Creating Sustainable Lives

A case study of youth in South Africa

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Abstract

At a time when globally youth unemployment is on the rise and the needs of youth are moving up on the agenda, the research aims to explore in particular the experiences of marginalized youth in South Africa. Through comparatively exploring the experiences of youth from rural, township and urban backgrounds and their participation in a youth employability programme, the study hopes to better understand the significance of special post-school training and approaches and youths' perceptions four years after programme completion. Through the case study it is hoped we can unpack the components or 'ingredients' that seem to make a difference, understand how they can be implemented and thus stimulate discussion on broadening the parameters of traditional youth programming.

The frameworks chosen provide an overarching lens to understand various dimensions the research. They assist to challenge and stimulate discussion on the need to broaden the parameters of conventional youth programming design and implementation. When youth are engaged in interventions, it appears many actors feel the primary outcome is increased economic outcomes leading to development of a country's Gross National Product (GNP). In this study it is argued that this traditional focus has led to an oversimplified approach to training done with youth, as it appears to often exclude substantive development of skills required in the work place and indeed affective skills for life. Amartya Sen's Capability Approach is used to expand a traditional definition of development and include valuable functionings. A second framework is the model of Identity Based Motivation shows that there is not only an issue with regards to specific components taught and experienced but that socio-cultural structural contexts must be taken into account. The third framework a cycle of Adolescent Empowerment explores the final dimension, which is how the programme is being implemented and how programmes of this nature can be made operational.

Acknowledgments

"All Ideas come from sensation or reflection. Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas: — How comes it to be furnished? Whence comes it by that vast store which the busy and boundless fancy of man has painted on it with an almost endless variety? Whence has it all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I answer, in one word, from experience. In that all our knowledge is founded; and from that it ultimately derives itself"

– John Locke

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List of Abbreviations

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AED	Academy for Educational Development
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
DBSA	Development Bank of South Africa
DOE	Department of Education
EFA GMR	Education for All Global Monitoring Report
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
ERS	Education Renewal Strategy
FASSET	Finance and Accounting Services Sector Education Training Authority
FET	Further Education and Training
GEFI	Global Education First Initiative
IBM	Identity-Based Motivation
IERF	International Education Research Foundation
ILO	International Labour Organization
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NFP	New Futures Programme
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
PBL	Project-Based Learning
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PPF	Programa Para o Futuro
SAIDE	The South African Institute for Distance Education
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SERVOL	Service Volunteered for All
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
TVSD	Technical and Vocational Skills Development
WEF	World Economic Forum
YEP	Youth Empowerment Programme

1 Introduction

Across the globe youth populations are experiencing growth trends of rapid proportions. The Youth bulge is a label given to rising youth populations referring to a pyramid shaped diagram illustrating age distribution of a population; with the youngest as the largest on the base and oldest as the apex. An astounding 87% of youth live in developing countries (WEF, 2013) and this will continue to rise as predictions in population trends show that the overall increase "…is projected to take place in high-fertility countries such as Africa, and countries with large populations such India, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines and the United States of America" (UNFPA, 2013, para.3). In Sub-Saharan Africa "…nearly 300 million people are aged between 10 and 24, and that number is expected to climb to about 561 million by the middle of this century. Africa in particular has the highest concentration of young people anywhere on the planet" (Roopanarine, 2013). Youth make up around 30% of the regional population of the Middle East and have coped with various exclusions and barriers and these frustrations were heard during the Arab Spring (Middle East Youth Initiative, 2015). The remnants of the movement continue to be felt through social and political instability in the region.

In 2013 it was estimated that globally 74.5 million youth were unemployed, almost 1 million more than figures estimated in 2012 (ILO, 2014). It is argued a correlation exists between large youth populations and countries prone to civil conflict as the growth places intense strain on countries and increases risk of social unrest. Youth unrest has been seen across the world outside of the Arab Spring, as young people despite being the drivers of change in their countries continue to be excluded and especially if services are already of poor quality.

At the furthest end of the African continent, South Africa has the third highest unemployment rate in the world for young people between the ages of 14-24 (WEF, 2014). Youth is officially defined as the ages between 14-35 in South Africa and according the World Economic Forum's (WEF) 2014 Global Risks report, more than 50% of young South Africans between 15-24 are estimated to be unemployed. The concentration of unemployment in this age cohort makes South Africa's situation a youth unemployment crisis in particular (DBSA, 2010).

In a country as South Africa with an increasing gap between rich and poor, education challenges and social unrest, youth unemployment poses a threat to social and economic stability and development. It tends to bring with it a multitude of social problems including crime, drug and alcohol abuse, poor health, loss of self-esteem and confidence in its young citizens to participate in the broader society (National Youth Policy, 2008). A significant number of young people have become discouraged in their search for work. Particularly for youth living in disadvantaged settings, unemployment and lack of opportunity can lead to life-long experiences of marginalization. This constrains citizens' access to opportunities to positively affect their lives and lift themselves out of poverty.

In a fight to eradicate poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment, governments are turning to youth programming to alleviate the pressure on today's youth. It is recognized that some of the true highlights of the youth phase are energy, drive and ability to bring fresh ideas. Harnessing these characteristics while understanding and catering for the needs of young people in programming remains a hard task in both development and humanitarian contexts. It appears that in part the quality and nature of approaches are hampering substantive outcomes in assisting youth in overcoming marginalization. In addition, it can be said that youth and their needs are often forgotten. There appear to be a range of reasons for this. Potentially the struggle for their recognition has ensued in part as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) goal 2 has focused governments', INGOs' and NGOs' attention on achieving Universal Primary Education by 2015 and less so on the needs of adolescents, youth and adults. In addition youth needs are diverse, making responding to them more complex.

Adding an important contextual layer for consideration are the life worlds of disadvantaged youth, which the study argues cannot be seen in isolation to their development. If an outcome is not seen to be self-directed transformation of youth, it is possible that youth from marginalized environments will remain bound to limited opportunities and superficial wins; short lived, low-paid subsistence work with precarious contractual arrangements that exploit disadvantaged states. Thus, how we engage with youth in interventions should be revisited. There is worth in exploring whether traditional programming as it stands could benefit from broadening its parameters to incorporate new ways of thinking and engaging with youth. Thinking of innovative ways to bridge the gap between school and work should be at the forefront of all development agendas.

1.1 Background

In 2007 I started my career as a facilitator in communication skills training. Assisting individuals, ministries and corporates, the company promoted effective communication skills as the foundation on which successful careers and business are built. In 2009 I was given the opportunity to continue along this line of work in the development sector, through a youth employability programme called the New Futures Programme (NFP). Local, implementing NGO SchoolNet SA with funding from Microsoft (South Africa and United States) partnered with the expertise from the then Academy for Educational Development (AED) to equip unemployed South Africa youth with technical and workplace readiness skills, learning from experiences of the Brazil Programa Para O Future (PPF). As life skills facilitator and eMentoring[1] coordinator I was able to better understand the worlds of South African youth and their challenges in navigating the world of work.

When the programme ended in June 2010, contact with participants and past staff members continued and it was evident that participants were still employing skills learned. At the same time, while many of the past participants were enjoying better quality employment there were some youth who still struggled to find decent employment opportunities, despite having the kinds of attitudes and drive that any employer would find an asset. Yet, youth remained hopeful and demonstrated a great deal of resilience.

For these reasons it became important to dedicate a study to explore the significance of special post-school programming, particularly for youth from marginalized environments, and discover what ingredients appear to make all the difference. The term 'special post-school programming' refers to interventions that fill the otherwise empty space between school and work with a more comprehensive approach to youth development. These types of programmes recognise the importance of non-cognitive skills development, expanding beyond technical skills acquisition. A more comprehensive range of skills includes values, attitudes and a broader range of capabilities. As the NFP had a strong focus on the above it is believed to be a sound platform for exploring the significance of such programming for disadvantaged young people seeking to transition into the workforce.

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[1] Online mentoring

In Phase I data collected from semi-structured interviews with 12 past participants will depict the personal views of youth on issues such as youth unemployment, NFP, its components and approaches and life after programme completion. I felt motivated to delve into the diversity of experiences and realities of youth from various geographical locations after 3 years working in education in rural and township environments. It became clear that the total past and present life experiences of youth would uncover important contextual conditions. Thus data collected in Phase II from life story narratives with 3 purposively sampled youth will shed light on rural, township and urban childhoods to better understand how the past affects young peoples' personal development path, participation and success in the labour market.

1.2   Making the case for Youth

Often youth are stereotyped within their societies as rowdy, rebellious and unreliable. Employers are often not willing to risk taking on young and inexperienced employees and further prejudice and discrimination is experienced for youth coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. These perceptions and barriers make it all the more difficult to find that first job. Yet youth are at a stage of their life where they can become operational as agents of change. They have the power to bring new ideas with fresh insight and will be the future leaders of the societies they live in. Governments might recognize youths' potential to drive economies and their potential to contribute positively to their societies. While countries have a valuable resource in front of them, governments have a responsibility to develop sound and relevant responses to the growing populations of youth and the rise of youth unemployment. In the current bleak landscape for marginalized youth attempting to find work, for young people it is not just about securing a job, it is about also about hope.

1.2.1   Redefining our perceptions of the definition of youth

The period of youth is a crucial one where identity, a fundamental condition of social being is constantly being debated and reconstructed (Brubaker, 2000) through a host of life experiences and shaped by the environments they find themselves part of. If we are to consider the broad range of intellectual, emotional and social changes that accompany young people from 15-35 there are bound to be challenges but also opportunities.

The lack of clear definitions and varying cultural perspective between adolescents and youth has led to definitions becoming slightly blurry and complex. It could be argued that there can be no universal definition of youth as it varies considerably according to cultural and social perceptions. To unify definitions, the United Nations defines youth as the ages between 15-24, however this tends to flexibly interpreted according to local situations. As an example in South Sudan youth are perceived as being between the ages of 18-40[2]. In many cases we see broad 'lumpings' of the group. In South Africa youth are categorized as all ages between 15-35; a group at very different stages of life with diverse needs. In general adolescents are defined as those between 10-19. These overlaps in definitions can affect planning, implementation and reporting across the two age groups.

Many of today's youth are unable to obtain work and establish independent lives which society has defined as key attributes that define adulthood. These could be a house, getting married, having children and supporting the family; defining moments that give one adulthood status. For young people today "…these attributes of adulthood are becoming increasingly unattainable …they are forced to live in a liminal, neither-here-nor-there state; they are no longer children who require care, yet they are not yet considered mature social adults" (Honwana, 2013: 3). A leading African researcher on young people in Africa, Alcinda Howana describes this state of today's youth as 'waithood'; a period of suspension between childhood and adulthood. She expresses that this period represents "…a prolonged adolescence or an involuntary delay in reaching adulthood" (Honwana, 2013: 4). Her work has commented on experiences of waithood for youth in Tunisia, Mozambique, Senegal and South Africa and that this has increased the traditional definitions of the age group. Showing a multiplicity of experiences around the world she explains "…at ten, a child soldier is an adult; at thirty, an unemployed and unmarried man is still a youth" (Honwana, 2013: .5). With the complications of youth experiences and the constant interruptions in transitions from adulthood, the author suggests that waithood may well extend into peoples' thirties and forties (Honwana, 2013).

1.2.2 A global focus on youth issues

In an effort to coordinate international efforts to ensure all people obtain their right to education, UNESCO's global movement Education for All (EFA) set the stage for countries

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[2] Personal experience as part of assessment team – Field mission to Ethiopia, Gambella

to meet the educational needs of all children, youth and adults. With ambitious aims set for 2015, the EFA goals directly connected to two of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and in terms of education has a focus on achieving Universal Primary Education for all and promotes gender equality and empowerment of women. Although EFA includes youths' needs, it was the Delors Report of 1996 that was influential in bringing the rights of youth to the foreground and particularly influential in making the case for a 'skills for life' component in education. These skills encompass basic knowledge and practical skills with an inclusion of social attitudes believed to lay the foundation for youth to become successful when they enter the world of work (Barrett et al, 2006). It was only in 2000 with the Dakar Framework for Action that the concept of quality was put at the core of the EFA goals for all children, youth and adults.

The need for skills development is recognized in the third EFA goal. The main premise of the goal is "…equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes" (GMR, 2012: 4). The importance of jobs reducing poverty however was recognized only "…eight years after the MDG framework was established, when a new target was added as part of the first MDG in the efforts to achieve full and productive employment and decent work opportunities for all (GMR, 2014). In 2012 the EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) highlighted the plight of youth in the 2012 GMR *Youth and Skills: Putting Education to Work.* The aim was to highlight that it is important to consider factors beyond ensuring access to school: "It is about setting young people up for life, by giving them opportunities to find decent work, earn a living, contribute to their communities and societies, and fulfil their potential" (GMR, 2012: i).

The report identified three key pillars, which have subsequently directed the design of youth programming efforts. These pillars are seen as the cornerstone of engaging in youth development: Foundation, Transferable and Technical and Vocational skills (GMR, 2012). The GMR definitions of the pillars are depicted below:

Foundational skills include the basic literacy and numeracy skills, which are prerequisite for obtaining the kind of work adequate to sustain for daily needs. They are paramount to taking part in further educational and training and for technical and vocational skills development (GMR, 2012).

Transferable skills (often conflated with soft skills, employability skills or life skills) are essentially the multi-useable skills allowing young people to cope and adapt in today's constantly changing work environment (GMR, 2012).

It appears transferable skills are interpreted in multiple ways depending on the mandate, mission statement, objectives and thus theories of change of various stakeholders. Literature shows that for some transferable skills include non-cognitive skills such as creativity and problem solving, communication skills, self-confidence and the development of leadership capacities. For others it translates to life skills such as HIV/AIDS components and peace education. The term 'Skills for life' others interpret as looking at whole-person development in light of youths' identities and values.

Technical and vocational skills refer to the kinds of jobs that need knowledge of specific technical skills from understanding the Internet and computer literacy to operating machinery (GMR, 2012). This appears to be one of the more focused on pillars for youth interventions, as the outcome is usually defined as improved income and employment in an economic sense.

In the year 2015, while progress has been made the 2015 GMR *Education for All 2000-2015 Achievements and Challenges* has taken stock of 15 years of monitoring showing rather grave results. For Goal 3 Youth and Adult skills, we see improved transition and higher retention rates and a few low and middle-income countries (one of which being South Africa), charging lower secondary school fees. Aaron Benavot, Director of the EFA GMR (2015) stated that Goal 3 in itself was highly contested and lacked a measurable target[3]. "There have been major challenges in the way skills have been conceptualized, and some countries have begun to measure them directly" (GMR, 2015:10). A proxy indicator was used to make comparisons; in that enrollment in secondary education was a proxy for the foundational skills needed for the labour market and indeed for life. This is highly contested as "measures of participation do not indicate the percentage of those who finish lower secondary school…Overall one in three individuals in low and middle income countries are projected not to have finished secondary school by 2015" (GMR, 2015: 11) and the picture is worse for those in low income countries.

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[3] Launch of 2015 EFA GMR in Oslo, Norway (notes by researcher)

Moving beyond and looking at the post-2015 agenda, in 2012 the UN Secretary's Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) was created with three main priorities: *1. Put every child in school, 2. Improve the quality of learning and 3. Foster global citizenship.* With the creation of the Youth Advocacy Group in 2013 within the GEFI youth created the *Youth Resolution: The Education We Want*, presented to leaders around the world. Through The Global Partnership for Youth (GPY) young people are being given a chance to express their expectations and ideas, essentially giving youth a voice to recommend what they feel should be prioritized for their age group in the post-2015 agenda. Importantly we can see that globally it is slowly being recognized that youth have a role to play in influencing the futures of young people around the world.

1.2.3 Skills for life

The opportunity to access quality education during formal years of education can in itself have positive effects during a young person's development. The GMR 2015 states that in terms of Goal 6 Quality of Education, there has been an increased focus to issues of quality (GMR, 2015). In the 2013/14 GMR *Teaching and Learning: Achieving quality for all* a global learning crisis was revealed and it was noted that achieving access to education did not mean that learning was happening in the classroom or that what was being learned was relevant to succeed in the transition from school to work.

In South Africa, educational institutions have come under criticism for not adequately preparing youth for the world of work (SAIDE, 2011) with employers often indicating that youth entering the labour market are lacking in core employability skills. In addition it is important to note "schools play a role in work orientation even when there is no specific work-related subject or activity in the curriculum. Most fundamentally, this is because school education serves as the major qualifying mechanism for entry into the labour market" (Hoppers, 1996: 19). As it stands it appears the education system has in a sense failed to equip young people with relevant educational and skills competencies that are required to participate in working life in the formal and informal economies (DBSA, 2011). With growing youth unemployment and increasing numbers of those Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) it can be said that the learning crisis has led to young people lacking in hope, motivation, confidence but also lacking in the know-how of how to improve their situations.

Studies have identified and advocated for increased recognition of non-cognitive skills development extending focus beyond preparing youth for technical and vocational work opportunities and the results have shown this balance has had substantive impact on young peoples' lives. These non-cognitive skills are also termed psychosocial attributes and include self-esteem, self-efficacy, agency (confidence in one's ability to act), motivation and self-confidence (Krishnan & Krutikov, 2007; Morton & Montgomery, 2011; Oyserman & Destin, 2010; Chinman & Linney, 1998; SAIDE, 2010, AED, 2009). Studies suggest that the most significant change and sustainable outcomes are seen in youth interventions that place a balanced approach to non-cognitive skills development and more technical skills acquisition and that the one cannot function adequately without the other.

1.3   Focus and Purpose

At a time when globally youth unemployment is on the rise and the needs of youth are moving up on the agenda, the research aims to explore in particular the experiences of marginalized youth in South Africa. Through comparatively exploring the experiences of youth from rural, township and urban backgrounds in a youth employability programme ending in 2010, the study hopes to better understand the significance of special post-school training and approaches and youths' perceptions four years after programme completion. It is hoped that the research will give a voice to youth from various walks of life to understand the diversity of their experiences from their perspectives and the importance of taking marginalised youths' life-worlds into consideration. We can then begin to explore the unique contribution of ingredients and approaches in promising programming, examining the cultural, social and economic contexts in which these approaches could be applicable.

Through the case study it is hoped we can unpack the components or 'ingredients' that seem to make a difference, understand how they can be implemented and thus stimulate discussion on broadening the parameters of traditional youth programming.

The study arose from personal participation as a coordinator and facilitator in the programme seeing the need to explore these issues further. What difference could these changes bring and how far could it go? The case study was thus chosen, as it was an opportunity to explore these ideas in more depth and with more rigour. It is believed that motivating for special post-

school youth employment programming is a necessary step for South African youth in their fight to bridge the gap between school and work.

1.3.1 Research questions

In an interest to explore the significance of broadening the parameters of traditional youth programming two questions have been designed to guide the research:

1. *What is the significance of special post-school training programmes and approaches in overcoming marginalization in the South African context?*
2. *What seem to be the relevant 'ingredients' that can make the difference and how can these be put into place?*

Within these overarching questions the study explores various relationships that feed directly into the questions being explored:

- Relationship 1: The relationship between childhood and upbringing and programming goals. Is there worth in taking cognisance of life worlds?
- Relationship 2: The relationship between the empowerment potential of programming and the reorientation of participants' perceptions of themselves. Does programming have the ability to re-shape how youth perceive themselves and their futures?
- Relationship 3: The empowering affect of the training on graduates' success in the labour market. This is expanded from solely income and economic outcomes to exploring continued navigation and better quality employment in the labour market.

Three frameworks act as guiding tools for this study in order to explore the significance of more comprehensive training opportunities for marginalised youth. The first is an overarching conceptual framework where Amartya Sen's Human Capability approach was deemed suitable to assist in re-framing perspectives on development as a whole. The approach served as further inspiration for the topic chosen and provides a useful lens to constantly remind the researcher and reader of an expanded definition of human development. This highlights the importance of transformative objectives and outcomes of youth programming as it helps to re-frame our status quo approaches and logic.

The second framework recognises that social structural differences in marginalised youths' lives can negatively contribute to their personal development. Oyserman and Destin's (2010) culturally sensitive framework Identity-Based Motivation (IBM) is believed to support the study's endeavour to better understand the empowering potential of programming in re-orientation youths' perceptions of themselves, attitudes and behaviour. The framework could assist in understanding how prior perceptions have had downstream effects on personal development, their engagement and thus significance of programming.

The final framework by Chinman and Linney (1998) suggests an adolescent empowerment cycle, which lays out specific dimensions believed to be at the core of the empowerment process. This framework merges various themes and clusters key areas of focus describing their effect in an empowerment cycle assisting to operationalize ingredients and approaches.

1.4   Structure of thesis

Chapter 2 presents the literature review and theoretical perspectives of the study. The literature highlights both traditional and promising programme approaches with studies from developing and developed world contexts. The chapter then describes the three theoretical frameworks in more depth to provide various theories and approaches deemed important to guide the research and ends by summarising key concepts emerging from through the literature and theoretical frameworks.

Chapter 3 outlines the complexity of youth unemployment in the South African context in relation to the social structural legacy brought about through the dark history of South Africa. The chapter reviews the landscape of education and then of youth programming all the while rooted in the historical context and present realities and opportunities facing the country.

Chapter 4 presents the New Futures Programme, which is the case study of focus for the research. The chapter describes the programme's history, intentions, design and how it functioned. It details key phases, components and crosscutting themes of the programme in an attempt to show the complexity but value of incorporating a comprehensive approach to youth programming where specific skills areas integrate skills, abilities, networks and attitudes.

Chapter 5 presents the methodology of the research, which helped create the building blocks of the study. The chapter outlines the justification for choice of approach, how it aided exploration, comparative elements design and outlines the phased-approach to the fieldwork. The chapter then discusses various limitations and areas of improvement.

Chapter 6 presents data collected for the purpose of answering the research questions guiding the study. The section first describes the phased approach to the research, then presents data from the various phases to shed light on the life worlds of youth and to understand youths' perceptions of the programme, the ingredients and what skills appear to be relevant four years after programme completion.

Chapter 7 begins by providing a summary of the research in terms of process and methodology, and then moves into a summary of the findings and interpretations from data presentation in Chapter 6 and an analysis of the findings regarding the three relationships explored within the study. Discussions on how the research questions were answered will be argued for followed by an analysis of the findings in context to the theoretical frameworks chosen to guide the study. Further points for action and consideration are presented at the end of the chapter.

2 Literature Review and Theoretical Perspectives

In this chapter we begin with a review of literature selected, which presents important trends, patterns and areas of consideration from traditional and more promising forms of youth programming. The chapter then describes the chosen theoretical frameworks in more depth to highlight various theories and approaches deemed important to guide the research.

2.1 Literature review

An overview of the research has lead to understanding some important trends and patterns, which are believed to inform this study's approaches and justify concerns with the chosen questions under exploration. Theoretical works have highlighted the role that youth programming can play in young peoples' lives and have aided in better understanding more comprehensive approaches to youth development. The studies reflect the current view on ensuring youths' right to quality education and training support and give insight into understanding how youth may develop relevant strategies for building their own capacities. The differences between traditional programming approaches and holistic approaches have been the focal point of the studies reviewed.

