, discussions or debates and community work.

Table a in Appendix 1 lists in approximate rank order the most popular youth centre activities. The ranking of the activities was achieved through combining suggestions put forward in the focus group interviews with suggestions obtained through individual interviews. Suggestions which were put forward by a group were given greater weight (in terms of their popularity) than suggestions put forward during the course of individual interviews.

Table a shows that the three most popular activities which youth centres should cater for are table tennis, discos, and educational/training programmes. All population groups in the sample said they wanted the Centre to offer table tennis, opportunities for socialising, and fictional video and film shows.

#### 4.5.3 Youth Preferences Regarding Centre Facilities

Youth in all of the population groups in the sample were in favour of the following amenities being available at the youth centre: a kiosk (where snacks and soft drinks could be obtained), toilets and changerooms, pool tables, table tennis tables, pay telephones, music and sound equipment, tables and chairs, video and tv set. Table b in Appendix 1 shows general youth preferences regarding centre facilities.

Additional suggestions for facilities included:

- A modern dancing floor
- Computer games
- Milkshake machine

- Small library
- Trampolines
- Skateboard track
- Squash courts
- Karate facilities
- Boxing ring
- Netball/volleyball court
- Lockers and showers in the changerooms
- Blackboards/screen for film shows
- Two small siderooms (where for example, study groups or those interested in reading could meet)
- Counselling facilities
- A sewing room
- A workshop for "tinkering" or repairing things
- An art studio
- A minibus for transportation to and from the Centre
- Water taps and parking bays
- A bar where alcohol is served (only black youth)

Youth felt that the Centre should have an open plan design and that there should be no empty or unused space. White respondents were in favour of fewer frills with more facilities at the Centre.

Some black youth favoured hostel facilities. They believed that accommodation should be made available to youth groups and individuals. Accommodation should also be available for long distance travellers on holiday in Natal. The youth centre might also require hostel accommodation if it were to hold seminars, workshops or youth conferences which might last longer than a day and might also attract youth from areas outside the Pinetown region. Youth not in favour of accommodation believed that a hostel might increase the noise level in the area. It was also felt that as the youth centre was close enough to their own areas (for example Clermont), hostel accommodation would not be necessary.

Some few respondents identified the need for a liquor outlet in the youth centre. It is worth noting that those in favour of a bar were for the most part young men in their mid-twenties. Other groups felt liquor should not be allowed on the premises as it might lead to misbehaviour and bad reports on the Centre.

All respondents anticipated the need for the youth centre to offer some form of transport to and from the Centre. Indian youth believed that if adequate transport were provided, the Centre would attract youth from areas even outside the Pinetown region. White youth suggested that the Centre operate a shuttle service so that young people could be picked up and dropped off along a set route.

#### 4.5.4 The Most Important Ingredient of a Youth Centre

Respondents tended to associate the most important ingredient or aspect of the youth centre with facilities the Centre should provide, or with activities that should be catered for at the Centre.

Other attributes mentioned which would contribute towards the Centre's popularity were:

- o "It should be accepted by the parents."
- o "The Centre should be alive. Something must be on the go all the time."

Youth felt that the Centre should have a friendly and relaxed atmosphere, and that there should be no pressure to do things one did not want to do. Victory Faith and Presbyterian youth believed that the Centre should offer "music and fellowship" and that it should be a place "where Christian people can meet.. non-Christians should also, however, be welcomed and made to feel at home." Youth from the Pinetown Boys High School focus group felt that smoking should be permitted but strictly controlled in terms of smoking areas and smoking times. Drinking alcohol should not be permitted at the youth centre. Youth from the Gelofte Hoërskool group felt that youth should be allowed to sit at the table/chair facilities (provided at the canteen) without having to purchase anything from the canteen.

Like the white respondents, black youth in the sample listed both facilities and types of activities as elements which would contribute towards popularising the youth centre.

- o Educational projects
- o Beauty contests
- o Film shows

Other features or ingredients which would attract youth to the Centre were:

- o The Centre should be well decorated
- o It should be "visible to all people"  
(Referring to some form of advertisement and/or sign outside the premises of the Centre)
- o The Centre should be fenced
- o Resting places should be provided for those who want to relax

"If one grows tired of the music then one should be able to go somewhere to relax. Tables and chairs should be arranged outside" (Clermont group).

"Music should be the main ingredient of the programme. It should include current music such as disco music" (Clermont youth).

"The routine of attending the Centre, one must feel one is gaining something by attending it" (Focus Group, St Wendolins).

Indian and coloured youth believed that the Centre should have a motto which would help unite its members. A written constitution would be necessary to ensure that order was maintained and to establish rules for the effective running of the youth centre.

