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**Research Site: Delft, Cape Town, South Africa**

**I** OFTEN stand up for myself. Because if you don't stand up for yourself then you actually don't mean anything, because you allow other people to rule your life.

— South African girl



**WHAT is the International Resilience Project (IRP)?:**

The IRP is a mixed-methods, culturally sensitive approach to understanding how youth around the world effectively cope with the diverse challenges they face. The IRP now has partnerships with researchers and community-based organizations on six continents in over 25 communities. The IRP is currently bringing to a close the first three-year phase of research, in which data was collected with over 1500 children in 14 communities worldwide. Delft, in Cape Town, South Africa was one of those communities. Youth there told us how they survive and thrive despite the turmoil in their lives and the social and political factors that affect their well-being.

**For further information:**

For a full discussion of the *International Resilience Project*, please see the accompanying Project Report contained with this package or visit us at our website [www.resilienceproject.org](http://www.resilienceproject.org)

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**Context and Risk Factors:**

**C** APE Town, on the southern tip of South Africa, is the legislative center of the Western Cape Province and has a population of 2,893,251 people. 46.6% of the Cape Town city population is under age 24; and in South Africa in general, 51% of the population is under age 18.<sup>1</sup> Cape Town, a tourism hotspot, is known for its famous port and boasts an abundant supply of natural resources, a good infrastructure supporting goods distribution, and a diversified economy. Since the end of Apartheid, the government has taken steps to improve basic services; but health, housing, education, sanitation, and access to potable water pose challenges for youth. Vast disparities exist between the rich and the poor in the city, with inequalities falling largely along racial lines.<sup>2</sup> Other risk factors faced by youth in this setting include: weakening traditional, social, and extended family support systems; a dislocation between generations; gender inequality; violence; drug-related gangs; crime; and HIV/AIDS.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, youth in Cape Town reported feeling a sense of hope that they could rebuild their communities and successfully find employment.



**Participants:** Of the 60 youth that participated in the study from South Africa, 50% (30) were female and 50% (30) were male. The average age of the participants was 19 years, ranging from ages 14 to 24. Most of the participants were in grade 11, but education levels ranged from grades 7 to 12. The communities of the participants saw the youth as coping well, based on culturally appropriate norms for behavior.

**What does resilience mean in Delft?:**

Qualitative interviews, consisting of nine 'catalyst' questions, were conducted with youth considered by the community to be 'coping well with adversity.' In Delft, 2 girls, 4 boys, 4 adults (2 males, 2 females), one adult focus group and one youth focus group told the IRP what resilience means to them. They spoke of how youth could make their own decisions, thereby contributing to sustainable futures for other youth in South Africa, if not themselves. Youth in South Africa told us for example: "I often stand up for myself. Because if you don't stand up for yourself then you actually don't mean anything, because you allow other people to rule your life. And so...a person cannot live like that. That's why you must stand up for yourself - to show that you are a person, and that you are in control of your life, and that you are in control of your own decision, and so yes." (South African girl)

# Studying Resilience:

An international team of researchers created the content for the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM), a 58-item instrument administered across all 14 research-sites. Local research teams also added 15 contextually and culturally specific questions to the CYRM during its administration in their communities. Questions were scored from 1 (do not at all agree) to 5 (agree a lot) by the youth themselves.

## Sample of South Africa CYRM Mean Scores

(Highest, lowest, and largest variance when compared to overall CYRM mean)

Order	CYRM Question listed by Mean Score	Site mean	Global mean	Variance	Color codes
1	Is getting an education important to you? (CYRM 10)	4.7	4.4	0.3	■
2	Do you feel safe when you are with your family? (CYRM 48)	4.5	4.1	0.4	■
3	Do you think non-prescription drugs and/or alcohol will help you when you have to deal with lots of problems? (CYRM 33) Reverse Scored	4.5	3.9	0.6	■
4	Do you know how to behave in different social situations? (CYRM 11)	4.4	3.9	0.5	■ ■
5	Are you proud to be (Nationality: South African)? (CYRM 53)	4.4	3.9	0.5	■ ■
6	Are religious or spiritual beliefs a source of strength for you? (CYRM 24)	4.3	3.1	1.2	■ ■
7	Are members of your family or community who do unacceptable things accepted afterwards? (CYRM 39)	3.8	2.1	1.7	■ ■
8	Do you need to cooperate with people around you if you want to succeed? (CYRM 8)	2.8	3.8	-1	■ ■
9	Are boys and girls both treated fairly in your community? (CYRM 56)	2.6	3.4	-0.8	■ ■
10	Do you know where to go in your community to get help? (CYRM 35)	2.5	3.4	-0.9	■ ■
11	Are you comfortable asking for help? (CYRM 36)	2.5	3.1	-0.6	■ ■
12	Do you feel free and comfortable to talk to your teachers and/or other adults about your problems? (CYRM 23)	2.5	3.1	-0.6	■ ■
13	Does the older generation understand and tolerate the ideas and strong beliefs of people your age? (CYRM 5)	2.5	2.9	-0.4	■ ■
14	Do you think having fun and laughing can help solve problems in life? (CYRM 1)	2.2	3.2	-1	■ ■
<b>Overall Mean across 58 CYRM questions</b>		<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>0.1</b>	