It is recognized that drawing conclusions about youth programmes and comparing interventions can be difficult as different programmes have a variety of features and address the needs of various groups of young people. However, there is worth in exploring the potential of varying approaches that suggest they aim to enable youth for lifelong transformation and broaden the parameters of traditional programming. How to achieve this is a complex issue. In this section the aim is to explore these factors further and consider addressing the status quo of traditional programming against more promising programme qualities and considerations.

As it is beyond the capacity of this study to review all empirical studies related to these factors, some key reviews are considered relevant to the topic of study. The review includes studies from both developing and developed world contexts to better understand the

significance of multidimensional youth programming for different lived experiences and groups of young people.

2.2 Traditional programming: Can an old dog learn new tricks?

It is interesting that in the GMR 2012 under the somewhat questionable title "Putting education to work" the section on transferable skills appears to be left unexplored. It is not disputed that the report is a thorough and important piece of work touching on major challenges for youth. The report was indeed a pivotal turning point for advocating for youth within the field of education and training. In terms of non-cognitive skills development the report does recognize that a good quality education can play a role in supporting development of transferable skills such as self-esteem, motivation and aspiration (GMR, 2012). This is particularly so for marginalised groups such women in various socio-cultural environments, youth who lack supportive home environments and for children and youth living with disabilities. However it is also expressed in the GMR that "…there is limited evidence on how education shapes transferable skills, such as problem-solving, teamwork for motivation, mainly because measuring such skills is difficult, particularly across countries" (GMR, 2012: 187).

Employers often indicate that young new recruits are lacking in socio-emotional skills as was found in Peru in certain low skills occupations and in the service sector (World Bank, 2011e as cited in GMR 2012). In the Philippines "…employers similarly reported strong demand but lack of supply for attributes such as creativity, initiative, leadership and ability to work independently" (di Gropello et al, 2010 as cited in GMR, 2012: 187). The report comments that teaching practices aiming to develop socio-emotional skills have been popular in mostly developed countries and requires special commitment and training capabilities from teachers. A few Asian and Latin American countries have adopted practices that emphasize problem solving and reflective learning rather than mechanical training in routine tasks (Tippelt 2010 as cited in GMR, 2012) however, it states that challenges still resulted in it being difficult for teachers to implement these pedagogical approaches, despite financial resources and provision of skilled teachers. An array of surveys referenced in the GMR 2012 show that transferable skills are important for labour market outcomes, but "…less evidence exits on how they can be cultivated through targeted interventions" (GMR, 2012: 189).

It is recognized that the three pillars of foundational, vocational & technical and transferable skills set out in the 2012 GMR provide a solid platform in order to influence labour market outcomes for young people and have a youth empowerment directive. However it is important to explore the benefit of expanding the parameters of what we've come to know as transferable skills, as "…education is mandated to do more than provide knowledge and skills for economic growth or poverty reduction as reflected in the notions of skills for work or skills for jobs, income-generation skills, entrepreneurial skills, and technical and vocational skills" (Buchert, 2014: 66).

2.2.1 Overemphasis on technical skills acquisition

It appears that a high proportion of employability programmes continue to place emphasis on technical skills acquisition and the strategy for easing the transition from training to the working world is the incorporation of short term orientating business training courses. In some OECD countries governments are exploring ways to increase employer engagement in vocational education and training (VET) to carry the high costs involved. Policy options considered are incentive creation "…to encourage voluntary involvement or by compelling employers through imposition levies or licensing arrangements" (Smith and Billett, 2005 as cited in Hoeckel, K, 2008: 9). In the same report the benefits of VET include the neoliberal lines of thinking such as improved earnings, employability opportunities, mobility, capacity for lifelong learning, measures of working conditions and job satisfaction (Hoeckel, 2008). Education systems around the world prioritize instrumental and technical knowledge capabilities, which as a result "…socializes learners according to the confines of prevailing power structures and relations" (Taylor, 2008 as cited in Stephens et al, 2013: 82) and while this is crucial for economies large and small, it is a one dimensional approach which appears to have constructed a technical focused status quo when working with youth in particular.

As countries focus more on income generation rather than individuals, communities and the most vulnerable, there is a risk that groups of people will continue to be excluded from a life they too have reason to value. Studies show that VET programmes that specifically prepare youth for a specialized occupation or vocation have reduced unemployment and increased wages (CEDEFOP, 2011) which purports to have both economic and social benefits on micro, meso and macro levels. It is evident that policies governing the labour market promoting access to employment, education in all its forms, entrepreneurial skills and career guidance are critical to address the growing problem of youth unemployment.

In the 2012 GMR there are extensive examples of opportunities for youth through alternative vocational pathways with a particular emphasis on technical skills acquisition. Polytechnic programmes in Kenya, which aim to provide skills directly related to income generating activities (IGAs) with subjects such as ICT, hairdressing, electronics and construction are one example. In Ethiopia we see skills training institutions established for early school leavers who are unable to enter formal education training programmes. The prioritization of predominantly technical skills can be seen by Ethiopia undertaking a comprehensive reform of technical education and training at all levels (Atchoarena & Esquieu 2002 as cited in GMR 2012). Similarly in Nepal, the Training for Employment project implemented between 2000 and 2008 by the Alliance for Social Mobilization (a local organisation), focuses on second chance learning in basic literacy and numeracy with vocational skills to improve work opportunities (GMR, 2012). Subjects include a range of activities such as construction, cooking and mechanics. In addition, while a tracer study covering 206 project graduates reported that 73% had found employment (Paudyal 2008 as cited in GMR, 2012) there is a glaring lack of discussion around how to implement non-cognitive skills development in all these instances. This begs the question if we are aiming for short-term solutions or permanent transformation with the young people we work with.

In June 2014, at the 26th session of the Human Rights Council the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education presented a report addressing this very issue on holistic and human rights-based approaches to assessments of educational attainments and on skills development. "Prevalent international assessments of the performance of students reflect an instrumental role for education, driven by the concept of educational development in mere economic terms, with excessive emphasis placed on learning outcomes in mathematical literacy and language skills" (Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 2014: 2). He concludes that the status quo has resulted in a narrow approach, which is detrimental to the humanistic mission of education and goes as far as saying it undermines the objectives of education itself.

In an ADEA paper titled *Skilling Africa: The paradigm shift to Technical and Vocational Skills Development*, the authors discuss the shift from Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to technical and vocational skills development (TVSD). The paper recognizes that skills are multi-dimensional and by saying so they include cognitive skills, critical thinking skills, core and soft skills therefore defining the shift as incorporating what

appears to be a recognition of the importance of non-cognitive skills development as well as entrepreneurial and analytical skills that are necessary for navigating the world of work (Afeti et al, 2014). A defining characteristic discussed with regards to relevance and employability is when the authors emphasize there is a need to ease the transition from training to employment. While the emphasis is still on the goal that skills acquisition must lead to gainful employment in economic terms, they include that "…the employability of trainees can be enhanced if the TVSD curriculum incorporates instruction in employment related skills, such as communication skills, report writing skills, team building skills, negotiation skills and essential business development skills" (Afet et al, 2014: 8).

2.3   Promising programming: Expanding the parameters

We see that historically the experiences of young people today are not completely unique but resemble many similarities of the experiences of youth who left work in the 1980s. "Preparation for work has been a major purpose of organized learning throughout human history and across different cultures the world over" (Hoppers, 1996: 15). In 1984 contributions to the Ninth Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers *Education and Youth Unemployment* put together a detailed overview of 35 countries to meet the variety of needs of researchers and workers in the field of youth unemployment and the school-to-work transition and education personnel wanting to make cross-country comparisons of the problems and solutions in the mid-1980s (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1985).

In the report the authors mention that traditionally learning the skills required for the workplace had been done through apprenticeships and on-the-job training. In many of the countries reviewed higher and further education sectors had a long history of working closely with employers to ensure the demands of the labour market and graduates' abilities were in sync. In Canada, Cyprus, Brunei, Mauritius, Australia and elsewhere post-secondary, further education and technical institutions focused primarily on employment (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1985). While many vocational training schemes aimed at production such as in Zambia and Zimbabwe, in countries with well already well-established systems of technical education, new initiatives to unemployment were taking place.

The Australian Technical and Further Education (TAFE) sector ran various projects for unemployed youth and for those still in school that were expected to be unemployed. Projects

included pre-apprenticeship, pre-vocational and pre-employment courses. An education programme run was "…concerned not with basic skills for employment but with 'employment-seeking skills' and to help the students' personal development" (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1985: 18). Similarly New Zealand had school leavers in training and employment preparation schemes that included technical, work experience and life skills components.

It is interesting to wonder why more defined frameworks for life skills have not been solidified into all forms of post-school training for employability. Literature shows that many programmes have tried to introduce work-orientated programmes into curricula and have offered periods of work in school environment with results that have not always been successful (Hoppers, 1996). In the 1980s, closer development of personal attributes were seen to be important and highly instrumental as they appeared to be relevant tools that individuals can employ in every aspect of their life and for any situation they may find themselves in.

2.3.1 Non-cognitive skills as a gateway to sustainability

At present it appears that where transferable skills are included when working with youth, it is difficult to find a clear understanding or definition of learning needs related to life skills. It is also hard to pin down well-developed plans for implementation other than broad term of transferable skills development. 'Skills for life' alludes to "whole-person development of individuals in view of their identity and self" (Buchert, 2014: 163). "Evidence suggest that the important effects of…interventions are not in raising cognitive ability particularly…but in boosting motivation and aspiration and improving outcomes such as school retention and productivity at work, as well as better social outcomes such as lower involvement in criminal activities" (Krishnan et al, 2012: 6).

Employability skills as a term in itself encompasses skills that are used all through life in every social interaction which in addition are integral for better supporting navigation through work life or hard situations such as unemployment. Defining well-known effective practices in youth programming Collura (2010) explains that a youth employment programme should clearly focus on helping young people develop employability skills. "While this may seem obvious, a clear definition and framework of "employability skills" is relatively elusive" (Collura, 2010: 2). There appears to be a lack of specific directives of the kinds of skills that programmes should be teaching youth to ensure they are prepared for the labour market, which by its very nature means prepared for life.

According to Buchert (2014) life skills or skills for life capture the essence in the simplest and deepest way in the 1996 Delors report (Buchert, 2014). The 1996 report presents a model of four pillars of learning which are linked to the philosophy of lifelong learning involving the development of knowledge and skills but also values through all stages of a persons' life. They are: Learning to know (developing your knowledge), Learning to do (applying what you've learned), Learning to live together (those social and inter-personal skills that allow for diversity and acceptance of all) and Learning to be (developing a sense of self and focused on individual personal development) (Delors et al, 1996).

It is well understood and well advocated for that cognitive ability is an important predictor of improved engagement in schooling and increased opportunity in the labour market (AED, 2009; Morton et al, 2011; Krishnan et al, 2012; GMR, 2012). Perhaps so much so that we have forgotten the importance of what supports our abilities to create knowledge, to strive to learn and for us to reach new heights; those being our non-cognitive skills. Important for this study's focus is that an increasing amount of studies suggest that attributes such as self-confidence, motivation, perseverance and self-efficacy are critical for success in both education and social outcomes (AED, 2009; SAIDE, 2011; Hinchliffe & Jolly, 2011; Krishnan et al, 2012).

An impact evaluation was carried out for The Akanksha Foundation that offers non-formal education to children in the slums of Bombay, India (Krishnan et al, 2012). While the study is focused on early childhood intervention, it is believed that the results and experiences are relevant for youth. The evaluation from 2012 examined psychosocial attributes/non-cognitive skills due to the foundation's high focus on the development of self-esteem, motivation and self-confidence within programming. These non-cognitive skills were measured by feelings and attitudes that reflected concepts of self-efficacy, self-esteem and aspirations about their futures. Upon revisiting young participants the evaluation found that those who had graduated had significantly higher levels of self-esteem than their peers. They displayed a higher sense of agency and seemed to have the ability and motivation to take charge of their lives (Krishnan et al, 2012).

In other situations, for youth growing up in troubled neighbourhoods attitudes can be far more negative and destructive. An outreach scheme in Paris, France, creating second chances for youth from troubled neighbourhoods to take part in a second chance programme preparing them for employment and the future explain that "...when some of the kids come to

us they are blocks of hatred, pressure cookers about to explode" (Guardian Weekly, 2014, para. 8). How can programmes "help to rebuild themselves and refashion…opportunities" (Guardian Weekly, 2014, para.9).

Social capital

The Akanksha Foundation evaluation showed that past participants appeared to have denser networks of people they could rely on suggesting "…alumni are both better able to invest in and maintain social capital" (Krishnan & Krutikova, 2012: 4). A plethora of job and career publications and websites state that 80% of jobs are found through networking and word of mouth, which has been a huge skill people have had to develop as the world of work has changed over the years. In the past it was considered a sign of loyalty to stay with one employer for decades. In fact in today's world, staying too long simply for job security could give one the appearance of being unmotivated, less likely to adapt easily and inflexible. There is also research that shows that those who move jobs more frequently are paid substantially more – about 18% to 20% more (Wharton, 2012, para. 2). In today's job environment, finding a job can be said to be highly dependent on how you develop and make use of connections largely happening through referrals but also recognizing and jumping on opportunities within networks when they arise.

Criticism

It is important to note however that some studies do not confidently support the expectation of employment programmes having the ability to promote self-sufficiency, even though they might be successful in exposing youth to workplace experiences. Evidence from three diverse programmes in the United States indicate that participation does not result in higher employment in the long-term and suggest that more intensive programmes are needed (Jekielek et al, 2002). The work by Jekielek et al raises some unanswered questions which could be relevant for understanding why some employment programme aren't more successful: Are different types of job training more effective and for which groups? Who are the best facilitators for these kinds of employability interventions? How much training in job skills is needed for longer-term outcomes? How far does skills training contribute to successful outcomes compared to services that assist with childcare or searching for a job? (Jekielek et al, 2002). The authors conclude that programme evaluators and designers should focus on positive socio-emotional, academic and health outcomes among youth and not just unemployment outcomes.

2.3.2 Simulating the world of work

From student mentality to professional role

Research from the United Kingdom has looked at employers' perceptions of graduates in terms of their employability. "Certain themes were seen to emerge that put into question the traditional perception of graduate employability, which is made up of various skills, competencies and attributes" (Hinchliffe & Jolly, 2011). What was seen to evolve was a concept of identity comprised of value, intellect, social engagement and performance and these elements are expected to integrate with one another. Performing well at school is not the best indicator of performance. As Hinchliffe et al (2011) point out, performance depends on how young people interpret situations and this depends on understanding a situation in terms of a practice and on understanding youth in terms of their identity in the context of that practice. This practice provides a place wherein identities are constructed, modified, revised and developed (Hinchliffe et al, 2011).

Moving directly from a school environment that has through the ages been criticized for being far removed from the realities of a working environment, the authors believe that the young person's identity changes from being influenced by a range of student experiences to merging into the public domain and is shaped by social and economic forces which are not always under their control (Hinchliffe et al, 2011). It is possible that this development can be achieved if young people are exposed to a kind of pre-work-simulation; a safe place to learn on the job, much as the old apprenticeship structures offered to South African youth in the 1980s, currently offered in Germany or special post-school training programmes which offer job-shadowing opportunities.

2.3.3 Responding to youths' needs

Service Volunteered for All (SERVOL) is a community based social empowerment and educational NGO that began its work in the 1970s in Trinidad and Tobago running educational and empowerment programmes in disadvantaged urban and rural communities. SERVOL opened a series of technical workshops for youth aged 15-19 (plumbing, welding, electrical centre, food preparation and garment construction and a mechanics garage). Evaluations carried out on the centres revealed moderate success; high dropout rates and limited success in finding employment upon completion. Upon studying the profile of the youth it appeared that an overwhelming amount of graduates had negative self-perceptions and low self-esteem. This prompted SERVOL to re-work their programme into the

Adolescent Development Programme (ADP) taking unique steps in a phased approach to be able to better respond to the needs of youth "…who had been conditioned to failure by their life experiences" (SERVOL, para.5). Negative self-image and low self-esteem appeared to have been reinforced by their lack of success in primarily academic focused schooling.

In a 2002 tracer study of SERVOL graduates titled *To handle life's challenges*, explored the effects of ADP on participants 10 years after participation. Interviews were carried out with 79 respondents, 40 formal ADP trainees and 39 individuals who formed a comparison group. While the study analyzed a variety of criteria that were at the core of the ADP, the communication, emotional development and self-esteem components in particular are pertinent to this literature review. The communication component stimulated increased listening skills teaching trainees to respect the opinions of others. This included public speaking and the study concluded it was instrumental in that 80% of former participants felt they were able to "…articulate their feelings and improve interactions among themselves, their siblings and parents" (Griffith, 2002: 29). The emotional development component supported self-awareness and allowed participants to face emotional conflicts in an effective manner. The self-esteem component assisted in developing self-confidence by encouraging participants to be proud of themselves while the comparison group where more likely to see themselves as failures and expressed dissatisfaction with themselves and their lives.

2.3.4 Empowerment strategies, approaches and social capital

Work done in the context of Australian Indigenous communities looks at the link between community development training and community development practice. Community development in the context of the research is seen as an approach that is beneficial when working with Indigenous people as it moves us away from strictly western models of thinking to finding ways to integrate cultural practices between the two (Stephens, Baird & Tsey, 2013); work done *with* people not *to* people. Looking at training provided by Wontulp Bi.Buya (WBBC) in the far north of Queensland Australia, the college is seen as a driver of community development and is positively impacting on the quality of life of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from remote community settings. What is interesting is that the authors attribute the impact of the training to three aspects of the WBBC training model as discussed below:

1.) *The role of empowerment as a modeled strategy:* Empowerment strategies applied in these community settings increase peoples' abilities to manage a variety of issues related to

health, disease and improved well-being (Tsey et al, 2010 as cited in Stephens et al, 2013). For WBBC empowered graduates mean people who on a personal level have a positive self-image and sense of place. Empowerment is suggested as understood differently by social groups and their historical and cultural experiences (Stephens et al, 2013) and indeed their life experiences. Within community work with people from disadvantaged situations, realizing improved levels of empowerment at a personal, group, community and class level can be more effective than approaching development from a "helper-helpee" perspective (Stephens et al, 2013).

2.) *The pedagogical approach:* Here four principles have been identified that have been seen to work effectively when applied in programming. The principles are 1) self-direction, 2) lifelong learning, 3) responsibility and control by the learner, and 4) planned vs. incidental learning (Ricardo, 1990 as cited in Stephens et al, 2013). These principles incorporate and rely on elements of consultation and participation built into the programme, which aims to ensure that learning provides participants with experiences that can be replicated or improved upon in a sustainable manner. According to Stephens et al (2013) managing of self-image is strongly linked to self-direction and responsibility over one's own learning.

3.*) The importance of the ties or connections of social capital for empowerment and community development:* Social capital refers to the range of networks of individuals from personal to professional levels that an individual has to rely on for various reasons and in different degrees. They have value in that they are a source of useful and supportive relationships for young people in various stages of their development and can continue supportive links once a post-school intervention has come to an end. The building of networks and social capital ties can help gain exposure and extend influence.

2.4 Traditions and culture

Referring back to the study on training provided by WBBC in Australia, it was explained that Australian Indigenous communities have a system of community networks linked to family and clan ties with traditional and hierarchical decision-making processes and these structures can have a profound impact on development processes (Stephens et al, 2013). Programmes could only benefit from taking these factors into account during interventions. In the South African context one of the prominent characteristics is cultural pluralism. Smaller

communities within larger communities consist of different traditional practices based on hierarchical structures often based on age and adhere to a variety of cultural values and practices. In a modernizing world, with young people becoming more independent and less influenced by elders, the fostering of networks and enhancing of social skills enables a new kind of empowerment.

In South African society there is also a presence of the collective 'we' (Lyons et al, 1998) which echo South African cultural values such as the idea of 'ubuntu' meaning the spirit of togetherness, roughly translating into 'human kindness'. Harnessing the power of culture and meaning attached to these ideas and values has the potential to have profound impact on participants' outcomes and experiences. Furthermore, interactions between people from different cultural backgrounds, class structures and age groups strengthens ties if done in a culturally respectable manner and could also have far reaching impact on the future interactions with the multitude of cultures and personality participants will encounter in the workplace.

2.5   The ability to bounce back better

Education, training and development is as much about learning how to survive through times of adversity as it is about skills acquisition. In a sense it is about learning to bounce back, but also bounce back better with knowledge, tactics, experience and hindsight to better inform decision-making and actions in the future. Young people from low-income communities across geographies (rural and urbanized) can be exposed to stressful life situations; daily stressors, which can increase their risk of negative outcomes (Mosavel, M; Ahmed, R; Ports, K.A & Simon, C., 2013). Relevant and insightful is Mosavel et al's work *South African, urban youth narratives: resilience within community* which demonstrates that it could possibly be resilience itself that can be used as a integral support mechanism for young people through difficult times. The study focused on the future aspirations of South African youth, the challenges in their community and how they would make life better for themselves and others (Mosavel et al, 2013).

"Resilience is the concept that despite many negative factors within his or her lived context, an individual can withstand destructive environments, develop resistance and thrive" (Rutter, 1987; Walsh, 2006 as cited in Mosavel et al, 2013: 1). The research discusses the interplay of

risk factors (poverty and violence), which result in negative cognitive, and behavioural outcomes (Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, & Klebanov, 1994; Wise & Meyers, 1998 as cited in Mosavel et al, 2013) and protective factors (self-esteem, humour and hope), which are thought to mediate risks and help prevent negative outcomes at different stages of person's development (Gilgun, 1999 as cited in Mosavel et al, 2013: 2). While programming can support to positively re-orientate attitudes, perceptions and behaviours, a growing body of research suggests that a person's sociocultural context is important as it "…frames the individual experience of adverse events" (Eggerman & Panter-Brick, 2010 as cited in Mosavel et al, 2013: 2). Mosavel et al's research has a particular focus on how community shapes individual-level factors, their experiences and their perceptions of the future and community connectedness and hope are two dimensions important to their study (Mosavel et al, 2013).

Important for this study, Mosavel et al suggest that researchers interested in positive youth development in South Africa need to understand to what extent community factors shape individual perceptions "…which may facilitate or impede the ability of some to have a protective response against risk factors" (Mosavel et al, 2013: 3). Their overall findings appear to have significant implications for positive youth development efforts. One of the strongest findings was the "structural condition of the community and the impact this had on all aspects of the participants' lives" (Mosavel et al, 2013: 5).

Summary

It is evident that planning for meeting the diverse needs of youth is both complex and multi-faceted. From the literature it is evident that there are huge social and economic benefits to VET on macro, meso and micro levels from employment opportunities and earnings to inclusion of disadvantages groups, life satisfaction and individual motivation (CEDEFOP, 2011). However VET by its very definition "…is directly linked with a nation's productivity and competitiveness" (CEDEFOP, 2011: 6) and aims to prepare individuals with a dominant focus on raising profitability by harnessing the drive and energy that young people have during this age period. It is respected that there are positive benefits for labour market outcomes and enterprise performance however as the report states: social benefits are always more difficult to measure (CEDEFOP, 2014). While there is widespread agreement that cognitive and technical skills development has been proven to be important. However, more emphasis is called for defining a framework for non-cognitive skills development. One-

dimensional approaches "…confine individuals more narrowly to being knowledge-worker citizens in a deregulated economic environment with a particular focus on their employment and employability from a market perspective" (Lauder et al, 2006 as cited in Buchert, 2014: 168).