#### 4.5.5 Utilisation of Centre Equipment

Respondents were asked to comment on whether the proposed Centre should provide equipment or facilities for hire or whether individuals should bring their own.

Most respondents favoured a flexible policy whereby users would be allowed to bring their own equipment if they wished, and there would also be equipment available on loan. Clermont participants in the survey clearly had the loan of musical instruments and sound

equipment in mind when discussing this issue. This type of equipment was expensive, they stated, and loan facilities would greatly benefit youth who could not afford to buy their own instruments.

One youth group assumed that the Centre might need to recover capital costs involved in its initial outlay for equipment. In this case Centre users must be prepared to pay their way.

In casual conversation it became clear that most youth would expect to pay for the use of computer game facilities. However, there should be no direct or indirect social pressure to participate in recreation which involved costs to users .

#### 4.5.6 Activity Schedules and Programmes

Respondents were asked about their views on the structure of Centre activity programmes: Should youth groups using the Centre pursue their own activities or should all groups using the Centre participate in a common programme?

##### Programme concepts

Four different programme concepts found favour among the youth participating in the survey:

##### a. Formal or set programme of events

Majorities in all groups favoured a scheduled programme for the Centre. A schedule would be devised for a fixed period, say one month in advance. Alternatively the Centre would adopt a set weekly or fortnightly programme which would change after two to three months.

All groups supporting this concept agreed that the Centre programme should be advertised widely by means of posters, leaflets, notices in local newspapers and possibly over the radio. Programmes could be posted in venues which served as popular meeting places for young people, in schools, churches and civic centres. Respondents did not think it would be necessary to send out circulars to individual members.

In most instances it was assumed that a set programme would cater for all-comers. A fixed common programme was considered particularly attractive by groups who subscribed to the fellowship ideal. Participants should be encouraged to join in the ongoing Centre activity. Thus, all persons attending the Centre at any one time would become a single group united in a common activity. A common programme would facilitate interaction between groups. Youth groups in Pinetown, Mariannridge and Clermont felt participation in a common programme would help break down racial barriers and foster goodwill.

A set common programme might feature several very attractive items each quarter of the year which would gain popularity for the Centre in Pinetown and outlying areas. For example, organised competitions during school holidays would attract new members. Some events such as lucky draws would also raise funds for the Centre. It was assumed that the programme would be fixed by the committee responsible for this task. Members would make suggestions for activities and events through the proposed committee structure.

However, several respondent groups pointed out that the common programme might not cater adequately for all age groups. These groups suggested that a separate programme might be required for the younger age group, say the youth



under 14 years. The afternoon disco for the younger age set may have served as reference concept for separate programmes for younger and older participants.

b. Informal programme

A minority of all participants in the study did not favour a set programme. According to this point of view an informal programme would serve youth better. Participation in activities should be voluntary. Interaction between youth groups attending the Centre should be allowed to occur spontaneously without any encouragement or assistance. A formal programme would inhibit casual attendance. The Centre should be a place where "you just come and go". "People should feel free to come any time and play. People feel reserved when too much is formalised." The informal programme concept is consistent with the need for a place where youth can "hang out" with friends and drop by casually.

c. Special interest groups and the booking system

The third concept is a system whereby interest groups and established youth groups book times when they can use separate facilities in the Centre or the entire Centre. If the booking system were fair and well-organised, it would avoid conflict of interests between groups and allow each group to develop its special interests to the fullest. In this way the Centre could cater to a very wide range of interests. Most supporters suggested that bookings should be made well in advance and if necessary fit in with the Centre's general programme. Some few respondents supported the "first come, first served" principle.

The booking system received good support from the Clermont participants in the survey. Special interest groups (bands, dance and choir groups) are well-established among black youth and there appears to be a demand for practice venues.

d. Mixed concepts: Combinations of activity schedules

In many instances references to all three concepts outlined above emerged spontaneously in a single interview session. Respondents participating in group discussions seemed to feel that the different concepts were not necessarily incompatible. For example, a set programme could combine the advantages of the common and separate activity schedules. Three proposals were made for a combined concept:

- o Common and specific programmes to operate simultaneously at all times. This might necessitate division of the hall or provision of separate rooms to avoid disturbance. With co-operation and tolerance on the part of participants there should be few problems.
- o Alternative common and separate activities according to a set timetable fixed in advance. Youth groups and clubs would be assigned specific times or days when they could use the Centre.
- o Specific interests shared by all-comers. One group in the survey felt very strongly that a common programme which fostered social fellowship was the ideal. In its view, special bookings should be the exception rather than the rule. One should avoid block and regular bookings, say "karate every Thursday". If a group wished to pursue a special interest, say organise a cookery evening, all persons who happened to be at the Centre during the special session should be invited and encouraged to join in the activity. Special interests would thereby be shared and become common.

