

Gang youth struggle to move on

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With violence seemingly behind them, young men from Gugulethu's Section 3 area find themselves in limbo as they struggle to get back to school or find employment.

As part of finding a solution a dialogue workshop was hosted by Africa Unite on Thursday at the Gugulethu Hall.

"After the gang fights were subdued many of the boys who were involved were idling in the township with nothing positive to do," said Thembisa Ndzunga, one of the local volunteers working with the boys to change their lives for good. She said that socio-economic problems were the biggest hindrance towards rehabilitating the youths.

"Most of them dropped out of school and now struggle to back in the system. Some of them are looking for skills development programmes where they can learn to make a living for themselves," said Ndzunga.

She said the aim of the dialogue is to introduce the young men to the Africa Unite organisation and initiate a partnership that would help them reach their desired goals.

Africa Unite is human rights and youth empowerment organisation that works with citizens, refugees and migrants to prevent

conflicts, enhance social cohesion and promote socio-economic development. Nomsa Somdaka, a programme manager at Africa Unite, said that the first step is to find out more about the problem that led the young men into crime and violence. "We need to go deeper than the generic reasons which are bullying, drugs and alcohol. Many of these youths come from severely poor households and the key is to empower them," said Somdaka.

She said that their aim is to find ways to assist the young men by getting them into contact with skills training agencies and government initiatives that can assist. One of the young men is Abongile Kopi (20), who wishes to go back to school.

"It was difficult to stay in school with all that was happening back then. I am now tired of township life as there is nothing to do."

He says he wants to study engineering as he has a passion for cars. He laments that inactivity is a gateway to crime, drugs and alcohol.

Another young man, Monde Gwele, shares the same sentiments: "We would really be grateful if we could have an opportunity to learn skills," he said.



Nomsa Somdaka from Africa Unite facilitated the dialogue with the young men from Gugulethu.

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