■ Highest Site Scores on CYRM ■ Largest Variance Below Global Mean (-)  
 ■ Lowest Site Scores on CYRM ■ Largest Variance Above Global Mean (+)

## South Africa CYRM Results:

■ Across all 58 measures of the CYRM, South Africa's mean (3.5 out of a possible 5) was above the global sample mean (3.4). Within the South African sample, youth placed particular importance (or scored themselves highest) on CYRM statements: 10 'Is getting an education important to you?'; 48 'Do you feel safe when you are with your family?'; 33 'Do you think non-prescription drugs and/or alcohol will help you when you have to deal with lots of problems?'; 11 'Do you know how to behave in different social situations?'; and 53 'Are you proud to be (Nationality):?'. It is important to note that CYRM question 33 is reverse scored. A high-score indicates that youth **do not** think non-prescription drugs and/or alcohol will help when they have to deal with lots of problems

■ South African youth gave their lowest scores to CYRM questions: 35 'Do you know where to go in your community to get help?'; 36 'Are you comfortable asking for help?'; 23 'Do you feel free and comfortable to talk to your teachers and/or other adults about your problems?'; 5 'Does the older generation understand and tolerate the ideas and strong beliefs of people your age?'; and 1 'Do you think having fun and laughing can help solve problems in life?'

■ When compared to the global sample, South African youth showed the most **positive variance** (scoring higher than the overall mean for youth globally) on questions: 11 'Do you know how to behave in different social situations?'; 53 'Are you proud to be (Nationality):?'; 24 'Are religious or spiritual beliefs a source of strength for you?'; and 39 'Are members of your family or community who do unacceptable things accepted afterwards?'

■ South African youth showed the largest **negative variance** (scoring lower than the overall mean for youth globally) on questions: 8 'Do you need to cooperate with people around you if you want to succeed?'; 56 'Are boys and girls both treated fairly in your community?'; 35 'Do you know where to go in your community to get help?'; and 1 'Do you think having fun and laughing can help solve problems in life?'

## South Africa Site Specific Question Mean Scores

Site Specific Questions	Mean/5
SSQ 13: Should more attention be given to the problems faced by youth in the community?	4.2
SSQ 10: Do you think you are being given enough responsibility for your age?	3.1
SSQ 15: Are there ways in which poverty can be overcome in the community?	3.1
SSQ 7: Are there people in your community that you admire?	2.9
SSQ 8: Are you exposed to dangerous situations in the community?	2.9
SSQ 1: Are there areas in your community where you are able to spend time with your friends?	2.8
SSQ 4: Do the circumstances in your community prevent you from giving your best in life?	2.6
SSQ 12: Are the youth treated as being important in the community?	2.5
SSQ 14: Is there support in the community for youth in order for them to develop their full potential?	2.5
SSQ 3: Do you have a feeling of pride in your community?	2.4
SSQ 11: Are there opportunities for you in the community to become involved in youth actions/programs?	2.4
SSQ 2: Are there any holiday or weekend activities that you can take part in that are arranged by organizations?	1.9
SSQ 9: Is your community being treated fairly by the Government?	1.9
SSQ 5: Do you see yourself continuing to live in the community where you are currently living?	1.8
SSQ 6: Do you see a future for yourself in Delft?	1.6

South African youth's mean score across all site-specific questions was 2.6 out of a possible 5, which was lower than their overall mean on the 58 globally administered CYRM questions (3.5).

## Understanding the Results "Ecologically":

The IRP team reached a consensus that the 58 global CYRM questions could be separated into four unique and important aspects of resilience: *individual traits and characteristics, relationship factors, community contexts, and social and political aspects of culture*. Of the 58 CYRM questions, 23 related to individual traits and characteristics, 7 related to relationship factors, 15 to community contexts, and 12 related to aspects of culture. Focus on these four areas of resilience shows which aspects are most relevant to children's success in difficult contexts. One can see from the chart below which aspects of resilience are more or less important to South African youth when compared to youth across all 14 research-sites.

## Four-part Ecological Model:

Gender Comparison of South Africa Site Means with Overall Sample Means (All Sites)

Ecological Model (Aspects of Resilience)	Site	Global	Girls		Boys	
			S. Africa	Global	S. Africa	Global
Individual Aspects	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4
Relationship Aspects	3.4	3.4	3.6	3.5	3.3	3.3
Community Aspects	3.5	3.6	3.4	3.6	3.6	3.5
Culture Aspects	3.5	3.3	3.7	3.3	3.6	3.3

## Endnotes

- 1 Cape Town. (n.d.). Wikipedia. Retrieved November 03, 2005, from Answers.com Web site: <http://www.answers.com/topic/cape-town>
- 2 South Africa At a Glance. Unicef. Retrieved November 3, 2005, from Unicef Website: <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/southafrica.html> (2005).
- 3 Risk factors and context information provided by IRP site partner, Quinton Adams, at Stellenbosch University, South Africa