#### 4.6.0 **The Proposed Youth Centre for Pinetown:**

##### 4.6.1 **A Unique Concept**

All groups and individuals interviewed felt the proposed youth centre had the potential to become a special meeting place for youth in the area. The main attractive characteristics which might distinguish the Centre from other recreation centres included the following features:

- o Friendly, relaxed atmosphere
- o Safety
- o Decent fun/good reputation
- o Multiracial, open Centre
- o Democratic management/youth manage their own Centre

It was clear that participants in the survey considered many of the above features to be closely linked. The friendly atmosphere was described as "cosy", devoid of "pressure to do things", "freedom from formality", and "youth oriented". Relaxation and fun were considered synonymous. The Centre would be a place "where young people can come together and do their own thing". However, the fun would be "controlled" and therefore meet parental approval. "A place to go where you don't go wild." Youth themselves would manage the Centre efficiently along democratic lines. Young people could feel assured they would not be exposed to "bad elements" or unwanted external controls. There would be self-supervision and opportunities to participate directly in the decision-making and management of the Centre. "Our mouths will have built a beautiful Centre. It will be different since its programme will be arranged on the basis of information gathered from youth" (Clermont youth group). The Centre would provide a neutral meeting place to cut

through language, race, and cultural barriers. An Afrikaans group viewed the Centre primarily as an inter-school social centre.

White Christian groups were acutely aware of the thin dividing line between "decent" fun and "dull" activities. They felt that a Christian-oriented Centre must prove itself. Proof of success would be if others came just to "see what the fun is like" and remained members.

Other white youth were particularly concerned about first impressions. The opening would be crucial to create the right club atmosphere. A group of young men recommended that the Centre should open officially during the school holidays with great fanfare. The first impression should be colourful and the opening should be well-advertised. There should be many attractive events organised for the opening. "If youth come to the opening and see that the vibe is right, this will ensure its popularity as the word will soon be spread." Another white group felt the youth Centre should create the initial impression of being a new attractive social centre in the area, an alternative meeting place to the Body Corporate and the Sanlam Centre. A Mariannridge youth group emphasised that if people knew there was a good time to be had, they would make every effort to come to the Centre from outlying areas. Youth would "improvise" transport.

Once the Centre had established itself as a successful venue there would be further obstacles to overcome to remain open. In other sections of the interview respondents had voiced their misgivings regarding the continued success of multiracial centres. Some misgivings were based on personal experience. Parental disapproval was another factor to be contended with. The "granny syndrome" must also be avoided. As mentioned earlier this refers to the perceived trend for spoil-sport grannies to try to close centres as soon as they receive good support.

#### 4.6.2 The Centre's Name

The survey discovered that the YMCA acronym was not a familiar one in all circles. Respondents feared that if youth knew what YMCA stood for, and the acronym became firmly attached to the Centre, some youth groups might feel excluded. However, the majority felt the name was not really the main issue, at least at this stage. "As long as it's a place where we can meet and mix." Respondents felt that a name change could take place later once the Centre was properly established. The Centre's committee could then propose a name change. Another suggestion was to organise a competition (entry 20 cents, open to all schools) to receive ideas. A naming competition would advertise the new Centre and raise funds.

One Christian youth group felt the name change was unimportant or inappropriate. Most youth using the Centre would be Christians in any case. Furthermore, "people must know it's a Christian Centre". The youth group from Wyebank felt if a name change were to occur, there should be some form of acknowledgement of the YMCA as the primary benefactor of the Centre.

## 5.0 SECURITY AT THE YOUTH CENTRE

All of the youth in the sample were in favour of some form of security at the Centre. Some of the parents believed that the Centre was situated in an unsafe area. The area was believed to be poorly lit and close to the outskirts of the municipality of Pinetown. Security measures should thus be instituted. The following suggestions were put forward by the youth:

- o A caretaker to look after the Centre's premises and to ensure that the Centre was locked up and secure at closing time.
- o Bouncers (or strongmen) to prevent trouble-makers from entering the Centre.
- o Youth in the survey also thought that it would be necessary to employ security guards at the Centre. Some youth believed that the guard/s could take the form of a nightwatchman. Other youth (especially the black respondents) believed the security guards should be more specialised than a nightwatchman would be. The guards would protect youth attending the Centre from "thugs" and "trouble-makers". Security guards would search youth entering the Centre to ensure that they carried no weapons. Security guards would also ensure that formality was observed at the Centre. (They would, for example, ensure that orderly behaviour was maintained.)
- o A burglar alarm system should be installed.
- o Burglar guards should be placed on windows to prevent expensive items such as the hi-fi set from being stolen.

- o The youth centre premises should also be fenced.
  