Resilience as a concept was suggested could be an integral support mechanism for young people through difficult times. This is evident for those who are exposed to more risk factors than others such as poverty and violence that result in negative cognitive, non-cognitive and behavioural outcomes. Protective factors such as self-esteem, humour and hope are thought to mediate risks and assist in preventing negative outcomes at various stages of a person's development. Interesting is that authors mentioned that altruism and personal choice were recurring themes in their research. They also displayed an intense want to help others, potentially because they themselves had experienced hardship. The literature questions whether altruism could indeed be a source of resilience.

2.6 Theoretical frameworks

The frameworks provide overarching lenses to understand various dimensions the research. It is hoped that the frameworks might help to challenge and extend existing knowledge on youth programming and broaden parameters of conventional programming design and implementation.

2.6.1 The Capability Approach

Sen's Capability approach used as a conceptual framework allows the opportunity to further delve into the ingredients necessary in programming and explore broadening the range of capabilities to be developed. The literature reviewed highlights key elements and raises a number of issues about the diversity of skills that young people should have. The concept of human capability rests on ability. "The substantive freedom of people to lead the lives they have to reason to value and to enhance the real choices they have" (Sen, 1999, p.293).

The approach has a two-pronged appeal. Firstly the freedom-orientated perspective highlights that despite the objective, the thought behind development should be expanded to the concept of freedom. Sen has argued that the main concern is with our ability to lead the kind of lives we have reason to value (Sen, 1999) and this notion allows us to re-direct our view of development: "This approach can give a very different view of development from the usual

concentration on GNP or technical progress or industrialization, all of which have contingent and conditional importance without being the defining characteristics of development" (Sen, 1999: 285). By using Sen's approach it highlights the need to re-orientate some of the basic issues of development, which are often neglected issues in public policy, in dealing with poverty, inequality and social performance (Sen, 1999).

The second part of the formulation of capabilities is that of 'valuable functionings'. All people have the right to live a life that has a measure of quality to them personally. Sen defines 'functionings' as "…the various things that a person may value doing or being" (Sen, 1999: 75) and that this is an improved benchmark to "assess social welfare than utility or opulence" (Alkire, 2005: 118). These functionings extend from basic needs such as being nourished and able to take care of oneself/family to survive, to being confident or taking part in political decisions (Alkire, 2005). Essentially this brings to the fore a focus on the evaluation of well-being, bringing about a life of genuine choice and this intrinsic value of freedom is proposed to extend across class and culture (Sen, 1999; Alkire, 2005).

2.6.2 Identity Based Motivation

A model of Identity Based Motivation is used to understand how varying social structural factors affect young peoples' aspiration-achievement gap by influencing their perceptions of what is possible for people like them with their particular background and upbringing (Oyserman & Destin, 2010). Social structural factors matter influencing the aspiration-achievement gap "in part by affecting young peoples' perceptions of what is possible for them and people like them in the future"(Oyserman & Destin, 2010: 1002).

The model was chosen to demonstrate how interventions focusing on the macro-micro level can work to re-orientate young peoples' perceptions of themselves while considering how social structural factors might impact attainment potential. Oyserman and Destin use an integrative, culturally sensitive framework of Identity Based Motivation which has three core postulates termed *action readiness*, *dynamic construction* and *interpretation of difficulty*. "Action readiness is the prediction that identities cue readiness to act and to make sense of the world in terms of the norms, values, and behaviors relevant to the identity" (Oyserman & Destin, 2010: 1003). The model assumes that identities are dynamically constructed in context. "Dynamic construction is the predication that which identities come to mind, what these identities are taken to mean, and therefore, which behaviours are congruent with them are dynamically constructed in context" (Oyserman & Destin, 2010: 1003). The third

postulate, interpretation of difficulty, predicts that when a young person experiences a behaviour that feels compatible with their identity, difficulties in engaging in the behavior will be interpreted as meaning that the behaviour is important not impossible and, therefore, effort is meaningful, not pointless (Oyserman & Destin, 2010). Thus, "interpretation of difficulty matters because it influences judgment, choice and behaviour" (Oyserman & Destin, 2010: 1003).

2.6.3 Positive Cycle of Adolescent Empowerment

The final framework supports exploring how programming can be implemented and how programmes of this nature can be operationalized. Chinman and Linney's (1998) cycle of Adolescent Empowerment allows the study to better analyze the 'how'. The model defines empowerment as a way people gain control over their lives through "…active participation, with an emphasis on strengths instead of weaknesses, an acknowledgement of cultural diversity, and the use of language that reflects the empowerment ideals" (Rappaport, as cited in Chinman & Linney, 1998: 394).
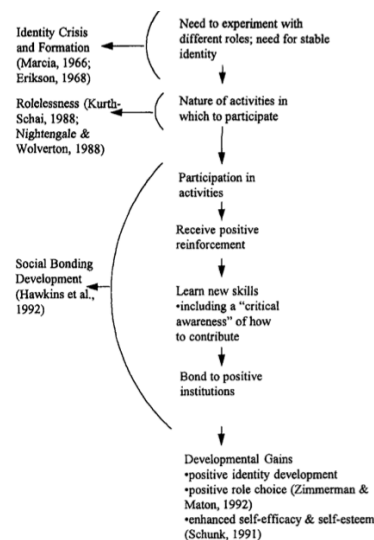
Figure 1 Positive adolescent empowerment cycle (Chinman & Linney, 1998: 399)

The Chinman & Linney cycle shown in figure 1 above merges themes of identity development, rolelessness and bonding theories and describes the potential empowerment process of youth in well-constructed programming. By giving a proposed overview of factors to consider in the empowerment process the cycle enables this study to further explore how the nature of activities, approaches and design might enable more comprehensive programming that involves youth as the main drivers of transformation and empowerment.

Overview of framework interaction with the study

The following basic overview depicted in figure 2 shows how the frameworks are thought to function and where they can have value in terms of the key questions of this study including the three relationships being explored.
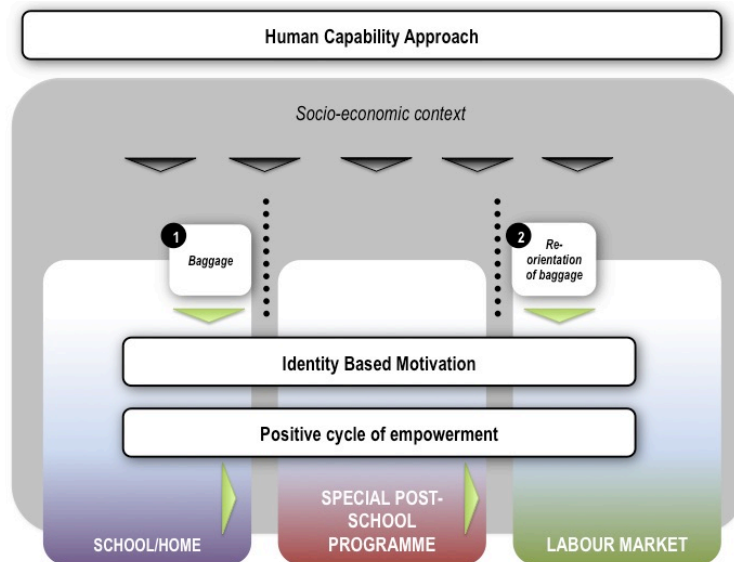
Figure 2 Basic overview of framework interaction

Through this basic overview we can see that youth are exposed to factors in their environment that according to the literature could play a vital role in shaping perceptions. The life experiences of young people could potential influence attributes developed, identities formed and skills acquired – "the baggage" they enter any programme with. 'Baggage' in itself implies that young people are not empty vessels upon entering a post-school programme and that potentially the wider socio-economic context which young people find themselves exposed to affects this baggage dramatically. The research hopes to explore the salient points highlighted from the literature review and theoretical frameworks, showing that together they have come to form an overall frame in which to understand the goal of the research.

In order to understand the significance of more comprehensive programming, its ingredients and how they are put into place concepts brought forth from the literature and frameworks will include skills for life, motivation, understanding negative image and low self-esteem, belonging to a network, socio-cultural structures and community conditions, altruism and resilience. Together with the frameworks this will assist when interpreting data collected from respondents.

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3 Context

Chapter 3 outlines the complexity of youth unemployment in the South African context in relation to the social structural legacy brought about through the dark history of South Africa. The chapter reviews the landscape of education and then of youth programming all the while rooted in the historical context and present realities and opportunities facing the country.

3.1   A brief history of South Africa

South Africa's history is riddled with stark contrasts and enormous diversity. It is a history of racial discord, which travelled a landscape of harsh realities and obstacles to finally create a country united in its diversity. When the Union of South Africa came into being in 1910, history saw the gradual repression of the right to vote to the final disenfranchisement of all populations of colour when the Black and Cape Coloured voters' rolls were completely abolished. The 1950s saw increasingly repressive laws against black South Africans which restricted movement, brought about segregation in public spaces and the introduction of the Bantu Education system which forced separation in schools and universities. Many people argue that this educational oppression was an outright intention of the Apartheid government to limit educational potential and force non-white young people into the unskilled labour market (Byrnes, 1996). Black teachers salaries became pitifully low and very few were qualified. Schools were shamefully under resourced and poorly equipped. In the 1970s, the per capita governmental spending on black education was one-tenth of the spending on white education (Byrnes, 1996). A turning point in South Africa's history and a characteristic of its resistance and struggle for freedom was the Soweto Uprising in 1976, when high school students flocked to the streets in protest against the introduction of Afrikaans and English as the languages of instruction and for their right to be taught in their own language.

20 years after democracy South Africa has ushered in an era of increased stability and peace. However, the country faces a plethora of social and economical challenges within its diversity. Public discontent is still seen today with violent protests happening regularly over poor service delivery and corruption within the government. The economy has stalled with a growing unemployment rate and groups of people who have given up looking for work. In

2012, South Africa's GDP growth fell to 2.5% with the World Bank estimating GDP growth for 2013 at just 1.9% with economists predicting probably less than 3% for the country's current potential. (Africa Check, 2014, para. 42). This means, "…there will be insufficient growth to address the backlog of unemployment or drive the creation of new jobs, and means that even where jobs are created they may not be sustainable" (Africa Check, 2014, para. 44). The crime rate remains a huge challenge with the most recent 2012/2013 crime statistics showing an increase in the number of categories of serious and violent crime. There is a growing sense of worry about the present and future, which has led many South Africans to question how far the country has come to ensuring a truly free and democratic society for all.

3.2 The complexity of unemployment and marginalization across South Africa

South Africa has an estimated population of 53.4 million people as of 2015 (Worldometers, 2015). Rich in cultural and ethnic diversity the population has a wide range of languages, religious beliefs and traditions. According to Census 2011 (the latest to date), Africans (broad grouping including the Nguni, Sotho-Tswana, Tsonga and Venda populations) make up the majority of the population at 79.2%, coloured (a contentious label of people from mixed lineage) 8.9%, white people (Afrikaners, English-speakers and immigrants from the Europe) 8.9% and the Indian and Asian population (majority of South Africa's Asian population are Indian but there is also a significant population of Chinese South Africans) at 2.5%. "Other" population group makes up 0.5% of the total (Census, 2011). At a glance the population data can be seen in table 1 below:

Table 1 South Africa's Population Census 2011 (Statistics SA, 2011)

SA's POPULATION: CENSUS 2011		
Population group	Number	% of total
African	41 000 938	79.2%
White	4 586 838	8.9%
Coloured	4 615 401	8.9%
Indian/Asian	1 286 930	2.5%
Other	280 454	0.5%
TOTAL	51 770 560	100%

Of the total population mentioned above, 22,25 million people (42%) are regarded as youth (14-35 years old) (NYDA, 2013). Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) is the national statistics service of the country producing official censuses and surveys. The latest Quarterly Labour Force survey (Quarter 4, 2014) provides information on youth divided into two groups i.e. 15-24 and 25-34 year cohorts. As of Quarter 4, 2014 labour force characteristics by age groups across the country were documented as follows:

Table 2 Labour force characteristics by age group Q4 Labour Force Survey (Statistics SA, 2014: 6)

Labour force characteristics by age group	
Population 15-24 years	**Oct-Dec 2014**
Unemployment rate (%)	48,8
Population 25-34 years	**Oct-Dec 2014**
Unemployment rate (%)	29.6

Despite being a leading economy in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the region. In 2014 in the 15-24 year cohort unemployment was estimated at 48,8 with a slight decrease from 51,2% from January-March 2014. For the population of 25-34 years unemployment stood at 29.6% with a slight increase from 28,3% from October-December 2013 (Stats SA, 2014: 6). Understanding the magnitude and impact of the unemployment situation for young people becomes clearer in the 3 categories unemployment is divided into: *Unemployed young people* are categorized as having no job, but still actively seeking employment. *Discouraged* groups have given up hope of seeking a job, because they feel that their efforts are of no consequence. Those *inactive* are not involved in any activities that are linked to economic activities. Another important consideration is the number of young people neither in employment, nor in education or training (NEET). Many countries across the world are experiencing an upward trend of NEETs particularly since the start of the financial crisis in 2008.

Disparity across provinces

In South Africa equality and opportunity is spread disproportionately across the 9 provinces contributing to disadvantaged states of young people. South Africa experiences regional disparities, which can be characterized as a rural-urban divide and an urban underclass (Linford, 2011, para 2). To understand the stark contrast across regions and their implications

for access to opportunities, figures have been collected in table 3 below. These figures use the expanded definition of unemployment, which includes people who have stopped looking for work. Unfortunately statistics for youth by age and province were not included in the survey. However taking account the trends by province gives further insight into understanding the socio-economic contexts of young peoples' experiences.

Table 3 Labour force characteristics by province Q4 Labour Force Survey (Statistics SA, 2014: 8)

Labour force characteristics by province	
Population 15-64 years	**Oct-Dec 2014** Unemployment rate (%)
Western Cape	22,9
Eastern Cape	29,1
Northern Cape	28,7
Free State	32,2
KwaZulu-Natal	20,8
North West	25,2
Gauteng	24,6
Mpumalanga	26,6
Limpopo	15,9

Severe economic disparities characterize South Africa and this is connected to geographical inequality. The differences that mark the provinces such as poverty, access to services and geographical isolation can lead to small homogenous networks, create instances of poor self-esteem and can fuel social, racial and gender prejudices. In South Africa inequalities have a high correlation to race. The Apartheid regime's (1948-1994) concern with the wellbeing of the white population; reserving decent, well-paying jobs for whites and improving the economical situation for poor white people. The widening gap especially affected the black African population as the government ensured that the majority of black Africans were limited to lower-level jobs. In addition, educated black people could not find decent work opportunities. Shifts in the labour market in the 1970s for jobs that required little education particularly in the mining industry left many non-white people without work. These factors partly still account for the inequality within races in the history of South Africa and continue to be felt in the present day.

With the end of apartheid in 1994, the educated non-white population was given the opportunity to gain substantive employment. "However, the vast majority of the black population still suffers severely from lack of marketable skills. Such discrepancies will continue to be felt in the next generation, as levels of education vary tremendously among social classes" (Linford, 2011, para.10). Affirming this prediction, the recent Stats SA 20 year review of skills and youth unemployment shows that black Africans have fallen behind in enquiring skills in the period from 1994-2014. While the report shows that during the period there has been a shift from low skilled to semi-skilled and skilled-work, higher percentages were still in semi-skilled occupations (clerks, craft and related trades and machine operators) and only a slight decrease was noted in low-skilled work (elementary jobs and domestic work) within the South African workforce. "An examination of the data also revealed little movement towards skilled employment among the black African workforce…showing only a slight movement towards skilled occupations" (Stats SA, 2014, para. 3). When Stats SA applied the analysis to age groups "…data show that there has been a shift towards skilled work in all age groups within the four population groups, with the exception of black Africans aged 25-34 years. In 1994, 17% of black African youths aged 25-34 occupied skilled occupations. In 2014, this decreased to 15%" (Stats SA, 2014, para. 4). In light of such a review, the country will no doubt be placing greater emphasis on addressing effective skills development. It is therefore a crucial moment to broaden the parameters of youth development and critically evaluate how we do skills development. This will be addressed throughout this work.

3.3   Realities and Opportunities

As mentioned South Africa is divided into 9 provinces and how each utilizes their education budget and structures their schools fees vary largely according to location. For example former white schools in suburbs (sometimes referred to as former Model C schools) in 2004 charged R10, 000 while schools located in township and rural locations charged around R150 per annum. (Pearce as cited in Ocampo, 2004, para 6). Socio-economic status and geographical location strongly influence access to and quality of a person's education career. Schools found in township and rural areas are at a higher risk of inequality resulting in disparities based on geography. Educational inequalities can exist due to varying degrees of

provincial departmental support, tightly limited resources, lack of qualified teachers and poor teacher attendance among other factors. The pressure on the system to ensure staff capacity and qualified teachers are in place is compounded with high levels of overage learners and high pupil to teacher ratios in classrooms. While more appropriately resourced schools have a teacher-student ratio of 1:25 many schools in poorer locations have as many as 1:40 to as large as 1:70[4]. While segregation in schools has been abolished and a united school system formed, well resourced, urban schools have improved equitable enrollment of races. Due to the correlation between socio-economic status, race and location, township and rural schools are still predominantly attended by black and coloured students (Ocampo, 2004, para 5).

The government's Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025 is an education strategy aiming to improve education and support teachers. The new curriculum called Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) provides detailed guidance in order to systematize what is taught in schools. In addition teacher education and development training opportunities have become more of a focus. The implementation of no-fee schools and the National Schools Nutrition Programme supports access opportunities to the poorest learners.

Higher education in South Africa mainly consists of a university system with a very small private college sector. For youth who leave school before completing their Grade 12 and those who pass without university exemption, there are very limited educational opportunities to further their education (Cloete, 2009). The final year of secondary schooling's Grade 12 Matric results have been praised for significant improvement since 1994 being on a consistent upward trend "…with the pass rate going from 62.6% in 2008, dipping to 60.6% in 2009, only to rise to 67.8% in 2010, 70.2% in 2011 and 73.9 in 2012" (Africa Check, 2014, para. 4). As the Department of Education (DOE) themselves inform, the Grade 12 Matric pass rate on its own is not the best measure of achievement in the education system. The examinations are not designed to compare the performance of the schooling system across years but to test if the individual learner qualifies for certification based on student chosen subjects (DOE, 2013, para.7). The DOE explains that in comparison to similar developing countries, the amount of Grade 12 learners successfully finishing secondary schooling by obtaining their Matric (final year of schooling) certificate is low by international standards.

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[4] Personal observations

Important changes in educational policy have been critical to address the atrocities of the past. In the former finance minister Pravin Gordhan's 2014 budget speech noted that in 2007, 5 million learners had access to free education; this year (2014) the number has reached to 8.8 million (National Treasury, 2014). Education receives 20% (R254 billion) of the government's consolidated expenditure, which is the highest amount the government spends compared to any other sector (Republic of South Africa, 2014). However, South Africa's education system has largely failed to keep up with the social challenges faced by the country. In the World Economic Forum's 2013 Global IT report, South Africa's education system ranked second to last out of 144 countries surveyed in poor quality of mathematics and science education, ranking 139th overall (WEF, 2013). The 2011 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) found that 43% of South African Grade 5 learners had not developed basic reading skills that are required for reading at the equivalent international Grade 4 level (Howie et al, 2012).

In 2014 post schooling education and training accounted for 21% of the total education spending with a considerable amount set aside for the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) (National Treasury, 2014). The NSFAS provides financial support to eligible students attending public Further Education and Training (FET) colleges and public universities. This gives students from poor and working class families the chance to further their educational potential. With youth unemployment in South Africa standing at such a high rate, it must be highlighted whether or not it is feasible to assume that students will be in a position to pay back these loans. This had led to regular student strikes across the country with growing youth unrest.

3.3.1 Gaps and misalignments

Training institutions in South Africa have come under criticism as many young people have a theory-based qualification from a college or university of technology, but in reality are unable to solve real life problems as they have had little or no practical experience (SAIDE, 2011). Even though expenditure on education has increased considerably since 1994 and "…the fact that better-educated young people remain poor suggests that the labour market has not been playing a successful role in alleviating poverty and that the education system is not delivering the skills needed in the labour market" (Leibbrandt et al, 2010: 10).

Across the globe there appears to be a widening chasm between what employment interventions as well as colleges and universities feel is important to relay to students and what employers expect (Hinchliffe & Jolly, 2011; DBSA, 2011). In the Development Bank of South Africa's (DBSA) 2011 report of youth employment programmes, gaps and misalignments in programme delivery were analyzed. The methodology used was developed by the World Bank but adapted to apply to the local South African context, focusing on specific issues constraining young South Africans. The analysis depicting "skills mismatch in particular" can be seen in figure 3 below.

Constraints/market failures		Interventions	Gaps
Skills mismatch	Ensuring that learners obtain a good general education	1. Improve general education provided in schools 2. Programmes to retain learners in schools 3. Second-chance programmes 4. Education equivalency programmes	• There are almost no interventions to keep young people in high school. • Second-chance learning programmes are almost non-existent. • Current interventions to improve the public education system will take many years before yielding results in the labour market.
	Technical skills mismatch	1. Training and on-the-job experience (internships and apprenticeships)	• The scale is insufficient. • Signalling remains a problem – employers and higher education do not understand what many of the qualifications are or recognise their value. • Either the focus or level of the training is wrong, or training is of a poor quality.
	Lack of employability skills	1. Reform teaching methodologies to incorporate soft skills 2. Life skills programmes	• There is no significant initiative focusing on transitioning skills/soft skills.

Figure 3 Analysis of gaps and misalignments in current programme delivery (DBSA, 2010: 39)

We see that there are a multitude of issues from poor level and quality of the training itself, a misalignment of effective coordination between employers and higher education to technical skills mismatch. In particular interest to this study is the finding of the lack of employability skills, where the DBSA suggests a reform in teaching methodologies that incorporate what they recognize as the importance of soft skills and life skills programmes. They state that a severe gap appears to be that there is no significant initiative focusing on transitioning skills/soft skills in programme delivery. They recognize that "the analysis indicates that in order to improve youth employability in South Africa significantly, a much broader spectrum of programmes is required" (DBSA, 2011: 40) concluding that interventions in their current form have had little impact on the employability and employment of young South Africans. The review highlights quality, which includes the approach that youth interventions should be constructed in a way that speaks to and listens to the needs of youth exiting the education and training system. It also focuses on the importance of a transferable skills component within

interventions as it is "...an invaluable means of providing young people with discipline, a work ethic and the soft skills required to become employable" (DBSA, 2011: 31).