- o Reference was also made (by some of the white respondents) to the poor lighting in the area surrounding the Centre. More street lighting in the location of the Centre would make the area safer.
  
- o The majority of respondents felt that no liquor should be served at the Centre, as this might encourage bad behaviour and jeopardise the safety of other Centre attenders.

It should be noted that respondents who believed that "bouncers" should be used at the Centre were referring specifically to those evenings when the Centre held a disco. Reference was made to the Corporate disco which employs four bouncers. The proposed youth centre was, however, much smaller than the "Corporate" and would therefore require only one or two bouncers.

## 6.0 TOWARDS A MULTIRACIAL YOUTH CENTRE

The majority of youth in the sample were in favour of a multiracial youth centre. Some of the Indian and white youth in the sample, however, expressed the fear of being "swamped out" and of the Centre being "monopolised" by large numbers of black youth. Some control measures regarding the number of youth attending the Centre would have to be applied. Respondents from the Victory Faith and Presbyterian youth clubs felt that youth from other population groups should feel welcome to attend the Centre. Respondents from the above groups felt that it was their "Christian duty" to be hospitable to other groups. Providing other youth were from a similar socio-economic background and shared mainly Christian beliefs, they should be free to attend the Centre.

Below are some examples of favourable reactions to the idea of a multiracial centre:

- o "I am a Christian, I believe in equal rights for all people."
- o "We should start mixing at a younger age, parents would then learn from their children how to get on with other race groups."
- o "It's about time we all got together, there is not much hope for adults, but children still have a chance."
- o "It should be multiracial so as to help youth relinquish stereotypes about other population groups."

Generally speaking, youth in the sample believed that the Centre should be multiracial because it would help to break down racial barriers established by the apartheid system. It would enable youth to develop friendships with different cultural and population groupings. It was perceived that a mixed youth centre would assist the youth to better understand other cultures and belief systems.

Some respondents amongst the white, Indian and coloured youth believed that if the Centre were to be multiracial the numbers of people attending the Centre must be



controlled in some way. If, for example, certain events or activities were arranged which were attractive to all youth centre members, then alternative arrangements would have to be made to control the numbers of youth attending that particular activity or event. The same event, for example, might have to be arranged on more than one day or a booking system be introduced. The booking system would serve to limit the number of youth attending a particular event on any one day.

With regard to the functioning of a sub-committee or management committee in a multiracial youth centre, it was felt that youth members from all population groups should have representatives to serve on such a committee.

Those white youth in the sample who were against the Centre being multiracial, referred to problems associated with the opening of Durban's beaches to all groups. In addition, it was noted that Corporate Body was not open to black youth. In the opinion of this group, some white youth might object to the presence of black youth at the Centre, and heightened racial tension and increased conflict might occur. It was anticipated that some parents would not allow their children to attend a multiracial youth centre on their own if they felt it would not be safe. Some white youth argued that since black youth did not reside within the municipality of Pinetown, they should therefore use the facilities in their own areas.

Some black respondents felt that the Centre should be for black youth only because white youth already had sufficient recreational facilities. Others believed that the Centre should be reserved for blacks only because white youth did not behave properly. For example, young men "kissed their girlfriends in public".

## 7.0 PERCEPTIONS OF OTHER YOUTH VENUES IN THE PINETOWN AREA

### a. Corporate Body

The Corporate Body is a multi-functional venue which caters for white youth in the Pinetown area. This venue offers gym facilities and aerobic classes for young people and adults. Over the weekend the area which is used for aerobic dancing serves as a venue for a disco. The whole operation (the gym, aerobic dancing and disco) is run on a profit basis and is owned by a consortium of businessmen. Youth pay an entry fee for attendance at the disco. The Corporate Body is situated off the Old Main Road in Pinetown.

An official at Corporate Body pointed out that during the school holidays activity programmes for the youth were organised. Guest speakers were invited to talk to the youth and various fun events and courses were arranged. He said that youth organisers at the Corporate Body are soon to put out a newsletter which will advertise and inform youth of activities to be held in the Pinetown area. He felt that the strong Christian emphasis to the Centre's programmes contributes to the popularity of the venue amongst the white youth. The official believed that parents felt satisfied that their children were attending a respectable and safe venue.

The lack of adequate recreational facilities for the youth in the Pinetown area was highlighted in a comment made by a member of staff at the Corporate Body. She noted that:

"During the holidays youth hang around the gym and very often make a nuisance of themselves. I sometimes give them small tasks to do to try and keep them occupied and out of the way..... I think they feel the need to be part of something or belong to something."

According to the official spoken to, it was decided to keep the disco open to white youth only as recent occurrences both in the location of the building and at the disco itself have caused concern. Management thus felt that the safety of the youth attending the disco was of primary importance. The disco consequently remains open to white youth only.

White youth in the sample believed that the Corporate Body disco was the main source of entertainment in the evenings over weekends for young people living in Pinetown. The following problem areas were, however, identified by some of the youth in the sample:

- o The disco seemed to attract the younger teenage set, between 13 to 15 years of age. Older youth felt that they should have their own venue.
- o Some respondents also noted that the disco was developing a reputation for allowing youth to smuggle alcohol into the disco.
- o Some of the youth who were interviewed were becoming bored with the Corporate Body and would prefer to attend another disco or recreational centre for the youth in Pinetown if one became available.

b. The Old Mill Club

The Old Mill Club is a multiracial venue in the Mariannridge area which caters for young people and adults. It serves mainly the black and coloured population groups in the area. It is essentially a community centre and offers a wide range of facilities and activities. These include: a cafeteria, (with a small kitchen attached), a day care centre, a tv repair training course, a woodwork shop (where items of furniture are made and sold), table tennis tables and a disco (which has been temporarily closed).

One of the main attractions for the youth in Mariannridge area was the disco held at the club in the evenings. The disco has, however, since had to close down because of mismanagement and the bad behaviour of some of its patrons. The disco was formerly open until 5.00am in the morning, and alcohol was served. Fights were reported between young patrons from different areas. Reports of muggings were also recorded.

Survey respondents from Mariannridge, who were also parents, were of the opinion that the manager of the disco had little control over the behaviour of the youth attending the venue. They also noted that the police were often seen at the club and frequently searched youth attending the disco. The police would sometimes even "rough the young people up", respondents stated, and fights occurred on the streets outside the club on disco evenings. Parents consequently believed that it was not safe for their children to go to the club and forbade their children from attending the disco.

## 8.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The views of a cross-section of potential users of the Pinetown youth centre and concerned adults have been presented in the main section of the report. This section summarises the major findings of the study and sets out the recommendations based on them.

### a. General Findings: Popular Recreational Facilities and Leisure Pursuits

- o All respondents believed that there was a desperate need for meeting places for young people and for additional recreational facilities in central Pinetown and the outlying areas. In particular, there was a shortage of "safe" venues for youth, places free from dangerous elements and harassment.
- o The survey indicated that the most popular meeting places for young people included discos, cinemas, community and church halls, shopping centres and cafes, the beach and beachfront amusement facilities, local swimming pools and sports grounds. Parties and braais in public venues and in private homes were also regarded as providing important recreational and leisure opportunities.
- o All groups indicated that they participated actively in outdoor sports, social, cultural and religious activities and enjoyed commercial recreational pursuits. Interests which were very popular and common to all groups included swimming, soccer, table tennis, watching television or videos, reading for pleasure and listening to music.

b. Youth Attendance

- o Christian respondents believed that they would attend the Centre providing other youth who attended the Centre also shared Christian beliefs and came from a similar socio-economic background as they did.
- o Afrikaans respondents believed that the Centre should be bilingual and cater for Afrikaans speakers as well.
- o Respondents from the outlying areas believed that all youth should be able to attend the Centre regardless of colour, creed, language and area of residence.
- o White and Indian youth recommended that the Centre should cater only for those youth attending high school (the lower age limit being approximately 13 years with the upper limit being around 20 years of age). The majorities of black and coloured respondents believed that no age restrictions should be imposed.
- o Youth would attend the Centre in small groups of two or three friends or as members of their own youth or interest group.
- o The following factors might discourage some categories of young people from coming to the Centre:
  - The lack of transport to the Centre.
  - Unaffordable entrance or membership fees
  - Inequitable balance of activities (e.g. between active and sedentary; common and interest group activities)
  - Strict adult or parental supervision
  - Negative image factors (e.g. Too Christian, straightlaced, formal; youth misbehaviour, poor management)
  - Strong affiliation with political or religious organisations resulting in alienation of some sectors of young people

- Parental disapproval associated with youth misbehaviour and poor management

c. Centre Activities and Facilities

Most white respondents believed that the Centre should primarily be a venue for "fun" activities. The provision of leisure and recreational facilities were considered the Centre's main function.

Black respondents, on the other hand, expressed two views on this issue. Some believed that the youth centre's primary function was to provide educational facilities and activities; others that educational and recreational components should receive equal attention.

Indian and coloured youth also felt that there should be an even balance between educational and recreational facilities and activities.

A wide range of possible activities for the Centre were suggested by the respondents, including table tennis, discos and parties, video and film shows, and opportunities for socialising. For the complete list see Table a in Appendix I.