3.4   The Landscape of Youth Programming in South Africa

In the 1980's the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) established a research group to formulate recommendations on training based on South Africa's discriminatory history, which resulted in black workers being labeled as unskilled, and therefore employers repeatedly denied any demands for wage increases. At the time the assumption was that skills development would lead to better wages. In the 1990's the DOE developed the Education Renewal Strategy (ERS), which laid out a system of three streams: academic, vocational and vocationally orientated. A series of initiatives, implementation plans and white papers led to an understanding that there was a need for development of a national qualifications framework (NQF). "It was regarded as a major innovation of the new democratic government, aiming to bring all learning, including basic, secondary and higher education and the various forms of 'in service' and industrial training under a single framework of outcomes-based standards and qualifications" (van Huyssteen, 2002, para.12). The Council on Higher Education (CHE) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) was thus formed. It was envisioned that in an ever-changing globalized world the NQF would bring about increased opportunities and more systematized pathways to progress through education, training and career paths (SAQA, para.10)

There have been considerable investments in developing a national youth development strategy to ensure that the generations affected by apartheid have the opportunities to participate in the South African economy and society. The ANC's 2009-2014 policy framework on education and training sees the two as basic human rights in that all individuals should have access to lifelong education and training experiences irrespective of race or class. The framework focuses on the development of human potential, so that every person is able to contribute freely to society. The vision of the National Youth Policy 2009-2014 is consistent with the National Youth Development Policy Framework of 2002: "Integrated, holistic and sustainable youth development, conscious of the historical imbalances and current imbalances and current realities…to build a democratic South Africa in which young

people and their organizations not only enjoy and contribute to their full potential in the social, economic and political spheres of life but also recognize and develop their responsibilities to build a better life for all" (National Youth Policy, 2008: 7).

In order to address the complexities and fill in the gaps where the formal education system has appeared to fail to equip youth with skills sets needed to access viable work opportunities; the South African government implemented a number of funded programmes. One strategy of public employment programmes, in 1994 saw the creation of the National Public Works Programme (NPWP), and the Community-Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP). However, "…compared to the extent of unemployment, the CBPWP created few employment opportunities and the programme had a maximum funding of R350 million per annum" (DBSA, 2011: 28).

Responding to the increasing worry of unemployment in 2003 the government implemented an Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) seen as an opportunity to include unemployed and less skilled people by encouraging ways to increase service delivery while intentionally creating work opportunities for the unemployed population. Quotas were applied to ensure participation of marginalized groups with the quota for young people standing at 40% (DBSA, 2011). The significant failure of the EPWP was the failure to coordinate and implement a system of additional education and training programmes to support workers and the many beneficiaries had not progressed to other jobs (DBSA, 2011).

Public deployment programmes were another strategy for people to earn an income while equipping themselves with further education, experience or skills development. According to the DBSA's review the only significant programme planned and to a limited extent implemented, is the National Youth Service Programme (NYSP) directly connected to the South African National Youth Policy (NYP) since 1996 (DBSA, 2011). "In the South African context deployment programmes present a solution to mass youth unemployment and its detrimental socio-economic and political consequences. Much more effort and resources should be allocated to such programmes to align them with the scale necessary to address the current youth unemployment crisis" (DBSA, 2011: 32). Programmes were funded by the then Umsobomvu Youth Fund and ran a course of 12 months, however very few programmes were implemented under the NYSP in 2010 and 2011.

With entitlement in mind the South African government developed a youth strategy out of which Umsobomvu Youth Fund (UYF) was established in 2001. The UYF at this point was important because it was South Africa's national youth employment system (ImagineNations, 2007) and offered young people from both urban and rural areas a new beginning in a society that has been racked by various forms of exclusion on a large scale. The ImagineNations report (2007) conducted a series of in-depth case studies, including BRAC in Bangladesh, the All-China Youth Federation (ACYF) in China and the Umsobomvu Youth Fund (UYF) in South Africa. The UYF seemed promising as reported by ImagineNations nowhere else in the world did a programme offer at such scale a comprehensive range of services for youth employment and enterprise development (ImagineNations, 2007). The report comments that UYFs sound business practices, products and services made it a model youth employment and enterprise development programme that provided youth with sustainable opportunities for employment and better livelihoods.

The National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) was established in 2009 following a merger between the UYF and the National Youth Commission to be a single, thorough structure to address youth development issues at national, provincial and local government levels. Taking its directives from the NYDA Act (54 of 2008) and the National Youth Policy (NYP) 2009-2014, the aim was to develop an integrated Youth Development Plan and Strategy for South Africa and to mainstream youth development in the country. The NYDA has the daunting task of planning, designing, coordinating and monitoring and evaluating all programmes aimed at integrating youth into the economy and society in general (NYDA, 2008).

3.5   Forms of injustice and the South African youth experience

As any working individual knows, a large part of a person's daily life is dedicated to activities related to work. Work life structures a large part of people's everyday reality and therefore is a major source of personal identity and self-evaluation (Bandura et al, 2001). The occupational roles that people perform determine whether their work life is challenging and fulfilling or repetitively inane and stressful (Bandura et al, 2001). If we look at Fraser's analysis (1997) we see that a spectrum of factors can bring about various forms of injustice to

youths' working lives. These influence on both economic and cultural levels as depicted can be seen in figure 4 below.
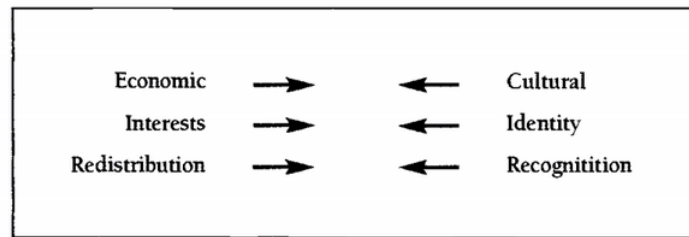
Figure 4 Fraser's Forms of injustice (1997) (Kabeer, 2000)

Economic forms of injustice can be defined as incidents of the following within the fabric of society: "…exploitation (the appropriation of the fruits of one's labour), marginalization (exclusion from the means of livelihood or confinement to poorly paid, undesirable forms of work) and deprivation (being denied an adequate standard of living)" (Kabeer, 2000: 4). Continued disparities in equity, access and participation in quality education experiences offered to certain groups of people could continue to reinforce social inequalities in South Africa. This perpetuates economic instability within poorer families, designating them to a life of hardship and further widens the gap between those have and those who don't. On the cultural end of the Fraser's spectrum patterns of injustice develop when there is a lack of positive recognition and acceptance. Many disadvantaged young adults fresh out of their education and training are not in a competitive position to apply for jobs in an industry related to their field of study. With businesses reluctant to take on the investment in training this could negatively impact feelings of welcoming young graduates into the workforce, also closing doors to possible opportunities of learning.

Upon surveying the job market it is evident that the majority of decent work positions require 3-5 years of experience. Apprenticeships are no longer the norm in South Africa and labour market has not developed a replacement culture for supporting and training young people on the job. If businesses continue to be reluctant to employing people based on their age and lack of experience this can deepen labour market discrimination (Sawchuck & Taylor, 2010; Carpenter et al, 2007). This lack of positive recognition and acceptance forms part of the cultural and economic injustices rife in society today. An important factor to consider in the high rate of youth unemployment is how businesses and employees view young people as

this can lead to disparities in who participates in employment and in turn affects the quality of young peoples' employment (Sawchuck & Taylor, 2010).

Youth from rural and township areas often move from their families to find work opportunities in the midst of bustling city life. Many find themselves in a situation where they may be working, but "…earning wages below the poverty line in the urban informal sector" (GMR, 2012: 3). This structures a life of assigning marginalized young people to low skilled work usually completely unrelated to their field of study; with graduates who have studied IT, Marketing and the like becoming house cleaners, packers at shopping markets and security personnel or else sitting at home disillusioned and waiting for the next opportunity. Many young people have become idle and demotivated due to being denied the opportunity to gain valuable and relevant workplace experience. This perpetuates a life of economic hardship and the development of low self-esteem and a lack of self-worth. Providing youth with opportunities to escape from low self-esteem and low skilled, low paid work should be at the core of every skills development strategy (GMR, 2012).

3.6   Risk factors

Children and youth in South Africa from low-income communities are vulnerable to high levels of daily stressors, which are said to increase the risk of negative developmental outcomes (Mosavel et al, 2010). One in two young South Africans indicate that family members often lose their tempers with each other (Leoschut, 2009 as cited in Pieterse, 2014) and "one in four indicate that they are often hit at home as punishment for their wrongdoings" (Leoschut and Burton, 2006 as cited in Pieterse, 2014: 1). Recent research from 2014 *Childhood Maltreatment and Educational Outcomes: Evidence from South Africa* reports that a South African children to a large degree experience varying degrees of maltreatment however little is known about the effects on long-term child development (Pieterse, 2014). The study is critical in shedding light on the links between childhood maltreatment in a country like South Africa where instances of maltreatment are prevalent. "Results indicate that children who are maltreated suffer large adverse consequences in terms of their numeracy test scores and probability of dropout and that the estimated effects of maltreatment are larger and more consistent for the most severe type of maltreatment" (Pieterse, 2014: 1).

The evidence of this link is important for three reasons: 1) it inhibits the production and non-production benefits of education and reduces external benefits associated with a good education system, 2) if it causes an individual to drop out of school it will also affect the efficiency of the education system and labour productivity and 3) if poor children are disproportionately maltreated, an association between childhood maltreatment and adverse educational outcomes may explain the persistence of inequality seen in South Africa literature (Im et al, 2012 as cited in Pieterse, 2014). Pieterse's findings show that the role of the family shapes both intellectual and social development of children suggesting that "childhood experiences shape the behaviour and educational performance of adults" (Pieterse, 2014: 2).

In Chapter 4 attention is paid to The New Futures Programme, specifically designed to develop transferable skills for transformation and re-orientation of youth, with sustainability as one of it's more beneficial approaches.

4 The New Futures Programme

Chapter 4 presents the New Futures Programme describing its history, intentions and design and how it functioned[5]. It details key components and phases of the programme and crosscutting themes that attempt to show the complexity but value of incorporating specific skill areas that integrate skills, abilities, networks and attitudes.

4.1   The New Futures Programme: South Africa

The beginnings of The New Futures Programme (NFP) in South Africa began with the piloting of a youth employability programme Programa Para o Futuro (PPF) in Recife Brazil. PPF intended to refine a strategy for permanent transformation by integrating basic technical education, employability and social skills development with mentoring and strong social support components. PPF was designed and implemented by The Academy for Educational Development (AED) with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), AED and private-public partnerships. With remarkable transformation and enhanced employability, by the end of the programme more than 88% of the participants had found employment or were furthering their education (AED, 2009).

In 2009 the blueprint of PPF was adapted to fit the demographic of unemployed youth in the South African context. SchoolNet South Africa in partnership with AED and Microsoft South Africa created the New Futures Programme (NFP) with the aim of preparing unemployed young South African men and women for the realities of the working world. The pilot was run from October 2009-June 2010 with two groups of participants each going through a 3 month programme: NFP 1 (with 21 students) and NFP 2 (with 20 students).

The NFP facility was established at the Sci-Bono Science and Discovery Centre in Johannesburg, which is South Africa's largest science centre that supports maths, science and technology education. The centre's aim is to contribute to addressing the skills needs of the country in effective subject delivery (maths, science and technology) in schools in the Gauteng province to build science, engineering and technology capacity in South Africa. As with PPF (located in the Bank of Brazil) it was believed that the location would play a role in

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[5] Informal Skype interviews with staff members held in Phase III of the research have been used to assist researcher in remembering the design and implementation approaches of the programme

enabling youth participants to interact with working professionals and a professional environment on a daily basis. As participants were able to observe others in a professional environment this supported new behaviour patterns where youth could model their behaviour and make use of more professional business communication skills.

Through aiming to provide IT technical support to the NGO sector in South Africa, the programme was designed to equip youth with a strong base of ICT skills but at the same time understanding the need for equipping youth with a broad scope of soft (non-cognitive) skills to navigate the world of work. Most importantly the permanent transformation of lives and securing quality employment became the focus of the programme design and implementation.

Being an employability programme both PPF and NFP integrated eight employability skill areas. Figure 5 below illustrates how this integration "…created synergy among the skills and amplified the learners' resulting employability capacity" (AED, 2009: 19).
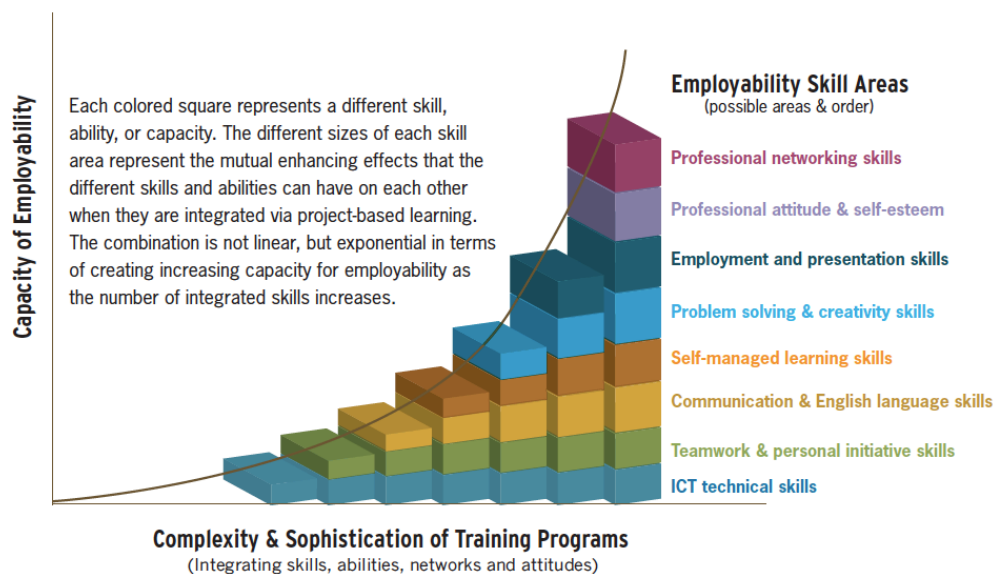
Figure 5 Complexity and Sophistication of Training Programs (AED, 2009: 20)

Through using a Project-Based Learning approach (PBL) it was envisioned that participants would have the chance to focus on real-world problems that captured students' interest, were relevant to their future tasks and provoked critical thinking. This included a strong focus on building and nurturing professional networks, effective communication, making thoughtful choices, navigating the job-search space and ensuring more confidence and success in the interview process (SAIDE, 2011). These components remained crosscutting themes throughout the duration of the programme. A key characteristic of PBL was the hands-on

approach that shaped and changed around the needs of participants. This appeared to have an positive influential result as the 2011 New Futures Programme Follow-Up study reported that "…at a personal level, the graduates reflected on the positive changes brought about in their lives through their involvement in this programme" (SAIDE, 2011: 31). The coupling of hard skills (ICT skills component) and a wide range of non-cognitive skills increased graduates' chances to improve their employment opportunities as was seen by the positive success rate of job secured at the time of the 2011 follow-up study.

4.1.1 Phases of NFP

Table 4 below was created for this research to give a schematic overview of the components of NFP incorporated to form the nature, design and implementation strategy of the programme. Crosscutting elements can be found within the various phases designed for participants. The phases are depicted and discussed thereafter.

Table 4 A Schematic overview of the New Futures Programme

Entrance phase	Orientation phase	Tangible phase	Exit preparation phase	Release phase
Team building	Imagining a new future	eMentoring, establishing professional networks	Experiencing professional work environment	eMentors
Building goals	Adult-led initiatives with significant youth input	Non-static curriculum integrating technical skills, basic English and creative thinking skills	Connecting to workplaces	Job shadowing
Needs assessment	Marketing oneself	Employability skills (problem solving, communication, teamwork, time management, leadership, presentation skills and other 'soft skills', building employment capacity, how to network	eMentors	Continued contact and support from staff and peers
Transparent/open communication between all members	Awareness of the world around us	Presentations and workshops from external experts on specific topics	Interview skills development and CV support	
	Courage to innovate	Job searching skills and understanding the world of work	Job shadowing	
	Job searching orientation	Hands-on PBL projects		
Affective/Self-confidence skills				
Real-world, hands-on experience				
Stimulating and professional environment				
Safe space for transformation and a nurturing environment				
Alignment of programme with business needs and local realities				

The entrance phase

The entrance phase describes how the programme was advertised, the importance of criteria during the selection process and the interview phase. In addition it describes how participants were then received into the programme.

During the planning and design phase the NFP staff members and AED consultant arrived at a set of assumptions prior to advertising and interviewing prospective participants. Criteria for participation in NFP was as follows: In an age range between 20-30, have at least 50% female participation, participants will be graduates from technical colleges or universities, unemployed with or without an employment history and limited prospects for employment, solid set of intermediate computer and Internet skills, basic communication skills, strong desire and commitment to move beyond learnerships to employment or self-employment and able and committed to attending the programme all day, every day for 3 month period.

After interviews and selection was complete, the participants' first engagement with the programme was a team-building weekend planned by staff to *Outward Bound*. This non-profit was founded by educator Kurt Hagn in 1941 as an education and expedition school that engages with people from all walks of life through challenging learning expeditions that inspire self-discovery. The *Outward Bound* excursion was filled with grueling daily activities that were always linked back to life, its hardships and encouraged thinking of how we overcome such hardships. Unfamiliar settings helped participants discover that they could do more than they thought possible (Outward Bound, 2014, para. 2). Most of the activities were alien to participants such as abseiling, physically exerting hiking experiences, being provided simple food to share between teams and cook in a bush environment with minimal to no resources and sleeping in the wild. This team building experience challenged, stretched and set the tone for the programme: that life and success are hard work. By creating a space where participants were pushed out of their comfort zones, personal reflection was awakened by pushing boundaries and challenging the norm, helping individuals and teams to "…discover strength of character and an aptitude for leadership needed to serve others in their community and care for the world around them" (Outward Bound, 2014, para.2).

The Orientating Phase

After the interview phase and Outward Bound excursion, participants began attending the programme and the process of re-orientation and awareness of oneself started to take shape. Expectations were discussed from the first day of programming and became a ritual, always

being a topic of discussion between staff and participants. Youth were made aware of the staff's faith in them to be creative, innovative and self-directed as all activities were purposively designed with the development of these abilities in mind.

To make commitment to the programme formal, teams were formed to develop personal learning and professional performance contracts. The next step included the entire group whereby participants and staff collectively defined the goals and objectives of the programme that were then formally signed by all participants. Another activity linked to accountability was the establishment of rules and policies for the learning facility to establish a combined set of rules and code of conduct for everyone in the programme. Participation of youth in this activity decreased hierarchies and set the tone for working as a team with a common goal.

From the baseline survey causes of unemployment were discussed. During the 'Pathways to Employability' learning project main causes of unemployment were unpacked and discussed at length. Other projects included goal setting and how participants envisaged their futures.

The Tangible Phase

The tangible phase defines various activities of the programme that were designed around needs and desired outcomes for participants' personal development, increased employability skills and non-cognitive skills development. The programme focused on a critical awareness of the benefits of expanding networks which included team work with peers and staff, the eMentoring programme which paired and introduced participants to their own online mentor and guest speakers from the business world. Transparent discussions were crucial to understanding the benefit of expanding networks for both future work prospects and personal lives in order to improve confidence, developing self-direction, motivation and slowly developing a better sense of self-efficacy through activities, discussions and practice in a safe and supportive environment.

A key characteristic in NFP was that the programme was not static but continuously shaped itself according to the needs of the participants. To support this incorporation of continuous feedback was deemed crucial. To give extra weight to the high importance of this on-going activity, staff members ensured that all feedback directly affected continuous design and implementation of ongoing activities. While improving relevance of work done this also respectfully showed participants that their opinions were worthwhile and had meaning. Every week a new theme was developed with all activities aimed at developing participants' skills

around the particular theme. Extensive consultations were held by NFP staff members to research the most sought after skills and attitudes South African employers were seeking to ensure that the programme was relevant to what the labour market was looking for, keeping in mind that the main areas of focus were ICT technical support and skills for life development.

Each participant was strategically paired with an eMentor, a working professional whose role was to support and guide through the process of the programme. The majority of eMentoring interactions were held online through email, Skype and other relevant messaging platforms. Objectives of the programme was to initiate communication between web-based career mentors and NFP participants, provide knowledge of different ways to build personal/professional relationships, give participants access to information about the labour market, move into the professional world and exposure to the culture and style of work. "Another important aim of this relationship is to assist the mentees in developing professional networks that they otherwise would not have had access to" (SAIDE, 2010: 7). Through these relationships eMentors helped mentees to develop positive attitudes and encouraged perseverance. An additional aim of the eMentoring component was to assist participants in improving their online communication skills. Technically it aimed to improve online technical skills, professional email communication skills, reading and writing.

Over an above the regular PBL projects the programme was enhanced by outings to visit business environments such as attending a local bank's training session with the Toastmasters organisation. Guest speaker presentations by external professional were organized regularly on topics such as how they personally navigated the world of work, skills and attitudes they believed that made all the difference (SAIDE, 2010: 6) and other relevant topics. Staff members from the Dependable Strengths Foundation[6] ran a workshop called "Job Magnet" assisting participants in identifying their strengths by looking to their own good experiences and finding unique patterns of strengths and skills. The outcome was a strengths report for prospective employers, which became a networking tool. Participants shared with their community as a self-marketing product with the possibility of being referred for employment. This aided self-confidence, knowledge of how to approach the job market and helped uncover ways for them to market themselves confidently in a job interview.

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[6] Dependable Strengths ran a workshop using a process that actively engages participants in narrative psychology exploring and articulating their good experiences and stories in small groups which reinforce and clarify positive perceptions of themselves

The Exit Preparation phase

This phase describes the programme's strategy to give participants opportunity to practice their skills development in real world settings in preparation for self-directed decision-making and navigation of the labour market. As the programme was only 3 months in length, exit preparation phase started a month and a half prior to the final release phase. It is recognized that had the programme been longer, a better spaced phased approached could have been employed. During the exit strategy participants could test the waters of real work life, but still be connected to the safe environment of the programme so as to return and discuss what worked and what did not; where to improve and what still needed to be thought of. This included the job shadowing period where all "participants spent one week at an IT company or in an IT department within a company. They then returned to the formal programme for a period of two week, before returning for another week of job shadowing" (SAIDE, 2010: 7). Temporary employers evaluated participants and this feedback was formally incorporated into the programme upon return. This allowed youth to gain insight and start re-thinking themselves as professionals.

A variety of activities requiring the communication with outside business people were put in place. These included organizing an event where eMentors and mentees were able to meet face-to-face for the first time and the opportunity to participate in an official Toastmasters' session with employees from a local bank.

The Sci-Bono Career Centre ran a hands-on workshop on effective CV development and a series of 'mock interviews' with Sci-Bono staff members. Feedback was given to participants to help him or her improve their interviewing skills (SAIDE, 2010: 7).