Youth in all of the population groups were in favour of the following amenities being provided for at the youth centre: Toilets and changerooms, pay telephones, a canteen/kiosk (where snacks and soft drinks could be purchased), tables and chairs where youth could sit and socialise (without necessarily having to purchase anything at the canteen), table tennis, pool tables, a music system (either a hi-fi set or juke-box), video machine and a tv set, a kitchen (to be used either to serve the canteen or to hold cookery classes). Table b in the Appendix gives a more detailed analysis of the facilities youth would most like at the Centre.

Respondents did not isolate one particular factor which would make the Centre popular amongst the youth. The facilities and amenities offered would be important. Equally important would be a good atmosphere and "vibe"; and a friendly and relaxed ambience. The Centre should have a democratic style of management; youth should also be allowed to participate in the running and management of the Centre. The Centre should be physically attractive, well advertised and visible.

d. Youth Programmes

The majority of youth in all groups favoured a scheduled programme for the Centre. This programme might either be devised a month in advance, or alternatively a weekly or fortnightly programme could be arranged.

A fixed common programme was particularly popular amongst young people who subscribed to the fellowship ideal. Participation in a common programme would help breakdown racial barriers and promote harmony between young people.

A minority of respondents in the study did not favour a set programme. It was felt that participation in activities should be voluntary. Interaction between youth groups attending the Centre should be allowed to occur spontaneously without any encouragement. A formal programme would inhibit casual attendance. The informal concept is consistent with the need for a place where youth can "hang out" with friends and drop in when it is convenient for them.

A further proposal is to allow established youth groups to book times when they can use separate facilities in the Centre or the entire Centre. A fair and well-organised booking system would prevent a conflict of interest between groups, and allow each to develop its special interests to the fullest.



A combination of the booking system, an informal programme, and a formal common programme could be adopted. The three concepts were not necessarily viewed as being incompatible. (Cf. Section 4.5.6d).

### 8.1 **Recommendations**

The evidence collected for the survey suggests that there are various options for the establishment of a successful youth centre in the Pinetown area. An attempt is made here to identify the major factors which may contribute to success and to highlight the issues which will need to be addressed in the planning of the Centre and the implementation phase. No claim is made of complete coverage of salient issues. The selection of recommendations has been based solely on the evidence submitted by the participants in the survey which has been summarised above.

- o **The Centre should adopt a flexible policy with regard to patterns of youth attendance.** Youth should be permitted to attend the Centre on a casual basis either as individuals or as groups; either small informal groups or cliques or formally organised youth clubs. This policy would promote the Centre's function as a venue where youth can "hang out" and meet informally. A well-run booking system would be essential.
  
- o **The Centre might consider catering for two broad sectors of the youth market, those youth attending school and those youth who have left school already (the latter category would include unemployed youth).** Findings from the study indicate that separate activity programmes are required for different age categories. Separate activity programmes for different age categories might be planned in conjunction with a common activity programme which would be open to all. The

common programme would facilitate interaction and promote a better understanding between all youth attending the Centre, whereas the separate programmes would solve the problems of older youth becoming bored with the activities for the younger group, and younger youth being dominated by older youth.

- o **Care should be taken to ensure the continued popularity of the Centre:**
  - a) The youth centre should advertise its existence. This should be done before and after the "grand opening". Notices advertising the Centre's opening should be distributed at schools (perhaps at the major Pinetown high schools), community halls or centres. Arrangements could also be made with school principals to announce the Centre's opening during school assembly time. An advertisement could also be placed in the Highway Mail, and township newspapers.
  - b) A special programme of events or activities should be arranged for the Centre's first opening day. These events should create positive first impressions of the Centre (for example, that the Centre is alive, vibrant, and exciting), which would encourage youth to return to the Centre regularly. The Centre should also plan future events and activities which would prevent the Centre from becoming "boring" or "dull".
- o **Careful planning and organisation should be applied to prevent overcrowding at the Centre.** Rules governing youth behaviour should be established and applied with circumspection.
- o **Consultation with youth representatives should precede the setting up of a youth programme.** This to ensure that the content of the programme is popular and that

an equitable balance is achieved between different categories of activities catering for various interest groups.

- o **The Centre should accommodate youth who are interested in Christian fellowship as well as those who have no strong religious affiliation.**
- o **Consideration might be given to devising a separate programme for youth who have a lower standard of education than the majority of members. This programme might run concurrently with a common activity programme open to all youth, whereby less educated youth would have the option of either participating in their own programme or in the common programme.**
- o **The Centre should investigate ways of providing transport for members.**
- o **The Centre should cater for both pure recreational and educational activities. Tables a and b in Appendix 1 give guidelines for planning the provision of amenities and facilities to support popular activities.**
- o **A flexible policy should be adopted by the Centre with regard to the utilisation of Centre equipment. Youth should be allowed to bring their own equipment to the Centre if they wish. Some equipment, however, should be made available on loan.**
- o **A scheduled programme of activities should be established. This programme might be changed on a monthly or weekly basis.**
- o **Consideration should be given to operating a number of different styles of programmes, either separately or simultaneously.**

- a) a fixed programme which would appeal to youth holding the fellowship ideal.
  - b) an informal programme which would appeal to youth who simply wish to "hang out" and attend the Centre on a casual basis.
  - c) a programme designed for specific interest or youth groups. This type of programme would appeal to formal groups of youth who might want to use specific facilities at the Centre for a certain period.
- o **The Centre should assess the feasibility of installing movable walls or partitions if an open-space design is envisaged.** Movable walls or partitions would allow a number of different programmes and activities to run concurrently without clashing with each other.
- o **Consideration should be given to limiting adult supervision at the Centre and where possible, employing young adults to fill management positions. A democratic style of management is recommended.** An effort should be made to involve members in management issues. Youth attending the Centre on a regular basis could be asked to elect a sub-committee which would represent Centre members at management meetings. This sub-committee would contribute to and put forward youth preferences and ideas. The benefits of this proposal are two-fold. Firstly, youth would feel part of the Centre. Secondly, the YMCA management committee would remain in touch with youth attitudes, thinking and feelings on important issues. Communication and good relations between youth members and management would be enhanced, thereby contributing towards the popularity of the Centre.

The youth centre should consider employing youth on a temporary, rotational basis. Senior youth centre members might be used to assist adult supervisory staff, and regular youth attenders could also be made responsible for the opening and closing of the Centre during times when the Centre is in use. It is recommended

that youth employed on this basis should be paid a small honorarium or salary for their services.

- o **It is suggested that a Centre manager and caretaker be employed on a permanent basis.** On occasions celebrities and experts in particular fields might be invited to give talks or presentations.
  
- o **It is recommended that some security precautions be taken.** The Centre should investigate the feasibility of installing burglar guards and or a burglar alarm system. Consideration should also be given to employing either security guards or a nightwatchman to guard the property.
  
- o **The YMCA Committee should assess the feasibility of opening the Centre to all population groups.** This should be done in consultation with youth currently attending the Centre and their parents. If the youth centre were to become multiracial, **careful planning and organisation will be necessary to prevent overcrowding.** For example, universally popular events could be held on more than one day. A booking system could also be used. This would serve to limit the number of youth attending a particular event on any one day. Alternatively, a ticket system or register could be introduced to ensure that only those who had booked for a particular activity would be allowed to attend.

Another solution might be to arrange YMCA youth outreach programmes. This would involve YMCA events or activities being held in several residential areas in the Pinetown region. Prerequisites are positive community response and suitable venues. Indoor venues are typically in short supply, therefore open-air events should be given consideration. Transport could be arranged to facilitate participation of young people from all residential areas. The outreach concept

might represent a first step to providing non-racial decentralised youth services and broadening the membership of the Centre. The successful life-in-the-park programme might serve as an example of this approach.

It is hoped the above recommendations will serve as a useful guide in establishing a youth centre to serve young people in the Pinetown area and possibly to encourage community groups in other areas to consider ways in which central venues can be developed to expand the leisure opportunities of their young people.

**Appendix 1:**

**Table a**

**LIST OF THE MOST POPULAR ACTIVITIES (IN RANK ORDER) WHICH THE YOUTH INDICATED THEY WOULD WANT AT THE CENTRE**

Rank order (according to popularity)	Activity type	Respondent categories which suggested the activity			
		BLACK	WHITE	INDIAN	COLOURED
1	Table tennis	x	x	x	x
2	Disco/parties/dances	x	x		x
3	Educational/training programmes	x	x		x
4	Socialise	x	x	x	x
5	Videos and film shows (fictional)	x	x	x	x
6	Volleyball	x	x		x
7	Pool		x	x	
8	*Singing and dancing	x			
	Drama	x			x
	Computer/video games	x	x	x	
9	*Indoor games: eg. chess, carom, Mlabalaba, scrabble	x	x	x	
	Basketball	x	x		
	Gym, bodybuilding	x	x		x
	Skateboarding		x		
10	Competition/raffles		x		
11	Competition/raffles		x		
12	Netball	x	x	x	
13	*Darts		x	x	
	Talent competitions	x			x
	Netball	x	x	x	

**Note:**

The asterisk (\*) next to numbers 8, 9 and 13 refers to those categories of activities which were given the same rank order (in terms of their popularity) by the youth in the sample.