The Release Phase

This phase was decidedly different as youth were fully aware that they were now becoming more independent and needed to rely on their own abilities and self-direction. The final phase was designed to create a bridge to the real world but this time with an acute awareness that now was the time to maximize the opportunities and networks that the youth had built during their time with the programme. This included going to interviews after job applications were sent out during the entire programme, having online discussions with eMentors, reaching out to job shadowing contacts and networks created during the 3 months at the Sci-Bono Discovery Centre.

4.2 Crosscutting approaches

These approaches can be seen as the consistent approaches used during the period of programming that became innovative features of the NFP design. The approaches assisted in creating the nature and positive habit forming style of the programme.

Non-static curriculum

NFP used PPF's curriculum for employability figure as seen below in figure 6 as a starting point and reference tool, focusing on four areas of learning and skills development. These were: Employability skills, Basic Education, Social/Life skills and Technical skills. NFP contextualized the figure to the South African context. Under Social/Life skills self-esteem and confidence building were included. Under Employability skills self-efficacy, job-searching skills, self-marketing skills, interview skills and CV writing were included. Under Basic Education while English-language skills and maths and logic skills were touched upon staff were not professionally trained nor versed in facilitating these areas. Technical skills areas remained the same as in PPF. The assumption remained that through learning activities none of these skills areas were learned in isolation from one another.
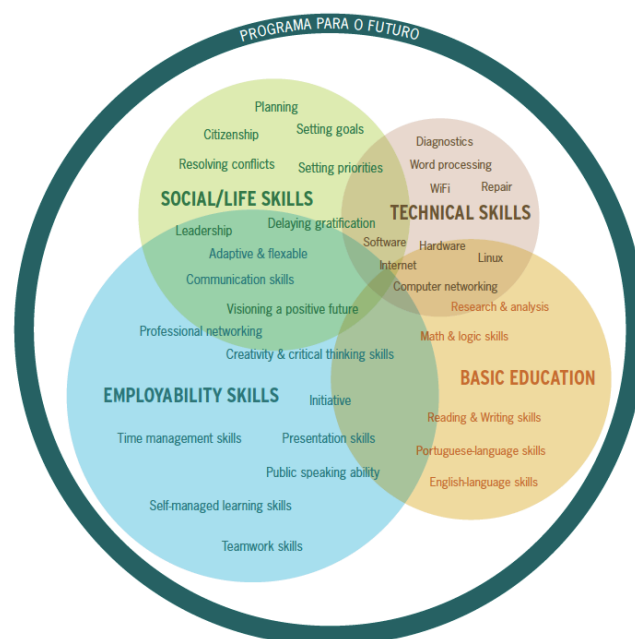

Figure 6 AED Programa Para O Futuro (AED, 2009: 20)

A golden thread was the constant re-alignment of the curriculum in close communication with the participants. Therefore the curriculum was not predetermined, but evolved and

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adapted to the needs of the group members. Youth had a good level of influence when it came to what was to be covered. Through a consistent, weekly process of feedback youth were able to voice their opinions and concerns regarding their own personal development needs in both the technical and soft skills realms. This information was then taken into deep discussions and planning sessions with staff who then designed the following week's programme focus. Staff used their own skills and knowledge to shape the suggestions of the youth and ensure that the correct timing of skills learning was also integrated into the youths' suggestions. Staff discussions from the one-on-one sessions were also discussed at this point, and these needs were then built into the weekly sessions were staff deemed fit.

Real-world, hands-on experience

Learning was seen as experiential and hands-on, thus it was imperative that participants actively engaged in solving problems or exploring the challenges. While the curriculum was not designed for any specific job, the combinations of areas were believed to support youth to qualify for an entry level IT technical support position. This meant that a traditional 'chalk and talk' method of facilitating would be irrelevant to youth. From baseline surveys it was evident that passive teaching styles were highly prevalent. NFP used a Project-Based learning (PBL) approach, based on active learning principles. Key principles underpinning PBL are that students are not empty slates and that their prior knowledge and experiences are critical, learning happens in a social context and that means negotiation in a collaborative team setting, learning takes place through self-directed discovery and questioning, problems are used as a stimulus for learning and critical reflection happens throughout the learning process (PBL Institute, para. 3).

Participants were challenged to engage in learning projects simulating workplace scenarios or relevant problem solving scenarios. NFP strived to provide an environment where learners could take responsibility for their own learning. An interim report on NFP in 2010 explains, "…Learners are given a primary question which is derived from the overall expected outcome of the session. The participants then came up with secondary question which help them to answer the primary question" (SAIDE, 2010: 5). Vast majorities of learning activities were carried out via learning projects done by learners and not teacher-led instruction. Participants worked in teams of 2-6 members depending on the learning objectives of projects as enabling the development of high quality teamwork skills was a critical outcome of the programme. Facilitators purposefully ensured that teams were diverse in order to gain

capacity to work together with different personalities and people from different backgrounds. Finally all projects aimed at creating a tangible product from the exercise, which can come in the form of a report, a presentation or a model for example, which encouraged youth to apply new skills, research and develop products that "demonstrated real-world capacity" (AED, 2009: 17).

Creating a professional and stimulating environment

Cutting across all programme activities was the focus on capacity development of youth to communicate and behave in a professional manner. Every effort was made to create a work environment and to model the world of work. This included mirroring work hours, stressing time management and coming to work dressed in a reasonably professional manner. From the previous PPF design it was stressed that participants were not to sit in a corner far away from the work environment, but to live and experience work as much as possible through the programme simulating a workspace.

The fostering of employability skills, attitudes and behaviours were further enabled through the inclusion of the eMentoring programme and the opportunity for building networks and job shadowing (SAIDE, 2011). Developing professional relationships with their mentors engaged youth in regular discussions around themselves and their newly envisioned professional development and life. Seeing themselves through the eyes of other professionals, youth were given the opportunity to see themselves in an environment which was very different to the lives they knew before and gave them hope to lift themselves out of their disadvantaged positions.

Safe space for personal transformation in a nurturing environment

A consistent approach was employed of learning and then testing what was learned in the outside world as much as possible. Many youth by their nature enjoy to challenge and question adult advice while others prefer a quieter approach. This approach's goal was to allow youth to experiment with their new role as a professional and through gaining valuable real-life experience they could safely begin to challenge their normal behaviours, habits and perceptions. Every time youth employed the skills they had gained within the programme in experiences outside of the programme, they then had the chance to come back into a "feedback period" where they could share experiences, thoughts and receive constructive feedback and advice from both peers and staff. Activities required participants to talk about themselves, get to know their peers and research and report their findings within a safe and

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supportive yet professional setting. As with other programmes that employ these kinds of structured approaches, "...the sense of individual responsibility for enacting change may be a consequence of the collective experience of social awareness building" (Stephens et al, 2013: 285). One-on-one discussions were held weekly with each staff member and each participant throughout the duration of the programme. Many social and personal issues were brought up during the training period and staff ensured to create safe, collaborative decision making choices and finally encouraged youth to come up with solutions to problems.

A focus on affective/Self-Confidence skills

NFP employed a highly practical approach, with transparent, open communication channels whereby youth were mainly adult directed but also approached to understand their needs and to make programming relevant. Through non-cognitive skills development such as communication and presentation skills training confidence was stimulated. Confidence was also stimulated through activities, which required participants to better understand their strengths and learn how to market themselves.

Alignment of programme with business needs and local realities

Connecting participants to business people outside of the programme was a priority. Staff worked to create links to skilled individuals who could offer support and advice to the youth of their country. By inviting many of these individuals to run workshops youth were exposed to the realities of South Africa's working environment. Businesses were consulted to understand what they had experienced with young people applying for work. Companies contacted mentioned particular emphasis for character traits such as responsibility, flexibility and self-assurance, at times technical skills being of secondary importance. Businesses therefore had a chance to directly influence participants and they received important insight into what was expected from them when applying for jobs and within the job.

This chapter has depicted key components, phases and crosscutting themes providing insight into the design and programme delivery of NFP. This will be useful for better understanding the following Chapter 6 which presents data from participants.

5 Methodology

The chapter begins by touching upon the distinctions and characteristics of both qualitative and quantitative research and then why a qualitative approach seemed appropriate in particular. Here we discuss how the approach aided in exploring the research question as a whole by discussing three relationships that directly feed into the main question. We continue to understand how a comparative approach was considered, the research design itself and the various phases of the research. The chapter then looks at how and why the sample was chosen, the data collection and analysis methods. In conclusion we discuss issues of validity and reliability as well as ethical considerations.

5.1   Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

Social science is interested in people's experiences, behaviours and the manner in which they think and the environmental conditions, in which people behave, think, feel and develop (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). Traditionally there have been two predominant approaches applied to social science research namely qualitative, quantitative however a third which has become ever more popular is a mixed methods approach which is the combination of both qualitative and quantitative research methods (Bryman, 2008) and what some call the "third methodological movement" (Creswell et al, 2011: 1). In order to discover which approach would best suit this study, it was important to understand that the nature of these methods, influenced by their philosophical assumptions, can be highly influential in drawing researchers to utilize them when studying a particular set of circumstances. Essentially, quantitative and qualitative approaches have distinct but contrasting views (Bryman, 2008). What constitutes as "knowledge" depends upon the epistemological and ontological beliefs that they adhere to. It is important here to define the key difference between the two. Ontological assumptions are concerned with the nature of the social world, where we ask questions such as are the realities of participants objective or subjective? Do individuals construct their world or does the world exist independent of individuals? Epistemological assumptions are about how we come to know about the world we live in (Burrell & Morgan, 1992) asking the questions how do we know what we know and how do we gain this knowledge?

Initially a quantitative approach was appreciated for how it required the researcher to present steps in stages, relying on concepts (the building blocks of theory) and how a researcher arrives at these concepts (Bryman, 2008). As Bryman (2008) explains, to back up the measuring of a concept, systematically created indicators are necessary to operationalize concepts to understand the causes behind the concepts in question. Hence the quantitative approach applies the use of numeric measures and variables to study human behaviour (Burrell & Morgan, 1992) and therein lies the rub. Some criticisms of quantitative research which became important to this study in particular was the approach's inability to distinguish people from the 'world of nature' (Bryman, 2008). The criticism is that this could merge the natural and social worlds (Bryman, 2008) as humans' ability for self-reflection gives a level of interpretation that cannot be found elsewhere in the natural world.

5.2   Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is interested in the "meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and description of things" (Berg & Lune, 2012: 3). Being derived from an interpretivist perspective the approach emphasizes the respect of the subjective realities of individuals. Ultimately people are self-reflective and socially complex human beings, with behaviours but also feelings and thoughts that are affected and shaped by their environments. This theme runs parallel to the nature and premises of the theoretical frameworks chosen and literature reviewed. Therefore what makes this approach's perspective decidedly different from that of a positivistic assumption is that the social world can only be understood from the individual's point of view who is directly affected by the phenomena being studied (Burrell & Morgan, 1992) and this became a key element of the study.

5.2.1   Why qualitative research methods seemed appropriate

This study is set out to understand human experience, attitudes and interpretations of informants. A qualitative phenomenological research approach was chosen due the admirable nature of the approach and its methods. The philosophical position attributed to Phenomenology was deemed important for this study, as there is interest in understanding human experience, incorporating attitudes and interpretations of those under study. In addition, it is believed the approach complimented the overarching conceptual framework of the human capability approach. When a study is concerned in exploring the significance of an event and a series of subjective experiences that could have influenced that event, on a

particular group of people, research methods need to have a particular nature. In this case it was believed a method aimed at exploring and sharing in the subjective realities of informants would be most appropriate. Importantly, "research methods on human beings affect how these persons will be viewed (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975 as cited in Berg, 2004: 7) and this was important as each informant was seen as uniquely filled with thoughts, feelings, experiences and meanings. This helped as a researcher to ensure clear measures were taken to honour their personal stories and prepare for the range of experiences informants had been exposed to.

5.2.2 Qualitative approach aiding the exploration

Under the main research question, the study aims at exploring the three separate relationships in order to understand how significant the participants' experience of the programme was.

Relationship 1: The relationship between background and childhood experiences on personal development. It is posed that there is much to be gained in research by choosing a method that allows one to focus on the life-worlds of youth. "Life-worlds include emotions, motivations, symbols and their meanings, empathy, and other subjective aspects associated with natural evolving lives of individuals and groups" (Berg, 2012, p.11). The power of a qualitative approach was that it enabled the use of life story narratives to explore how social-economic contexts impacted the family environment, social environment and to explore if there was a safe and protective environment to grow up in. Here we can begin to explore the meanings and personal realities behind various forms of social injustices, positive understanding of oneself and how these experiences affected substantive freedom and valuable functionings later in life. Through a qualitative exploration we could begin to hear from informants how social structural factors had affected their self-esteem, self-efficacy and what they felt was possible for people like them. What was it that supported them through this process of self-realization during programming?

Relationship 2: Exploring the relationship between the empowerment potential of programming to positively re-orientate youths' perceptions. This is believed to be a predominantly subjective inquiry because what empowerment means to one person might be completely different to another. This depends in part on themselves as individuals as well as the circumstances they find themselves in. To understand if and how any re-orientation had

taken place, this could only be done through hearing informants' thoughts on the perceptions they had of themselves and their abilities before and after the programme and whether this had been a positive experience of change and self discovery.

Relationship 3: Exploring the empowering effect of the training on graduates' success in the labour market. In a previous follow-up study on NFP by SAIDE (2011), a predominantly quantitative approach was taken to quantify how successful participants had become in terms of employment outputs. Had they found employment, had their income improved and was the employment formal or non-formal? It appears that "…the majority of programmes focus on documenting the number of young people employed upon completion if the programme. However…scholars and practitioners are becoming increasingly aware that youth employment programs do more than just place youth in jobs. Yet there is still little evidence to demonstrate what additional outcomes or effects youth employment programs have on youth development" (Collura, 2010: 8). What skills were still viable 4 years after programming had ended and how useful had they been in securing work related opportunities and confidence to navigate the labour market?

5.3   A comparative approach

This study applied Bray and Thomas' Cube (1995) as a framework to discover the possibilities available to conduct a multilevel comparative analysis. In addition, the cube was consulted because "…researchers should recognize…the mutual influences of other levels on the educational phenomena of interest" (Bray, Adamson & Mason, 2007: 8). Thus what follows below is how this study applied the three dimensional analysis of the cube. Bray and Thomas' Cube can be seen in figure 7 below:
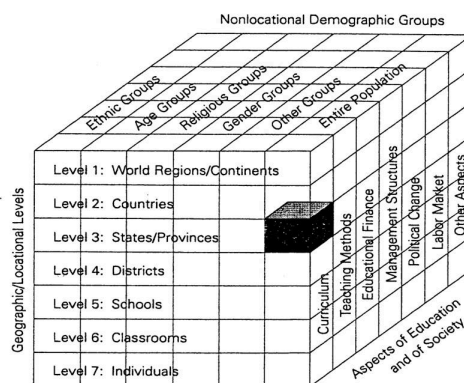
Figure 7 A Framework for Comparative Education Analyses (Bray & Thomas, 1995)

The study used the cube as a framework to assess the variables within a multilevel comparative analysis such as geographical impact on education, livelihood activities and life stories. On the face of the cube, the first dimension *"geographic/locational levels"* assisted the study to consider the worth in looking at the life-worlds of participants from three different locations each of which were represented in both cohorts of NFP, namely urban, rural and township settings. In South Africa being brought up in each of the aforementioned locations brings with it various options when it comes to educational opportunities, access and quality of education and work opportunities after graduation. In addition location can define the environment in terms of income levels, distribution of services, level of risk within the community, development of a secure family unit and role models.

The second axis referring to *"non-locational demographic groups"* highlights comparable groups such as race, age, gender and religion. Due to the social and political history and context of South Africa, the vast majority of people who are unemployed and looking for work are both young and are black Africans as were all the participants of NFP. The cube sparked interest then in the discovery of different lived experienced of the young men and women of the programme thus taking a gender perspective at the non-locational demographic level.

The third and final dimension *"aspects of education and of society"* for this study on an employability programme naturally incorporated aspects of the labour market. Bringing the aforementioned levels into a multilevel comparison within their experiences in the labour market.

5.4 Research Design

The research design acts as a blueprint for a study and assists with the data collection and analysis. Decisions on design are partly dependent on the objective of the study and opportunities the researcher has at his / her disposal. A variety of designs are available including survey design, longitudinal design, case studies, and experimental and comparative design (Bryman, 2008). Each research strategy has its strengths and is suited to different sets of conditions (Yin, 1981).

5.4.1 Case study design and method

When deciding on the right design for this study, value was found in the case study design as it can be used for exploratory, descriptive or explanatory purposes or to test explanations for why specific events have occurred (Yin, 1981) According to Yin a case study method is best used when attempting to understand real-life phenomena in depth, but when this understanding includes important contextual conditions (Yin, 2014: 18) as it is these contextual conditions that influence the phenomena under study.

It is believed that rich, detailed and in-depth information characterize the type of information gathered in a case study (Berg, 2012) and "…in contrast, the often extensive large-scale survey research data may seem somewhat superficial in nature" (Champion, 1993 as cited in Berg, 2012: 251). As this study was concerned with the how and the why of the participants after a particular event had occurred and time had passed (having a likeness to a tracer study of participants) any other method might not have been able to explore both the phenomena and its context to the necessary extent. A case study as an empirical inquiry to investigate the experience of informants' in depth within their contexts on a technical level is able to cope with situations where there might be many variables of interest (Yin, 2014). Again having some predefined theoretical stances helped to guide the research during data collection and analysis. By being able to look at the phenomena under study within their context shows how "…case study research comprises an all-encompassing method-covering the logic of design, data collection techniques, and specific approaches to data analysis" (Yin, 2014: 18).

5.4.2 Single-case design

A single-case design with one group of programme participants was decided on prior to data collection due to time constraints, as it would have put considerable pressure on time to access to participants from multiple programmes. A single-case study still has the ability to make a contribution to knowledge and though being focused on one group can still assist to inform future research and refocus interventions for youth. However it must be noted that within studying the programme as a single case study it was possible to distinguish different units of analysis being the staff and the learners, the overall group of respondents and the 3 individuals chosen for life story narrative interviews. What was important was the selection of the single-case in itself. It appeared from the desk review that more research on youth

employability initiatives needed to explore the additional outcomes and effects of holistic programming. This meant an approach was needed that could show more than increased income levels as a measure of success. This would then assist in developing more explicit knowledge on the transformative role that holistic programming can have in addressing constraints of the past for marginalized young people.

5.4.3 Phases

The rollout of the research was done over a series of phases, each feeding into and influencing the next namely the pre-phase followed by phase I, II and III. Being a first time researcher it was advised for responsibility and clarity to conduct a pre-phase interview with one purposively selected informant to assess the feasibility of the semi-structured interview questions, style of questioning and approach. It was soon evident that some questions came across in an overly philosophical manner and more explaining was required to simplify and in a sense 'get to the point'. Choice of words and the aim of each question were then re-evaluated for clarity. This was a helpful process, as answers to questions became more rich and the atmosphere more relaxed and conducive to deep thinking and reflection. This process of reflecting on questions and 'working-in-real-time' to adapt wording to informants' personalities became a continuous process throughout the rest of the phases.

For Phase I the 'simplified' interview guide was adopted for the individual sessions with twelve participants. Rapport had to a great extent already been established with informants during NFP therefore this advantage accelerated the time needed to 'get-to-know-one-another' and to build trust; these links were already present. It is believed that this enhanced the quality and depth of information from informants' as it put them at ease. Interviews lasted between 1-1.5 hours and were mostly held at the same location as the NFP. It was believed that this might spark emotions and enable reflections as participants showed a positive connection to this institution. Phase I data was then analyzed in the field in order to inform Phase II being the life story narrative interviews.

Phase II is where 3 participants were purposively selected from the 12 in order to carry out participant life story narrative interviews. Criteria for this selection were as follows: 1. The 3 participants should be selected based on their ability to demonstrate a willingness to talk about topics at length as life story narratives are best told by those who have these

characteristics. 2. The three participants should represent urban, township and rural upbringings respectively this includes having grown up and gone to school in these areas. This selection would then fulfill the comparative requirements of the study. 3. Male and Female genders should be represented and 4. Participants must be available to meet for a second interview of at least one hour. The final three chosen were: 1 female from a township upbringing, 1 male from rural surroundings and 1 male from an urban background. Interviews lasted between 1.5-2 hours and were held both on the old site of NFP and in public locations in order to make travel logistics as easy as possible for each informant. Their stories and experiences became my units of analysis and the aim was to better understand the way they create meaning in their lives as narratives.

Phase III was employed much later, months after the prior phases had been carried out. This was in part because memory fades and as a researcher it was believed advantageous to space the phases and information gathering out in order to stay connected and up-to-date. Here informal Skype interviews with semi-structured questions were held with NFP staff. This included the project manager and life skills facilitator from the programme. While the first was able to spark memories to the overall structure and design of NFP the life skills facilitator proved to be of great value when looking at the significance of special post-school training programmes. This was because of her continued contact with many of the participants in an informal manner. Participants continue to keep a close relationship with her, in short, she still provides the role of mentor for many a past NFP participant. It is important to add that this is four years after the programme completed. Details of the phases can be seen in the table 5 below.

Table 5 Phased approach to the research

Phase	What was done?	With who?
Pre-phase	Interview guide tested in order to adapt questions and style of interviewing	1 participant (purposive sampling, youth)
Phase I	Semi-structured interviews with adapted interview guide. Data analyzed in the field to inform next phase	12 participants (youth; male and female; rural, township, urban)
Phase II	Life story narrative interviews	3 participants (purposive sampling, youth, 1 female, 2 male, rural, township, urban)
Phase III	Informal Skype interviews with project manager and facilitator from NFP	2 participants (purposive sampling, staff)

5.5 Sampling

As the study is focusing on exploring the significance of an employability programme, it specifically turns its attention to the effect and potential for one group of marginalized individuals. This group is split into three geographical locations that all experience a sense of marginalization. The group is also split into equal amounts of males and females to explore the impact that gender can have when exploring the effect of life story experiences on personal development. While they are independent they are also comparable cases. As the personal experience of the participants is of high importance informants comprised mostly of the participants themselves but to inform the exploration of the programme itself facilitators and managers were included to provide technical detail and experience.

Previous NFP Follow-Up Study

Before discussing this researches method of sampling and to better understand the overall profile of NFP participants, it is useful to look at the SAIDE Follow-Up study from 2011. After establishing contact with all 40 graduates from both cohorts of NFP (1 & 2), 32 participants took part in an online survey with 24 completing the survey. The data provided by the SAIDE study is useful for understanding the overall picture of respondents'

educational background and geographical areas of school completion, pertinent for my own study.

The SAIDE survey states that 44% of respondents completed their secondary schooling in a rural area, 34% in a township and 22% in an urban area. In terms of educational attainment the 69% of respondents obtained a 3-year Diploma as their highest post secondary school qualification. 22% had a 1-2 year Certificate, 12.5% had an undergraduate university degree and 9.4% had a postgraduate university degree (typically an Honours degree). Respondents obtained their qualifications from private Colleges of Further Education, Universities of Technology, contact Universities, state colleges and the South African Distance Education University (UNISA). While NFP specifically targeted IT graduates, a number of other disciplines participated in the programme. Of the 32 respondents of the follow-up study 25 were IT graduates and 7 were from other subject areas (SAIDE, 2011: 6).