**Table b**

**A LIST OF THE MOST POPULAR FACILITIES WHICH YOUTH WISHED THE CENTRE WOULD CATER FOR**

Rank order (according to popularity)	Type of facility	Respondent categories which suggested the facility			
		BLACK	WHITE	INDIAN	COLOURED
1	Canteen/kiosk with table and chairs	x	x	x	x
2	Toilets	x	x	x	x
3	Pay telephones	x	x	x	x
4	Changeroom/s	x	x	x	x
5	*Hi-fi/music equipment tv/video set	x	x	x	x
6	Minibus or alternative form of transport	x	x	x	x
7	*Table tennis table	x		x	x
	Volleyball court	x	x		x
	Rehabilitation/ or advice centre	x	x		x
8	*Computer/video/arcade games			x	x
	Pool table		x	x	

**Note:**

The asterisk (\*) next to the categories of facilities 5, 7 and 8 refers to those facilities which were given the same rank order (in terms of popularity) by the youth in the sample.



## b) GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDELINE

### INTRODUCTION:

Researchers at the Centre for Social and Development Studies, University of Natal wish to find out how young people use their spare time in the Pinetown Area. We would appreciate it if you would help us answer a few questions in this regard.

#### A. GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How do members of the group use their spare time? What are their most popular interests and hobbies?
2. What are the most popular meeting places for young people?  
(Probe: beaches; cinemas; swimming pools; youth clubs; amusement parks; sports grounds; church halls etc.)
3. Apart from these meeting places, is there a need for halls where young people can get together and pursue activities of their choice?  
(Probe: are there enough alternative facilities; accommodation; clubs etc.?)
4. If there were an empty hall, the size of about two classrooms, to what use would young people in the area like to put it?  
(Probe: types of activities: sports; games; carpentry workshop, sewing room, educational training programmes, etc.).
5. Would such a neighbourhood youth centre attract only young people living nearby, or would people from other neighbourhoods also wish to participate in activities?  
(Probe: all reasons).
6. What should a typical youth centre offer to attract young people? What would be the most important ingredient of a youth centre? What would be the features or factors that would encourage young people to attend such a centre?
7. What factors would prevent respondents from frequenting such a neighbourhood centre? (Distance, affiliation to other clubs, organisation, groups etc.)
8. The Pinetown YMCA has purchased a hall off the old main road very close to the Lahee Park sports grounds. If the hall were converted into a youth centre (along the lines suggested by the interview group) which young people would use it?  
(Probe: age; affiliation; geographical location; sex; socio/economic groups etc.)  
(Probe: why and for which purpose).
9. Which group/s of young people might not wish to or might not feel free to come to a centre run by the YMCA?
10. Would young people come to the centre as individuals or through groups?

#### B. SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

1. Probe particular aspects of a successful youth centre:
  - 1.a Amount of supervision required. Need for protection against vandalism. Someone to sleep on property.

- 1.b Age limits?
  - 1.c Open to all regardless of race; colour; creed; gender etc.?
  - 1.d Hours open?
  - 1.e Amount of parental involvement?
  - 1.f Neighbourhood reactions: noise; increased population in area etc.
  - 1.g Level of involvement of young people in establishing the centre (eg. facilities; activities) and also in running the centre once in operation.
  - 1.h Preferred management style: democratic/authoritarian. One Director or a committee?
2. What emphasis should the programme have (to date the only major activity attached to the YMCA in Pinetown is boxing)  
eg. sports; games; educational; counselling, discos, entertainment, etc.
  3. What types of facilities do you think the centre should have: eg. kitchen; telephone; tv; hi-fi; sports equipment, workshop, art studio, sewing shop, rehabilitation centre for drug addicts, advisory centre for alcoholics?
  4. Should there be hostel accommodation available?
  5. What types of personnel would be required to run the centre and activities. Would groups arrive with their own leaders or would they rely on centre staff. Do you think there would be a need for any expert personnel. (eg. counsellors, trainers, etc.)?
  6. What types (if any) of security, safety systems would you think would be necessary for such a centre?
  7. How would young people identify with the centre?
- 7.a Membership register?
  - 7.b Monthly Membership fee (flat rate or for participants in specific courses, activities, or even uses of equipment) and/or a membership joining fee?
  - 7.c Membership card?
  - 7.d Should the centre have a name or should it simply be called the YMCA centre
  - 7.e Should each youth group using the centre pursue their own activities, programmes or should all the groups interact/participate in a common programme?
  - 7.f Conflict of interests? (between noisy and quiet activities, activities using large areas (karate; aerobics, etc.) - hall only limited size
  - 7.g Should groups; individuals bring own equipment; hire; rent; loan for a period equipment belonging to the centre.
8. How might the YMCA centre differ from any other neighbourhood centre, if at all?

Thank you for your time and co-operation.

This work is licensed under a  
Creative Commons  
Attribution – NonCommercial - NoDerivs 3.0 Licence.

To view a copy of the licence please see:  
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>