Sampling for the research

While needing to begin at a somewhat random starting place to ensure the sample consisted of equal part female and male, a list of all 40 participants was divided into two subgroups by sex. This resulted in 16 female and 24 male participants. Due to the fact that SchoolNet SA (implementer of NFP) informed of their recent updating of contact details for all 40 participants, certain individuals were marked as unavailable as contact details were no longer valid. These participants were then excluded from the list.

A systematic random sampling approach was used whereby every 3rd name was selected from both the male and female participant list. This number was decided on by dividing the total number of participants (40) with the desired number of the sample being 12 (6 male and 6 female). To assist in starting this process at a random starting point a random number table was consulted whereby a number between 1-20 was selected. The selection then began at this number location and stopped at every 3rd name thereafter. A spreadsheet of the final 12 participants was sent to a staff member at SchoolNet SA assisting in the process of contacting the selected participants for availability. Where a participant was not available, the same process was employed as described above to select a new participant until a full 12 people had confirmed their availability and willingness to participate within the given timeframe.

Sampling for Phase II was done in a purposive manner once data from Phase I had been collected and analyzed in the field. This data included face sheets used to collect general

information of the 12 respondents as well as audio recordings from Phase I semi-structured interviews. To select 3 respondents for Phase II, all participants from Phase I were asked during their interviews whether they would be available and willing to participate. Transparency was maintained by explaining what this would entail. Participants that gave their consent were divided into geographical / locational levels of rural, township and urban based on criteria mentioned in the previous section under phases and using purposive sampling.

5.6 Data collection and analysis methods

5.6.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in Phase I with twelve participants, each of which lasted approximately 1-1.5 hours as many respondents had to take time off work to meet during their lunch break to participate in the interviews.

The decision to utilize semi-structured interviewing was that it would allow for flexibility in order to modify the questions and their order on the go and to tailor the approach depending on the individual being studied, as each person is unique (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). It was also hoped to assist with leveling out the power hierarchy between interviewer and informant. This was considered important to counteract based on my role as a past staff member of the programme. This flexibility with participants encouraged a more relaxed and level playing field during the interview, thereby showing each participant that they had a safe and respected opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences.

This coupled with various interview techniques such as the types of probing methods was hoped to ensure that a maximum amount of information was shared during the limited interview period as the majority of the participants took time off from work to take part in the interviews. Relevant probing questions required the researcher to listen carefully as well as to understand the context of the participants.

5.6.2 Life story narratives

Narrative inquiry methods are significant to this study because it allows the researcher to capture personal and human dimensions of experience and has an awareness of the

relationship between individual experiences and cultural context (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The particular focus is on the stories told and expressed by respondents. An attempt was made to hear about the respondents' life stories. 3 individuals were thus selected and through interviews asked to describe their life experiences. For this study it was decided to use narratives so as to see how individuals from varying backgrounds related to location "…are enabled and constrained by social resources, socially situated in interactive performances, and how narrators develop interpretations" (Chase as cited in Clandinin & Connelly, 2000: 55). It is acknowledged that there are more rigorous approaches to life story narratives but due to limited time and scope of a Masters thesis this was not adhered to as strictly as it could have been.

5.6.3 Informal Skype interviews

Other key informants were the project manager and life skills facilitator of the programme. Both informants provided insight into programme design and methodologies. During NFP both informants were heavily involved in the planning, design and implementation of the programme and thus their contributions were used to contribute to the chapter outlining the design and implementation of the New Futures Programme. Upon returning from the field, audio recordings and notes were transcribed and coded. In addition personal facilitator notes from 2009, NFP concept notes and curriculum tools were reviewed. It was necessary to familiarize myself with the data, generate initial codes, review the themes, define and name the themes and finally produce a rough report. A list of priori codes was developed from the frameworks, research question and relationships explored which also included the three relationships under exploration and codes that emerged though the data analysis. Additional Skype interviews with NFP staff members also aided in refining codes. Additional emergent codes developed through reading, and an attempt was made to ensure codes fit the data rather than trying to make findings fit the codes. This however was indeed a difficult task.

5.6.4 Research instruments

Upon development of the instruments flexibility has remained a key theme through the process. A face sheet was developed to capture general information of participants, their current employment status and to garner more information about what the felt they still needed assistance with. This fact sheet was distributed and completed by 12 participants during Phase I. In addition, an interview guide was developed which listed fairly specific

questions but constructed in a way that there was room for adaptation and further probing. Questions were open ended to gain us much information about experiences and feelings as possibly and to avoid simple yes/no answers.

A second interview guide was developed for Phase II, constructed to uncover the life-world of the three participants through life story narratives. Atkinson (2004) provides a catalogue of questions placed in various categories such as: birth and family of origin, cultural settings and traditions, social factors, education, work, inner life and spiritual awareness, major life themes and vision for the future as well as closure questions (Patton, 2001). This guide was adapted from Michael Patton's Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods, which gives a clear and simple direction, however the questions developed in the table 6 below give more detail about the line of questioning:

Table 6 Lines of questioning

Lines of questioning	
Identity	Developmental gains such as positive identity construction, positive role choice, self efficacy, agency
Confidence	Self esteem, sense of trust, level of engagement, confidence in the future
Empowerment	Social bonding, participation in activities, relationships with staff and positive reinforcement and feedback, the way they were treated in the programme (value), participatory approaches in programming, learning critical awareness of how to contribute, bonding to positive institutions
Capabilities	Self efficacy, agency, participatory approaches and their effects, positive reinforcement, social bonding, bonding to positive institutions, learning new skills (hard and soft) including a "critical awareness" of how to contribute, employability, attitude towards work
Programme assessment	Where expectations met, most beneficial dimensions of the programme, participation in the programme, nature of programme activities, participation in positive, meaningful activities, learning useful and relevant skills, positive recognition, meaningful role development
Future	Aspirations for the future, confidence in the future, lifestyle expectations / plans, work expectations and goals

In developing the questions emphasis was placed on trying to understand how the interviewee would frame and understand the issues being discussed (Bryman, 2012). This was done for clarity and in order for participants to feel free enough to divulge information that they deemed important and that had significance for them personally.

5.7 Research ethics

There were no identifiable risks for the participants taking part in the interviews except that many took time from their lunch hours at work to attend. This appeared however to be organized in advance and interviews were conducted in close proximity to their places of work (if applicable) and completed within an agreed timeframe. However there was a possibility that participants might have held back information during the Phase II narrative inquiry and therefore it was decided that all participants would remain anonymous.

Serious consideration needed to be taken into account and that is the fact that myself as the research was an involved staff member of NFP. The personal relationships formed could on the one hand be useful to enhance the depth of information obtained, but it could also lead to participants giving the kind of information they might expect a past staff member to hear. Cognizant that participation in and relationship to the participants might have unwanted effects, these were mitigated as far as possible by considering the impact of these factors into the design, analysis and reporting stages. It became very clear that calculated steps needed to be taken to ensure trustworthiness for credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability so as not to sway the research and the findings. In terms of authenticity, fairness in all aspects of the informants' viewpoints and awareness of cultural and social differences both between informants' and between informant and research were observed by being informed. It can be said that South Africans, particularly youth have a culture of talking candidly. Cultural and social differences were brought up if the moment called for it.

Originally the benefit of having a neutral, mother-tongue language assistant present was discussed. This might have allowed for uninhibited information to be captured and add strength to the information. However, as personal bonds had already been formed it might have added an uncomfortable third person interaction, which might have seemed alien to the informants. In addition all participants had completed some form of higher education in

English. However, it became evident that respondents were clearly worried about their competency in English. Having a trusted translator could have positively impacted by raising additional questions and aiding in creating an objective distance between respondents and researcher.

5.7.1 Researcher skills in case studies

Yin (1998) as cited in Berg 2012, identifies five skills that are associated with conducting good case studies. These skills were taken into consideration as much as possible prior to fieldwork and during interview sessions: 1.) An inquiring mind and the willingness to ask questions before, during and after data are collected and to constantly challenge oneself about the why. 2.) The ability to listen, to include observation and sensing in general and to take in information without bias. 3.) Adaptability and flexibility to handle unanticipated events and to change data-collection strategies if they aren't working and to use alternative sources that may be more fruitful. 4.) Thorough understanding of the issues being studied in order to do more than merely record data, but to interpret and react to the data collected. 5.) Unbiased interpretation of the data. Here Yin suggests that a good test for bias is the degree to which the researcher is open to contradictory findings. (Yin, 1998 as cited in Berg, 2012, p.253) and this has tried to be covered in the literature review.

As a researcher it was important to develop these skills and be consciously aware of their value during all phases of the research. Where some skills lacked, more attention was given increasing good practice. For example with skill 4 above was improved upon by researching additional articles and evaluations of programmes around the world. In addition, as the South African researcher currently resides in Norway it was important to keep up-to-date with the landscape of youth programming in South Africa as well as the unemployment experience of youth. This was done by being in close communication with young South Africans, news sources and literature reviews. This included continuous reading of qualitative research studies and a willingness to change direction. Additional communication with young South Africans from prior work experiences besides NFP has extended to assistance with CV application assistance and informal career advice and to an extent eMentoring. The latter consists of online platforms using Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) as a way to communicate and share information while cultivating a mentor-mentee relationship.

During the interview process it was important to hone listening skills and make a conscious effort to work against self-constructed biases.

In addition, all participants had English as a second language and it was evident through analysis of the data that many respondents felt that their level of English affected their day to day lives. It was decided upon that the hiring of a translator would might impact the on a relationship level. It is recognized that had the respondents had an opportunity to share their thoughts in their mother tongue, they might have felt more comfortable and thus shared deeper and a more complex understanding of how the programme had impacted them. On a cultural level the researcher might have learnt a lot more by having the assistance of a trusted translator.

5.8 Validity and reliability

Reliability and validity have been core to positivist perspectives and thus have needed to be adapted to support interpretivist approaches in qualitative research. Even so, in qualitative research there is still a need to a check system. "If we see the idea of testing as a way of information elicitation then the most important test of any qualitative study is its quality" (Golafshani, 2003: 601).

Trustworthiness is crucial to ensure reliability in qualitative research (Seale, 1999 as cited in Golafshani, 2003). It was hoped that being a South African and being a staff member in NFP these factors would increase trust and transparency between researcher and respondents'. Having been a part of such a positive and important part of their lives, it was evident that respondents' felt comfortable to share information and personal views, critical and positive. This close connection however has its limitations in that the personal relationships and prior interactions could have influenced the research's subjective views. However, respondents' were very positive to the interviews and interactions and also grateful that someone was following up to see how they were doing. As a limitation of the research study was that there was only one researcher, securing Skype interviews with NFP staff members was essential to enhance internal reliability when verifying components of the programme and aiding in being aware of consistencies and inconsistencies in reporting and validate some findings. All efforts were made to ensure a fair representation of respondents' viewpoints.

"It is often suggested that the scope of the findings of qualitative investigations is restricted" (Bryman, 2012: 391) and that qualitative research is too subjective making it hard to replicate. What strikes one qualitative researcher as significant might not strike another. The personality, age, gender and other characteristics are always likely to affect interpretation. With interviews conducted with such a small group of respondents' it might appear unlikely that findings can be generalized to other locations / contexts. However the dire situation for disadvantaged youth facing unemployment is a global phenomenon. Therefore there is much that can be learnt as long as it is contextualized to other youths' life worlds and socio-economic realities.

"Confirmability is concerned with ensuring that, while recognizing that complete objectivity is impossible in social research…it should be apparent that (the researcher) has not overtly allowed personal values or theoretical inclinations manifestly to swat the conduct of the research and findings deriving from it" (Bryman, 2012: 379). It is recognized that the researcher found worth in the study because of participation in its implementation. Even so while passion is evident throughout the study, it has been with keen awareness that the researcher has been aware of personal investment and its consequences.

5.9 Limitations

Being a staff member of the programme indeed provides a sense of validation as own experiences and being part of the monitoring aspects of the programme have increased understanding. However this was a constant battle of the research as I felt quite involved in the programme and believed in the programme's benefits. Efforts have been made to remain as objective as possible. While it is felt that rapport had already been developed with the respondents, there is a possibility that knowing the participants influenced their responses.

Another limitation during the fieldwork was the availability of the selected sample of youth. Effort was made to select youth representing rural, township and urban backgrounds. While sampling was successful for the first two locations, the original respondent selected for the urban representation was at last minute not available. Thus I had to select a respondent with less representing an urban background in a less strict of a manner. While this respondent still

by definition represented an urban upbringing, the location was not strictly in a bustling city centre.

Overall questions created in the interview guides could have been improved to focus more on the change experienced rather the experience and difficulties on unemployment in particular. Concepts such as resilience and altruism could have been delved into further. Improved planning, increased reading of literature and more time spent in the field could have aided this considerably.

6 Presentation of Data and Findings

In Chapter 4 the New Futures Programme (NFP) was presented in terms of its phases, crosscutting themes and approaches. We saw that it was designed to equip youth with both a strong base in ICT skills and a broad scope of soft skills to navigate the world of work (SAIDE, 2011). However, what made the programme interesting as a case study for this research was that it strived to widen the parameters of traditional programming, the so called 'special' post-school training programme. It did so by expanding the traditional definitions of soft skills and employability skills (problem solving, critical thinking skills, CV writing and interview skills) to include encouraging youth to strengthen their self-esteem, confidence and encourage ways of developing self-efficacy) which was believed to be an important element of navigating the world of work especially for youth coming from marginalized contexts. In addition NFP was chosen as a case study as it was an opportunity to trace past participants to gauge their perception of the programme's impact four years after completion.

In this chapter data is presented for the purpose of answering the research questions guiding the study: *1. What it is significance of special post-school training programmes and approaches in overcoming marginalization in the South African context? 2. What seem to be the relevant 'ingredients' that can make the difference and how can these be put into place?*

Within these overarching questions the study explores various relationships that feed directly into the questions being explored: 1) The relationship between childhood and upbringing and programming goals, 2) the relationship between the empowerment potential of programming and the reorientation of participants' perceptions of themselves and 3) the empowering effect of the training on graduates' success in the labour market.

This section first describes the phased approach taken to data collection and the profiles of respondents. The chapter then presents data from phase II as there is worth in providing the reader with important contextual understanding of life worlds, then moves to phase I to understand youths' perceptions of the programme, the ingredients and what skills are still relevant four years later. Data is organized around major categories, informed through literature reviewed, theoretical perspectives and those that emerged from interactions with the youth. Phase III interviews with past staff members have simply been used when necessary to

support data from respondents and to assist the researcher effectively describing the NFP in general.

Phased approach

The research was rolled out in a series of phases. **Phase I** made use of an interview guide with semi-structured interviews for one-on-one sessions with 12 participants. Interviews lasted between 1-1.5 hours and were held at the previous NFP programme location where the programme ended in 2010. Data collected in phase I focused on youth experiences before and after NFP and in part on the components/ 'ingredients' and approaches to gauge the youths' perceptions on how relevant the experience had been four years after completion.

Phase II was rolled out after purposive sampling of 3 respondents from phase I (based on criteria listed in the methodology chapter) to participate in brief life story narrative interviews. Interviews lasted between 1.5-2 hours at both NFP site location and public locations due to travel logistics and ease for respondents. Respondents represented 3 different geographical locations in terms of their upbringing: rural, township and urban settings, which are indicative of geographies of entire sample (phase I). The study operated under the premise that the life worlds of youth cannot be separated when exploring the significance of programming in overcoming marginalization.

While generalizations cannot be made, how life worlds and location functions in relation to youth allows us to consider how this might influence other youth in South Africa. **It is for this reason that presenting data from phase II as a starting point** is believed to be valid. Phase II is directly linked to the first of three relationships being explored that of *the relationship between background and childhood within programming goals.*

Phase III was employed upon return from the field, months after the prior phases had been carried out. This was in part because memory fades and as a researcher it was believed advantageous to space the phases and information gathering out in order to stay connected and up-to-date. Staff members from NFP took part in informal Skype interviews and their insight on the design and implementation of the programme have been incorporated into Chapter 4 discussing NFP in more depth. These responses have been used to a lesser degree in data presented in this chapter.

Respondents' profiles

Phase I: Respondents were between the ages of 24-29, were an equal ratio of male and female (50%) and were all black South Africans, who make up 79,6% of the total population of South Africa. Out of the 12 interviewed only 2 respondents at the time were unemployed and had been out of work for 2 months (male respondent) and 9 months (female respondent). Respondents came from rural, township and urban backgrounds either growing up and attending schools in these locations or moving to locations as a consequence of search for better education/work opportunities, or due to family migration.

Phase II: Respondents were between the ages of 24-29, 1 female (township) and 2 male (rural and urban). At the time of research 2 of the respondents were unemployed (1 female, 1 male) and 1 respondent was engaged in full time employment (1 male).

Phase III: 2 previous staff members from NFP, which included the project manager and a Life Skills facilitator with a background in Social Work. Phase III was employed much later after fieldwork had been completed. The aim was for the interviews to assist in better defining the NFP as depicted in Chapter 4 and therefore contributions have been used to a lesser degree in the chapter.

6.1   Data presentation: Phase II

We begin by presenting data from the brief life story narratives carried out in Phase II. This case study has endeavoured to include important contextual conditions of youths' backgrounds, as these influence youths' perceptions of the programme and of their current life situations. By exploring the cultural, social and economic realities of 3 youth who represent the geographical locations of the full sample of respondents interviewed in the study, we can be cognizant of potential similarities in experiences. *It is for this reason that the study will present data from phase II as a starting point.* As recognized in the methodology chapter of this thesis, only brief narratives were collected due to 1) time constraints and 2) lack of experience in life story narrative interviews by first time researcher.

6.1.1   Socio-cultural structures and community conditions

Economic disparities characterize South Africa with a stark rural-urban divide and an urban underclass (Linford, 2011, para 2). As described in Chapter 3 inequalities in South Africa

have a high correlation to race. Since 1994 there has been a shift towards skilled work in all age groups within the four population groups, with the exception of black Africans aged 25-34 years. In this population group we see a decrease in fact since 1994 of 2% of black African youth in this age group. In 1994 17% of black African youth aged 25-35 occupied skilled jobs and in 2014 this decreased to 15% (Stats SA, 2014).

Respondents in phase II had a mix of both low-semi skilled and skilled work experiences. One male was employed in full time contractual, skilled work. The other two respondents at the time of data collection were unemployed but actively seeking work. Previously the two other respondents had been involved in low-semi skilled work such as checkout counter packing at supermarkets, receptionist work after participation in the programme (female) and informal construction jobs to ICT support after completing programme (male). These three informants have been given codes for recognition (see also Annex IV). T1 refers female respondent (township, Khayelitsha, Cape Town). R1 refers to male respondent (rural village, Buzana, Eastern Cape). U1 refers to male respondent (urban, Modimolle, Eastern Cape).

Results from Township life

Khayelitsha

Population (2011)

Total: 391,749

Density: 10,000/km2 (26,000/sq mi)

Khayelitsha shown within South Africa [7]

Township communities are often racked with poverty, lack of services, violent crime, poor education, overcrowded housing, drug usage and increasing incidences of intolerance with xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals. The term 'township' refers to usually underdeveloped urban areas of living that prior to the turn of Apartheid were reserved solely for non-white citizens.

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[7] Source: Wikipedia

At the time of data collection T1 had been unemployed for 9 months and was actively seeking work. Since NFP T1 had held 2 jobs, working for 2 years as a receptionist at a Doctor's office and part time work as a cashier in a supermarket. Before the start of the life story narrative interview, T1 expressed that, as a listener the researcher should be aware that there are not many happy stories about life growing up. As a first-time researcher I was made aware of the gravity of asking a young person to what was thought a simple question: "Tell me about your life growing up":

> "Where I grew up it was so painful…my mother she was an alcoholic. I think I was born in Cape Town and my grandmother took me from my mother in Cape Town because she heard from somebody else…that my mother she always left me alone going drinking and whatever. So she (grandmother) took me to Eastern Cape, where they were many of us…There was I can say the brother of my granny […] They come and ask me if they can raise me as their child, so I go in PE (Port Elizabeth). So the guy, he was an old man, so poor, heartless. We grew up we suffer a lot, we don't have food and I started to work for myself when I was still young to sell the oranges on the street…so to bring something at home. But she was always my hero, she was always protecting me…My grandfather he was not allowing someone to go to the library, it's like you are going for a boyfriend if you're going to library. So she was always protecting me and if I go to a library she will end up be beaten…so I was always like you know I want to be on top on class so that at least I will make her happy so that the bruises that she get for me at least won't be just in vane you know? I checked for my father…so they go with me in Cape Town (Khayelitsha) the shacks you know…so when I go there it was more painful. He has his brother; we sleep together in the same bed because the place it was so small…so he end up on raping me about a year…when you try to tell your father he will not want to believe me…so I stayed there, but it was a little bit better because the food was there, my father was working, but there was no happiness" (T1-(f)).

In total T1 described six separate location moves to different families all to township locations. The respondent cited accounts of physical and sexual abuse with little family support systems or safe referral mechanisms for reporting such instances or access to psychosocial support. The respondent also cited accounts of emotional abuse and that these had lasting effects on behaviour to this day even after moving to the city, getting married and having children.

Descriptions of T1's schooling career she described having to walk long distances to school and being proud of passing Grade 11 (year before final year of secondary) with what the respondent described as good grades. While she did not describe a lot about school itself, she did share stories of how siblings in the various homes she moved to would bully her by stealing her books and how the environments were very difficult to study, although through out she tried to remain focused. This focus however was linked to being more difficult due to

situations experienced in her home life. T1 linked this to doing poorly at school and described a change in achievement capabilities as time went on in her educational career:

> "I was so high student in my class. Maths I was number 1 and in Science and Biology and you know sometimes you go outside and read and study, you always hide yourself for studying. It's a very strange because you're not allowed to study when you're with him […] He was beating me at the age of 10 years, with that one you use for construction, those ones, he would beat you, kick you […] it was so hard place. Can give with negative words that you just a rubbish…even if he send you on shop you must come back fast. That's even why I'm still fast now, even now when I'm going, because I know you have to be fast when you go there, I can't control myself now to just go slow" (T1-(f)).

T1 described disruptive and high-risk environments with alcohol, music and loud events during the evenings made studying hard, believed to be a reason for not attaining at school and for becoming isolated from others at school:

> "If you want to study there on Fridays they will raise the music and dance and be drunk, whatever, so you can't even study. When you tell them it's an exam they say you can study tomorrow. So at school I failed my grade level because of that […] my teachers they noticed me that I'm so isolated, I don't want to stay with other kids". (T1-(f)).

When making decisions about jobs today T1 explained that the most important consideration is her children as jobs in the past required late night shifts. Although she hired child-minders while she was working at night, she mentioned it was not always guaranteed the person would be there the whole night. She described that meeting her husband who was finishing his degree and moving to a house in the Johannesburg was a relieving moment:

> "He bought us a house and those furniture and I started to smile, to see that all those tears I cried, all those prayers I was sending to God they were starting to come" (T1- (f)).

Results from Rural life

Bizana

Population (2011)

Total: 7,974

Density: 330/km2 (860/sq. mi)

Bizana shown within South Africa

[8]

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[8] Source: Wikipedia

Rural areas are often more likely to have access to the lowest level of services such as access to water, electricity and limited access to services to exercise ones right to education. For children and youth this usually means travelling far distances to gain attend schools, which due to a more isolated location are predominantly poorly equipped and lacking qualified teachers. Economic constraints to access education affect rural youth in particular (DBSA, 2011). Further livelihood opportunities after school are predominately based on agricultural activities such as farming and informal work opportunities.

At the time of data collection R1 had been unemployed for 2 months, but was actively seeking work. The respondent had held two jobs since completing NFP, participating in an internship in the Information Technologies (IT) industry and an IT support position.

> "Growing up I was pretty quiet person, always reserved…while I was quiet I loved to do something with my own hands, I was more like hands on, but not that much talkative. I used to do some garden stuff. Because we grew up in rural areas and I was used to plant and stuff and I also had some small garden of my own and I used to plant my own mielies[9] and own vegetables and my mother and father loved it a lot... So, it was pretty nice growing up in the village, not knowing outside world, always interested in knowing what's happening in townships and in the cities. And you were always scared because you used to hear bad stories about the cities (lowered tone), that there is the violence in the cities, and there are lots of tsotsis[10]" (R1-(m)).

The respondent described a rather up-beat depiction of rural life, suggesting that it had helped him develop responsibilities and that perhaps today he would be nothing had he not grown up in this environment. Activities requiring routines such as taking care of livestock he linked to learning responsibilities and accountability. He had a positive disposition describing manual labour in tending to the field in the early hours of the morning, enjoyed learning to ride horses and using cattle to plow fields, all of which his grandfather was a part of his learning. Having a grandfather figure that taught him these skills, who explained the history of the land and shared stories of growing up in the rural community was something the respondent prized and spoke of fondly. It was mentioned however that most of the male figures in his family were as he described 'quite harsh'.

R1 shared that during his school career he did not put too much effort into studying and homework, however described a supportive relationship with his mother on several occasions, one of which related to supporting his schooling career and achievement by motivating to him to study at home:

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[9] Maize

[10] Tstotsi is a South African word meaning a person who steals, lies and who is not trusted

"My mom was here with me each and every time, making sure that I understand each and every subject" (R1-(m)).

In order to find a better quality learning opportunity, R1 described having to move to attend school 25km away from home. He believed that the new school being a lot stricter forced him to put in more effort to succeed. R1 however still described the location of the 'better' school as 'very rural'. He explained that 6 friends had to rent a room with a monthly rent of R20 (1.6 USD). While four friends shared a room, R1 stayed in his own room, realizing he had to be more responsible and independent in high school. He explained that he failed the first year partly due to a lot of fun and partying with friends but also because his previous schools were of poor quality compared to the stricter school his peers went to. He explained there was more pressure at home to pass once he reached Grade 11 (the year before final graduation) as his father had been through an injury, which meant he (R1's father) could no longer provide for the family. The year of his father's injury was the same year R1 failed his grade at school. He explained how his father's injury impacted him:

> "When I think back it was also had some kind of effect in the destruction that I had in order to fail also because I needed move on to forget what had happened with my father because he couldn't work anymore. Now there is a pressure with the groceries in high school and stuff, so I had to rely on some of my aunties and stuff when I didn't have food and stuff. I also think that had some kind of pressure on me" (R1-(m)).

The respondent was clear in describing that moving to the city for him was the only way to find better working opportunities. He described the experience of migrating from a rural to urban location as starkly different. He spoke at length about the difficulties in transitioning and adapting to a very new environment. Difficulties included being economically independent to survive, understanding new languages and getting used to behaviours of other people. R1 suggested that the only way to find out about work opportunities was through word of mouth through friends. These opportunities were mostly menial, informal jobs and he repeated that there was a lot of pressure to earn money in order to pay rent and survive in the city. The respondent described his first job encounter as a typical informal 'piece' job[11] in South Africa:

> "I met my friend and he said here where I am working you can just come here and stand next to the gate with others guys, around 7 o'clock in the morning, they take people, casuals for work for one day and then they pay them at the same day and then you get that money. I was lucky enough because the guys they took me that day, I was pretty lucky. I didn't even have lunch for the day…and we working until 4 o'clock" (R1-(m)).

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[11] A 'piece job' in South Africa means any kind of employment where the worker gets paid a fixed rate for work done regardless of how much time it takes and usually means unskilled work

Results from Urban life

Modimolle shown within South Africa [12]

Modimolle (Nylstroom)	
Population (2011)	
Total: 41,988	
Density: 500/km2 (26,000/sq. mi)	

Urban areas are usually defined as having a high population density and may include both cities and towns. While a township can still be considered an urban location the difference here is the degree of development and access to services. Rapid growth "…has taken place in South Africa's smaller cities, mostly due to small initial populations and increasing economic activity" (South Africa Info, 2013, para.8). Living in urban areas be they towns or cities families generally have better access to services as well as educational and work opportunities.

At the time of data collection U1 was engaged in full time, contractual employment in recruitment and training and had been employed for 10 months. Since leaving NFP U1 had held 3 jobs working in different industries such as health care, training and recruitment. U1 growing up in Modimolle represents an small city location of upbringing, however still characterized as urban.

> "It was a nice, nice grow up, you know when I was growing up…I had to live with my mom, my dad was working here in Joburg (Johannesburg), so I was the only, oldest little boy in the house, so I had to take some responsibility in terms of a changing a bulb you know, a boy has to do that. So I was the little man. So I learnt responsibility at a very young age…I knew that if I do something wrong, I might be the one who had to fix it…" (U1-(m)).

U1 had a positive outlook on relationships in his family describing supportive experiences with his sister, mother and father. He described the relationship with his mother in particular:

> "My mom saw potentials in me at a very young age. I think it's one of the things that made her believe in me at all times. Her voice is just different from all the other people. We went through tough things me and her together" (U1-(m)).

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[12] Source: Wikipedia

U1 described that his mother, father and sister all held stable jobs with high degrees of responsibility. He explained it was his father who introduced him to a field called Human Resources (HR) and encouraged him to find out more about it, saying 'it might be the right one for you'. U1 shared that in terms of decisions in choosing a future career path, he felt 'clueless' at that stage of his life. After his father's advice he realized his deep interest in HR but also through work opportunities his father gave him with a business in the town where they lived prior to his father working in Johannesburg. He was involved in hiring and working with people and this fueled his interest in studying the field further. This was however not possible due to economic constraints at home at his mother working for the government meant he did not meet the criteria for applying for a bursary. U1 then described why and how he came to participate in NFP:

> "So I had to start with cash which was not enough because its not me only at home. My life actually was just to study and be more with knowledge have more knowledge and after get a decent job. I thought it was gonna be easy because I grew up my sister, she went to school, immediately before she even finishes she got a job then I thought okay I'm gonna go the same route! But it never happened that way. I had to look for a job and at some point I was like hopeless. I was like okay I don't get a job maybe I should pursue my own business; maybe I should initiate something that I can work on. So that's where the mind starting changing and searching for contingency plan." (U1-(m)).

Upon finishing NFP and after a short-term employment contract was coming to an end, U1 described an opportunity to enter another youth development programme as this would be a better way to spend one's time instead of being unemployed. After a placement test and an interview, the staff of the programme soon realized that there was potential for U1 to become a staff member in the programme instead of a participant. U1 was offered to attend an interview as a potential employee not as a candidate. At the time of data collection U1 was still employed with the programme with clear links to the goals of NFP; an innovative youth programme assisting South Africa youth to find and secure permanent full-time employment. The respondent articulately and passionately described the workings and aim of the programme to assist young unemployed South Africans leaving school by creating social networks for job seekers and working in tandem with South African businesses to work to better respond to labour market needs. U1 described that his role is to assist in strategically placing young people from disadvantaged backgrounds into relevant positions within the labour market and is involved in training and information sharing with youth.

Summary

In summary it appears that community conditions are active ingredients of environmental influence during childhood. We see that youth have a set of baggage before arriving at the programme that can is made up of both positive and negative experiences, which are influenced, by socio-economic constraints, geography and relationships. Risk factors contributing to marginalization of youth are prevalent in all locations from this sample, however the degrees of factors vary. It appears from the sample, location matters for jobs prospects. Economic pressures affect youth at a young age and informal, insecure work opportunities become the only option to survive when moving into cities. From the data we might consider that socio-cultural structures related to poorer economic conditions narrow the work opportunity trajectory of young people as we see instances of short-term contracts and informal work opportunities.

While it is recognized one cannot generalize the experience is the same for all youth in these environments, it is hoped that the data sheds light on the life worlds of youth and potentially how their later work experiences have to an extent been affected by the socio-economic conditions they have grown up in, in a sense creating a set of structures that appear hard to climb out of. The youths' stories stimulates consideration that youth empowerment programming should factor in the life worlds of youth and noting that youth from different walks of life have a variety of needs.

6.2   Data presentation: Phase I

This section of the data presentation will take a step back to phase I of the research and present data from semi-structured interviews with all 12 respondents with a particular focus on the programme and its experiences upon programme completion. The informants have been given codes for recognition (see Annex IV) and have been labelled from P1-P12 and f/m for female or male respondents. The interview guide (see Annex II) explored NFP in particular to understand respondents' perceptions of what has been most useful four years after programme completion. Data collected from the face fact sheet prior to interviews has also been incorporated (see Annex I).

6.2.1 Experiences and strategies in searching for work

To incorporate the important contextual conditions respondents were first asked to describe their expectations in finding work after leaving school and their strategies and experiences searching for work.

Education = high expectations

When asked to describe their experience of life after school and their interactions with the labour market, respondents shared that completion of secondary school in itself held much weight in their families and in the perceptions of communities. Respondents from township and rural environments placed higher weight of the role their Grade 12 (final year of secondary schooling) certificate, while others from more developed urban locations placed their emphasis on the importance of obtaining further education and training certifications, diplomas and degrees. In general respondents expected a smooth transition from education to work.

> "I didn't think there were such things as unemployment and doing nothing, it was so unreal…it was a real wake up call. Maybe a whole lot of us aren't told what the real world is like immediately or during school so that we can come prepared you know". (P4-(f)).

> "We have these degrees and diplomas and certificates and step out of school with a whole lot of expectations and we get crushed immediately (claps hands) when there's nothing happening. I was at home, doing nothing and in the morning sitting watching TV, taking a walk on the street, then come back, cook and then it's time to sleep. You know doing one thing each and everyday. So for me it was very frustrating. And to think I've just graduated, I've got my certificates I thought maybe when I had my certificates things could be easier as always do the youth of South Africa. You can go to school, but it will be hard to find a job, you won't find anything". (P3-(m))

> "After I obtained my diploma I was looking for a job seriously because the breadwinner at home passed on and I was the first born. To act exemplary at school if you are the eldest, if you have siblings and you are the elder, it's like they are your kids now. At that time I was not working, I was just from school. I wanted a job immediately. There was a lot of pressure I would even register with agencies and then you'd find that sometimes they'd give you 6 months contract, 1 month contract and which is stressing you because you know that your contract will end anytime soon. You become stressed. It was harder than I expected". (P6-(f))

Still blank after school

Some respondents explained they needed a programme like NFP as they felt they were 'still blank' after studying. Many described that after tertiary level studying they felt they still didn't know much about their fields. 11 out of 12 respondents noted they felt the need for

more practical experience after college/university. The vast majority stated their diplomas/certificates/degrees only focused on theoretical understanding (reading, writing) and little to no practical work (working with equipment, practicing theory). Some respondents mentioned that this lack of knowledge and practical experience caused embarrassment during interviews. This affected their confidence and made them feel inferior, as they could not grasp the concepts or tasks being discussed during the interview even though they had studied the field. One respondent mentioned the Information Technologies (IT) college she attended was 'one of those fake ones' explaining in her opinion poor quality learning, lacking computer equipment and no Internet connectivity.

Lack of experience

All 12 respondents explained their experience in trying to find a job after leaving school as difficult and the majority linked this to the lack of experience to compliment their certifications. There was a strong consensus that the labour market had made it clear that experience was key to finding work and youth displayed despondency and frustration in not knowing how or where to get this experience. Many expressed they felt the labour market in South Africa was not geared to taking in young graduates and allowing space for learning on the job. Only one female respondent mentioned participation in a learnership that lasted 2 years. It was expected by the respondent that the company would absorb candidates into system, however from her perspective this was not always the case. Although one male respondent had a rather proactive view:

> "I think the experience side we are still lacking…if you check other countries where people get to volunteer and then get experience and then with us here in South Africa we wait for that opportunity and we don't make things happen for ourselves. We find that when they say they want someone with 2 years experience then we are like shocked and say okay, where do I get this experience because I've never worked, forgetting that there are like learnerships and then volunteering and internships where you can get this experience" (P2-(m)).

However, gaining information on learnerships and of opportunities in the labour market, a respondent explained was influenced by location, small homogeneous networks and lack of ways to learn about the world of work (internet, newspapers, news boards, etc.):

> "Being in the space that I was at and realizing the opportunities that are so minimal for some people - because when you are in the location[13] it's almost like you are caged -you don't get all the information. Unless you've got opportunities from your brothers that are working somewhere else and they send you this information via paper and that's the only

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[13] Location refers to a township in South Africa

time you actually get chances like this. So ja, (laughs) it (NFP) was god sent". (P4-(f)).

While many youth described sitting at home looking for work, one female respondent shared a story of applying for a nursing position (the respondent had no nursing/medical background): Upon arriving at the location to submit her application she was met by a mass of people, all queuing to apply, which the respondent described as ending in physical pushing and chaos among applicants. The staff collecting applications wheeled out a large garbage can as a method of collection where hundreds of CVs were subsequently placed.

Summary

In summary youth interviewed put educational attainments such as completing Grade 12 and tertiary education on a pedestal. This belief in the power of qualifications comes with an expectation that the labour market is in a sense 'waiting' for young graduates giving youth the impression that finding a job is a natural next step in transitioning from school to work. Their appears to be an unwelcoming environment of the South African labour force and this has potentially resulted in youth having little faith that educational institutions are equipped to prepare youth for the world of work. At college/university level, the data suggests that some tertiary institutions are providing a questionable quality by evidently being theory focused with little practical application.

6.2.2 Experiences and strategies after participation

Improved navigation

When asked if participants felt that since NFP their job searching techniques had changed, respondents explained they felt they had a better understanding of what to look for when applying and thought more critically when reading job descriptions and titles in advertisements. They explained being more aware of details in advertisements such as driving license requirements or if extra courses were needed to apply for specific types of positions in the future. A few respondents commented that CV writing has been vital in the process; many were proud of their CVs and felt they received more responses from prospective employers because of the improved quality.

Knowing where I fit

Four respondents mentioned prior to participation in NFP they would apply for any job related to their field (99% of respondents interviewed had an IT background, but were not

necessarily working in these fields after NFP) with one male respondent sharing that before NFP he didn't understand it was best to apply for jobs based on actual abilities:

> "Before I didn't know, anything that was written 'IT' I used to just apply. Now I now my abilities and my capabilities that i can do this job, this job relates to me. Now I know if a job relates to me, because I had just come out of college (before NFP). I know which level I'm on, I can't just apply for senior IT manager, I know where I fit, I'm still a junior. Now I look for whether they need me to have a driving license or extra courses. My decisions are much better than before much different after that programme, I can't lie." (P7-(m)).

The same four respondents linked improved skills in applying for jobs to having greater understanding of their capabilities and understanding of 'where I fit'.

> "I don't apply for anything (after NFP). I look at the job and the requirements and decide whether or not I can fit there" (P1-(f)).

One female participant accredited this change to her assigned eMentor on the programme explaining that this relationship allowed realizing the kind of opportunities available and the jobs one could apply for. How this same respondent mentioned that she still felt she needed assistance to understand how to search for a job.

A male respondent explained that his cohort ended NFP in February 2010 and he found his first job in March by attending a function for job seekers where he distributed his CV. Another male participant managed to secure a short-term contract and once it had ended decided to approach SchoolNet South Africa (NGO implementer of NFP), explained to the Director that he was an ex-participant and enquired if he could volunteer for the organization. After being called in for an interview, he started volunteer work as a database administrator and finally secured contracted employment as he proved his skills and worth. At the time of data collected he was still employed as a programme administrator and coordinator with the same organization.

Three respondents had interesting and bold stories in searching for employment after completing NFP. One female participant mentioned that a facilitator at NFP continuously reminded her that one of her strengths was 'good people skills'. She explained that this gave her confidence to spontaneously approach a doctor's office and enquire about a reception job where she worked for a few months, although without a formal contract. She explained that it's useful to accept jobs even if you aren't interested in them because it means that you are

working and have the opportunity to network for other job opportunities which is better than sitting at home. A male respondent explained he was offered two positions at the same time: one short term but higher pay the second longer-term but lower salary. He chose the longer term option with lower salary. His reason for declining a shorter-term, higher paying contract was:

> "Reason being, I was looking at getting experience. Like you know, I know Gijima was going to be great, I was going to get experience, but it was only for 6 weeks and when that 6 weeks ends what if I don't get the contract? I will stay at home again. So for me, I took it as a long term thing" (P3-(m)).

A few respondents mentioned that before NFP they had no concept of what the workplace environment would look like or what was expected from them.

One respondent who at time of data collection was working as an IT support consultant shared:

> "Actually what I thought working, I would just go to work, work and come back. Like I didn't think of the interaction with other people. Then I thought I'd just go to work, they'll give you something to do for the day. I'll do it. I'll go home. I didn't know much about like the, like...there's more in the workplace than working. You find that there's meetings, there's presentations that you have to do like for me before I thought it was like just going there, doing a job and then going home" (P11-(m)).

In terms of applying what was learned in NFP to daily life one female participant shared her strategies and experience in finding a job after NFP.

> "It was not difficult to leave NFP. By the time I went for the interview I was so confident because we had covered the interview part at NFP. It helped a lot. I was so, so confident. I can even refer back to NFP whatever that had been done I think bank on it and ask 'can I use this strategy now?' NFP 1 ended in March 2010 and I went to an interview in March for this post and I'm still there. It happened while I was still in NFP. NFP would supply us with newspapers so we could check available posts. I saw one in the newspaper and I applied for it. Sometimes facilitators would remind us and bring the newspaper. Because I was really looking for a job. I particularly liked the Wednesday and Sunday newspapers and then you take it from there. It became part of NFP assisting us to get a job. My understanding was that NFP would assist us to get a job" (P6-(f))

Summary

From the data it appears that as literature suggestions, youth are not prepared to navigate the world of work when leaving tertiary level education. For some youth participation in a programme expanded the concept of work from routine activities to include interactions with others. Those who had gotten work experience after NFP explained that now they realize there is more to the workplace than just practical tasks and specifically noting that it was the interactions with other people that was an important factor they had not considered before.

After participation we see marked improvement in job searching behaviours and decision-making skills. Job searching skills improved ability to understand job advertisements and use critical thinking skills. In one instance in choosing better quality, more stable work over a short-term contract with higher wage in order to stay in one position longer and gain experience. Confidence improved to approach companies for work and initiative taking is seen through attending job fairs and volunteering at companies for experience, thus showing expansion of networks.

6.2.3 Components of the programme

In the design of NFP various employability skills areas were decided upon based on the original Brazil blueprint. In this section we will look at ingredients of the programme that past participants felt made an impact on their employability four years after programme completion.

Practical technical skills

The opportunity to take theory learned from school and then NFP into practical application while in the programme respondents explained was relevant, these respondents were working in an IT related field in particular. Describing being hired for a technical position one respondent shared:

> "So the technical stuff we did in NFP really, really came into play there. You know because we were dealing with telecommunication equipment, preparations, installations, you know, so that has been perfect, it really, really did help. So I can say that technically it really, really helped. Because you know from school, the practical side of it is limited. Unlike when we came here, we were really exposed to everything. You know we could start our own network[14], we could start it from scratch and that really, really helped on the practical side of things" (P9-(m)).

The lack of practical application during years of study was mentioned as a concern for many of the respondents. There appeared to be value in NFP having a hands-on, practical approach to the programme as P9 explained:

> "Well, you know even at school you are taught about those kind of things, but when you do them practically it's sort of like a different thing. When you are work it something that you know you do it practically now, but at school they will just tell you okay this is what you do, but if you don't experience it then it's, it's just something else… when you come to where you experience it firsthand…it's actually something different. But NFP I

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[14] Technical term: When various computers are connected. The Internet is an example of a very large network

think it was a really great, great, great programme. It really, really opened our minds to a whole lot of things" (P9-(m)).

Learning how to work with different people

The majority of participants noted that learning to work with different types of people has been very useful. In the data collected a number of respondents discussed they came into contact with a wide variety of personality types during the programme and valued working in teams during activities. Informal interviews with previous staff members highlighted that for certain activities facilitators strategized the composition of group membership. They would ensure that a wide range of personality types were mixed within the group to either stimulate better communication and challenge participants to overcome differences and find a solution to working together.

> "So I can say from working with NFP I got a lot from working with the whole group because you know you had to adjust to the group. Because technically most of the time you work by yourself, you know just look at your PC…but when it comes to like a group thing you have to…interact with people, you have to get through to people" (P1-(m)).

For some participants this ability was valued in current work places. One female participant described an incident at work, where a colleague was brash in his approach and had hurt her feelings. She explained that after her experience with NFP she decided the best thing to do was to be calm and talk to him about it and managed to handle the difference amicably. She described that this made her feel calmer and in control of her situation at work.

6.2.4 Activities centred on individuals

All sub headings of the following section although could be categorized ingredients or approaches respondents linked to building of self-confidence. For this reason the following concepts have been grouped together.

Communication skills

The majority of youth interviewed expressed that the communication skills part of the programme assisted in confidence building and relevant in their lives today. Both male and female respondents shared that they often reflected back to strategies learned such as speaking with clarity and professionally and thinking of how one is coming across to others. This they linked to the concept of confidence. Respondents shared they think back to specific exercises related to presentation and communications skills and some being more specific saying 'the vocal and speech exercises'. One male respondent still referred back to handouts

from the programme to continue honing the skill. A respondent expressed how presentation skills were relevant in his work today:

> "The presentations, they were really good. Even now where I'm working, there are training rooms where I work. I can see each and every thing that we did they are doing it. It's like giving you a case scenario to solve. So presentations as well they prepare you for in case you need to stand up and your superior is not there and your superior says 'can you do this for me?' you'll be able to stand up in front of a big crowd and do what your superior should have done and do it like properly as long as you have all the information that you need. It was like everything that was there actually it was really nice things to have" (P3-(m)).

Respondents who had been employed or were currently employed explained that in their work lives they had realized the importance of personal skills that they felt more confident to speak to people in 'higher authority' such as managers, heads of departments and one female respondent mentioned 'even with people who have degrees' referring to her work colleagues.

> "The programme taught me a lot of things like even now, like maybe at work I had to present or sit with the managers or stuff, I feel confident because I know what I am doing. So it's not a problem" (P11-(m)).

One female respondent explained that when you join a large organization it can be daunting to talk to others but the group work during NFP assisted in learning how to exchange words and be around others. When asked if confidence is still a struggle or if it feels more natural today, one respondent felt it had become a way of life:

> "It does come naturally. Now even when I look at myself now and then compared to myself before NFP, I'm like a different person actually. The programme taught me a lot of things like even now, like maybe at work I had to present or sit with the managers or stuff, I feel confident because I know what I am doing…If I didn't join (NFP) maybe I would still be the same person" (P11-(m)).

With regards to being taught these skills in school, only one respondent out of the twelve interviewed mentioned that he'd been taught how to manage the interview process through a life skills subject at school and that he had used these skills during the interview process for NFP. He mentioned that this subject included time management, professionalism and being calm during interviews. One other respondent mentioned that there was guidance at school level on CV writing. Sharing her thoughts on learning soft skills and skills for life in school one female participant said:

> "Maybe have such programmes (NFP) for people fresh out of school…I think it would help greatly to give them a sense of direction, maybe they don't have money to go study at places like varsity (university) and things like that…I think every university needs to have the soft skills part of New Futures, because then we know we are creating leaders,

we are creating good quality people not just a person with a piece of paper and they can't interact with other people, then what's the point? So maybe have some form of New Futures in modules or whatever, but push it into universities, I think it would be of great help. And I'm telling you New Futures had a great impact and I'm not just saying this, but the soft skills part of it made the greatest impact on most of the people. Because the technical…everyone gets a degree or a diploma and studies, but the other interpersonal skills they are very difficult to come across and that's what New Futures is" (P4-(f)).

Self-directed learning

Another concept brought up by youth was that of initiative to research on topics one is not aware of to enhance knowledge. One respondent added that the researching skills taught in the problem-based approach has been useful for confidence and communication skills and explained that when you research a subject you feel more confident.

On various occasions both male and female youth shared what appeared to be a fear of being seen as fool in the eyes of others. They expressed tools they felt had the ability to assist in developing self-belief:

> "Something I've learned at NFP is that in life you mustn't underestimate yourself. You must not tell yourself I can't do this…just say no I can. I've learned that you need to do research and search about it. Sometimes you have this fear that some things you can't do, but what I learned here (NFP) is that anything is possible. You can be whatever you want to be. So you know it gave me that stand that you know I can face everything now. I'm not afraid of anything, not afraid of anyone…because now I'm even telling myself I'm so loud, I'm talking loud (laughs). But it's cool. I'm no longer shy. Even if I'm sitting with people that have degrees, I just sit with them and talk with them. I think I found the real Andile[15]" (P1-(f)).

When asked how do you feel about your ability to complete tasks at work after NFP one female responded noted that self-reliance had become the most important skill learned and that NFP taught her to feel comfortable to ask if you don't understand something. Echoing a similar perspective a male respondent replied that if in NFP if you didn't understand a topic or a task one was encouraged to research about it. Previous staff members added that a small library of books, relevant pamphlets, newspapers and Internet was set up to encourage youth to develop inquiring minds. They added that the career centre in the Sci-Bono Discovery Centre (location of NFP) was an additional source of information. Tours of the centre, various outings and presentations by external speakers they believed added to the concept of developing an inquiring mind. The staff members felt that the problem-based learning (PBL)

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[15] Names have been changed

approach of the programme assisted in developing an ethos of researching before producing a product/content and in a way this was instilled in participants. One male respondent linked the value added of researching skills to PBL. In his work life today the added:

> "If I don't understand something, on my spare time I have to do a little research even now at work I make sure I'm always up there. So ja, I'd say actually it did help me a lot even at work…When I go from work I don't just go home and then sit and wait for the next day. Like maybe some of the things I don't understand, I won't say ah that's work stuff and I'm at home. I'll just take my spare time and do a bit of research" (P2-(m)).

English skills

Some respondents described their concern in not feeling comfortable with the English language as a communication and working language. They explained as English was not their mother tongue; their embarrassment of how they came across affected their confidence in both work and social settings. In their social lives it extended to them feeling this hampered them connecting with others. During interviews only youth from rural and township environments mentioned that their lack of confidence when speaking English was a strong contributor to feeling nervous during interviews. It was evident that some youth were highly judgmental towards themselves stating they felt 'inferior' to other people because of this.

One female respondent shared how after participation in NFP her communication skills were tested in the working environment. It was here that she said she 'realized how much she had grown'. She continued that she was less concerned with her English grammar and more confident to speak up. She described that before the programme she had a fear of saying something wrong and coming across in 'a poor manner'. Although intertwined with 'communication skills' already mentioned in this chapter it must be said some respondents linked presentation skills to gaining more confidence in communicating in English with one male respondent linking this to a concept of 'knowing oneself':

> "Even though I wanted to talk but then I was like oh no maybe I was just say something wrong, so I just kept quiet. I've grown now. I don't think I would just have been able to do this without NFP. Remember we used to do presentations and we were forced to talk, to raise your voice, to stand in front of people and talk" (P12-(f)).

> "I'm much better now, now I'm much confident, I can also talk using that language I was scared to use before because I used to make much judgments about myself and I felt inferior to other people. But now I'm more confident and also know what I'm capable of and I also learned about myself during that time. You need to know yourself before you can do anything else because if you don't know anything about yourself you can't do nothing going forward" (P7-(m)).

Self-awareness and confidence

After gaining exposure to the world of work one female respondent described her perception of young peoples' confidence in general:

> "I've spoken to a whole lot of people within the workspace and I'm telling you, we lack confidence. We don't believe in ourselves (sighs) it's a mess. You know when you lack these small things then you are not able to produce in a proper way and it's not because you can't. You might have the skills but because somehow you missed a step then you're not able to produce and I think it's greatly because of these things like confidence, your soft skills, learning how to stand up and present in front of people, you know? The small things that we take for granted, those are the things that then push us and make the great people what they are" (P4-(f)).

Throughout the interviews respondents would regularly bring up confidence as a key skill that was still with them in their lives today. Some mentioned this extended to not believing in their ability to plan for goals and in their ability to execute them. Others mentioned characteristics such as shyness when entering NFP:

> "It helped me a lot because I learn how to have confidence about yourself that's what I learned most. To learn how to lift your face up you know, so that you won't be shy anymore" (P5-(f)).

When asked how this confidence was lifted, P5 responded that it was about the experience of being in the programme and meeting different people. She described it was an eye opening experience for her to meet other people and see a likeness others; seeing that others had similar weaknesses. She added that there was an atmosphere of supporting one another and using strengths to help others and learn from your mistakes.

Respondents linked the concept of confidence to various expressions such as 'knowing myself' and 'personal mastery' where a male participant explained the term personal mastery was a 'little theory' that he developed based on skills he'd picked out of NFP. These included communication skills, handling conflicts, using the knowledge from NFP in his life and seeing results. A female respondent explained that belief in oneself was important (this was echoed by other respondents on various occasions) and that one should master the art of personal positive reinforcement. A male respondent mentioned that there was a kind of self belief that came from NFP participation by saying that NFP opened the door to say this is what the workplace expects and encouraged participants to take it from there. He added that he felt confident that he could take this positive attitude forward in life. This male respondent reflected on his experience before and after the programme:

"[…] Before it was like my head was facing down. After New Futures it was like okay (shows confidence and sits up straight) 'let the interview come now I'm ready for it'. So I think like…I am…I don't think actually, I know I am a contender" (P3-(m)).

Re-thinking your future

In an informal discussion after the interview had ended, one male respondent (P3) shared that the Pathways to Employability learning project[16], which partly looked at visions and goals had made a lasting impact. He explained that he wrote up his goals in this NFP activity and it had a car and a house in it and he had kept this in his mind. In a separate interview with a female respondent, she brought up this male respondent (P3) and the activity sharing:

"And then we also had I think it was right in the beginning when we had to create our future on a piece of paper ja, that, gave use visions of where we want to be and today when I speak to P3, when I look at P3 then and look at the P3 now and it's just like ja that picture if coming to life! And it's a great transformation" (P4-(f)).

Summary

The data shows similarities to the findings of the SAIDE follow-up study (2011) in that the majority of respondents state confidence as a major impact of the programme. However the means of gaining this confidence appear to be linked to various components and approaches and simple participation in an orientating programme. Collection of data in 2013 shows two years after the follow-study and four years after programme completion, this remains relevant for youth, which is significant. It appears that youth are judgmental of themselves, however when they see others have similar weaknesses and that there are tools to improve on weaknesses they describe moments of self-awareness which some link to the importance of developing personal positive self recognition. When positive results are experienced in real life scenarios this appears to reinforce the belief that certain behaviours equal positive outcomes and this gives confidence and encourages repetition of the behaviour. It appears that communication and interpersonal skills are highly valued, as they remain useful after programme completion. We see that while the design of NFP was based on the PPF Brazil blueprint, it appears to have been contextualized and adapted by the facilitators and youth to suit the South African experience.

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[16] This project had learners explore their perception and knowledge on external and internal barriers to unemployment and possible pathways to employment success. Learners contextualized the challenges of unemployment that affected them, their communities, country and the world at large

6.2.5 The nature of programme activities

The nature of the type of activities can be linked to both the characteristics and to the style of approaches of a programme. In this section we will look to what approaches seemed relevant and the how participants perceived the nature of the experience of being in NFP and what value this held for them.

Real-world experience and relevance

Across the respondents many commented that NFP more than resembling a youth employability programme for disadvantaged youth, actually resembled a first job. They showed pride in this fact. When probed further as to why NFP seemed like a job and not a youth programme, some respondents explained it was the professional nature of the programme, others said it was because they were given tasks as if it was a working environment, but the difference was that there was enough time to learn on the go and for example research beforehand on topics they didn't yet understand. Another respondent explained coming from school he felt he still had what he called 'that student mentality' and that through the activities he was taught how to think like a professional, how to behave in a work environment and what responsibilities he had.

> "Personally, you know when you are coming out from school you've got that you know theoretical knowledge if I may put it like that. When we came to NFP it was more of a practical thing. We were more exposed into the real world now. This is how it happens in the real world of work and the kind of activities that we did were really challenging". (P9-(m)).

He linked some of these lessons to the job shadowing component of NFP through this was exposed to a real work environment listing skills learned such as business etiquette and how to handle oneself around people at work. When asked to reflect on how the interactions between peers and facilitators affected respondents today, a male respondent described how behaviour was adapted to a more professional environment:

> "I think, I think even though it wasn't like a workplace, but it was more of like a workplace experience. Because basically we were reprimanded if you are late, so like everyday it's still helping me, because I know if I go to work I have to be early, there are certain things that I have to do and those that I don't have to do and then how to interact with my colleagues cuz what happened was we had to act like we were in a workplace environment. Looking back now it's more of like the same thing, even though it wasn't a really a professional set up it felt like it was a real professional setup" (P11-(m)).

When probed further and asked if behaviours such as dressing in a professional manner and

arriving to the programme on time were not behaviours that would have been done regardless of the programme, the respondent answered:

> "I did some of those things, but you know if you are not working it's different, I think the programme was like a gap between us not working and working. Because we had to know that like everyday we dress properly, coming early, that there are certain things you have to do and don't have to do. For me the programme actually, when looking back, I'm grateful for the programme actually. Because for me it was like a foundation". (P11-(m)).

Another male participant described his impression about the role that professionalism played when compared to a college/university environment:

> "It was totally different because you have to be professional each and every time during the sessions. Even with friends, during the activities we had to be professional and have fun at the same time. It was different from the college it was (sighs and makes a face) at the college they don't care about anything. You don't really know your place and know what you have to accomplish" (P10-(m)).

Positive recognition, reinforcement and constructive criticism

When discussing approaches that youth appreciated about NFP themes of positive recognition, reinforcement and constructive criticism emerged.

> "You know what I really like about New Futures was being able to criticize each others' work and every time we were criticizing someone's work it was giving my piece of mind to that person so it's imparting, so we had a lot of that. It wasn't just about this is what I think and this is how it stays, we got a lot of views" (P4-(f)).

When asked what did you learn about yourself during the programme, participants noted accepting feedback. When probed further one male participant added that feedback was received from everybody in the programme either during group discussions or performance report feedback from facilitators. He noted that smaller groups of people and the way in which one interprets feedback were important to him:

> "I remember there was a report that was made in terms of our performance, so some things were not positive and you have to learn how to digest that. Not that it was our first time getting that kind of feedback and it was just within a little number of people, it wasn't like in a classroom where they say no your English is bad. It was like working on a project and they indicated what you need to be working on to improve who you are. So I learned to work on that not to say maybe they don't like me, some people take it that way. And once they take it that way its difficult for them to drift their mind away from that its not about hatred and liking but its because of you growing" (P9-(m)).

From the data collected criticism it appeared that forms of criticism were first thought of as a sign of disrespect in South African culture and that you are judging other people. When probed further about this cultural dimension one female participant offered her view:

> "In the long run it makes us better people. I think why it doesn't work with most people is because we are not looking at the bigger picture. It's about the work that I've created and you need to accept it as it is. But if you look at it on a bigger scale, if more people were to look at it and you've had a lot of views already to criticize what you have, then it's almost a guarantee that the bigger crowd will accept because you've already had a smaller crowd look at it you know? So it helped in a sense that even today in the workplace when someone tells you something of your work or how to improve your work you take it in not personally…so we can criticize work but it doesn't mean that work is you (laughs) so there's a great difference" (P4-(f)).

Nurturing environment

When asked to think back to the interactions between facilitators and peers and if there was something about these relationships that affected youth, a variety of respondents mentioned that the supportive and kind attitudes and actions of the facilitators helped build confidence and self-awareness with respondents using words to describe the nature of the programme such as 'nurturing', 'community', 'family', 'home' and highlighted the ease and openness of interactions.

> "[…] it was the opportunity that was there and then meeting the right types of people within the programme and all those sorts of things that link and pave a path for you to go […] It was a learning experience where I needed to be awake and catch as much as I could and learn a lot from the people I was in contact with. Okay we needed the technical skills and the soft skills we needed, but I think what changed me or things that impacted greatly in my personal story, are the people that I came in touch with. For me, the nurturing type of people that was important for me because in as much as you get education you need that nurturing. Someone that will reassure you that things will be fine or the people that would always hold your hand, no matter how bad things are or where you are coming from the people that are there for that certain period of time they create this path, I don't know I think it's grounding?" (P4-(f)).

One male participant linked the nature of the programme back to assisting with overcoming personal weaknesses by learning of from others and constructive criticism, which although already discussed appears intertwined:

> "You know, it was like a community. You know like in a community you learn from other people, when you don't this you can ask another person and if that other person knows they will be able to teach you or show you how. So like I learnt from my peers and also from facilitators. Because the thing is like sometimes when you have a superior you have to have someone that you look up to. So when you make a mistake for example those people will tell you no you shouldn't have done this, you should have

done this then that thing you just carry it over with you for the rest of your life. So, it was a really good experience, I've learned a lot. Even some of the stuff I still practice now" (P3-(f)).

In data collected from staff members, both facilitators commented that attendance was regularly high despite no funding for stipends for travel costs. The expressed that travel costs were a major problem for participants as at the time they were unemployed. This was often brought up as an issue with facilitators and in the group. The nature of the programme might have influence dealing with such issues as a few respondents mentioned if they had a problem either personal or logistical, they could bring this up for discussion openly:

> "Ja, cuz we were more of a family than just colleagues because if maybe you had a problem we could talk to you guys, we could talk to x[17], so it was more like home. You could share with the other guys". (P11-(m)).

Both staff members interviewed reiterated that attendance remained surprisingly regular and level of motivation in participation appeared overall not to be negatively affected, despite concerns from participants of lack of funding for stipends to pay for costs of travelling to and from the programme 5 days a week. It appears that the nature and atmosphere of the programme gave some participants motivation to attend:

> "That is why it was like easy for me to wake up and come here everyday because I knew I was just coming here, enjoying myself a lot, learning at the same time. Ja, this is why it was like easier to absorb everything that you guys were giving us (smiles) because we were enjoying it but at the same time gaining a lot from it" (P1-(f)).

A female respondent explained her thoughts on the differences between the kinds of relationships created in school and in NFP. She shared that at school she felt there was little opportunity to sit down and have conversations with people where they motivate you or where 'people will actually listen to you'. She believed that there is more focus on getting through the curriculum and felt that the school structure forgets about the person, which she believed to be detrimental to personal development:

> "I think there's too great a focus on getting the work done and you forget about the person and I think that's what kills a lot of people in the long run" (P4-(f)).

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[17] Reference to another facilitator in the programme

Summary

In summary it appears that data reiterates thoughts in the literature reviewed and in theoretical perspectives guiding the study in that the nature of the activities, the approaches and in the experiences of youth matters. Concepts such as positive recognition, reinforcement and constructive criticism appear to influence self-confidence, create reflective moments and appear to enhance self-reliance. As with the SAIDE Follow-up study 2011, the data shows that there is an increase in confidence amongst the respondents. In part this appears to have been supported by social bonds between staff members and participants. In addition, a nurturing environment might be a key ingredient to creating a safe space for youth who appear to have judgmental perceptions of themselves and their abilities, to openly discuss weaknesses and strengths and create plans of action to overcome weaknesses or capitalize on strengths and even to realize potentials that were unknown. Seeing the programme as a first job and being committed to the programme because of this could suggest that youth felt they had a role to play through responsibilities held and learning of how they could contribute.

6.3   Looking to the future

Data collected from the face fact sheet distributed to all respondents during phase I interviews, enquired about what participants' felt they needed to be more successful in terms of their capabilities. Responses are summarized in table 7 below:

Table 7 Face fact questionnaire Phase I

Skills still lacking	#	Assistance needed
Technical skills	3(m)	Study more to ensure success in the IT industry, how to build own networking database, financial assistance or internships, nothing needed as current employer is assisting in furthering education
English written and verbal skills	1(m)	Old NFP facilitators, more classes on English use
Further studying	2(m) 1(f)	1 (?) Financial assistance, 1(m) Have experience but don't have formal qualification. Currently enrolled at university, discipline to save and pay for fees

Keeping updated on new technologies	1(m)	N/A
Presentation skills	1(f) 1(m)	Old NFP facilitators can assist, practice
Marketing skills	1(m)	Further studying
Own-business start up	1(m)	Studying further (institution)
More knowledge on how the world of work operates	1(m)	Studying further
Planning for the future	1(f)	How to apply for a job
How to balance studies and work	1(m)	A mentor for support
More work experience	1(m)	Learnership
Satisfied – nothing needed	1(m)	Have all the skills necessary to succeed, would just love to give back to the community
Motivation and focus	1(f)	Discipline to pay for studies, however felt she was on the 'right track'

Altruism and resilience

Despite a series of stressors T1 had been exposed to in her childhood she shared:

> "I don't want to see anyone suffer. I don't want to see anyone suffer like me…if I was the person who had the money I would…buy clothes and the school bag for kids and just give them. You go to school you don't have shoes, it's winter, the shoes is broken, then you have to put plastic at least the water won't get in…So I know that life. So that's what I would like to do. To motivate other people also out there; this pain, I was in. Because even right now, there's someone who was raped by stepfather, brother, those things are happening. " (T1-(f)).

T1 shared that negative experiences have not changed her for the worst:

> "Even that thing it never changed me. Even now I still love people. I'm more careful now (laughs) but I can't help myself, I keep on helping people, give them food, and give them clothes" (T1-(f)).

Other respondents shared that if they could be the owners of their own business they would focus on giving inexperienced youth a chance at work. When respondents' were asked what they felt was needed to be more successful in their futures, one male respondent believed he had all the necessary skills to succeed and now he wanted to prioritize giving back the community. In data collected from phase I it was event that youth had an awareness of youth

unemployment in South Africa and showed empathy for people in difficult economic circumstances:

> "I just think if only I had my own company then I would be hiring these people. I know that feeling of not working. It's hard" (P1-(f)).

Respondents also had advice to give unemployed youth such as motivating them to keeping applying for jobs even when they felt despondent or didn't receive feedback and use employment agencies.

Summary

Data collected from the face fact sheet distributed has revealed that the majority of participants feel there are still areas for improvement. Even though they felt more confident in their technical, non-cognitive and English language skills they still felt these skills were lacking and they more assistance was needed to succeed in the future. Many of the participants were wanted to or were continuing their studies if they had financial resources to do so.

Two concepts that have emerged are those of altruism and resilience. Various respondents showed hopes for their futures as well as proactive attitudes in their decision to rise above adversity and then to help others. We see that despite hardship experienced in their own lives, if respondents had the means they would want to help others in the future and do not want to see others suffer.

6.3.1 Room for programme improvement

For this study, it was felt important to present respondents' perceptions on how NFP could improve programme quality. Questions related to levels of participation were posed, however other topics shared by respondents have been included.

Level of participation

When probed about participation levels in NFP and decision-making power of the youth a male respondent explained how NFP could improve:

> "Well, decision making wise I don't think we did have that much. But again, I think the way the programme was designed like I forgot that term... I just forgot the term[18], but like it was not like we had something like that we know we were going to do, things

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[18] It is assumed the respondent was referring to the project-based learning approach

were changing. Sometimes we expect something's going to happen and then it doesn't happen and then we do something else. As for decision making basically it was like more of following the plan so we didn't have much to say to change the way the programme function and stuff". (P11-(m)).

Other areas for improvement

Other areas that made it hard for the youth was the financial constraints of the programme, which youth said affected the quality of the programme. At times there were not enough computers to share and the Internet connection was unstable. Staff members shared that Internet was a heavy expense on the programme and that various computers had been stolen from the office could not be replaced. For some youth not having financial help for travelling to the programme 5 days a week was a constraint. Others mentioned that the programme length was too short. There was a decision by management to change from one cohort of 6 months to two cohorts of 3 months to reach more youth hence NFP 1 and 2. This for staff was also a positive as it gave implementers a chance to iron out programmatic issues and improve quality for NFP 2.

6.4   Relationships in relation to findings

In this section we will end the chapter with discussing the relationships explored under the research questions in relation to the findings. In Chapter 7 these relationships will be analysed in more depth in relation to theoretical frameworks and key concepts of the research and additional emerging concepts from the findings.

Relationship 1: Life stories and their effect on personal development

Phase II of the research being the life story narratives, was a key tool for exploring this relationship in order to better understand the life worlds of youth examining the cultural, social and economic contexts in which they find themselves. It appears that community conditions are active ingredients of environmental influence during childhood, school career and working life. Risk factors contributing to the marginalization of youth are prevalent in all locations from this sample of youth, however the degrees of factors and their severity vary. Self-esteem and self-efficacy however appear to be significantly affected.

Supportive and nurturing environments with positive role models differ, however educational status of parents appears to affect the extent to which support and guidance can lead to

positive educational attainment as well as career making decisions. If lack of family support and high-risk home environments exist, we notice instances of negative outcomes regarding educational attainment, lack of support for participation of youth in education and lasting effects on negative self-esteem. We see however that despite strained economic conditions and isolated locations, positive social relationships and interactions give youth opportunities of learning responsibility and accountability. Interestingly, we see that despite local hardships youth show a set of protective factors such as hope, proactivity and taking initiative which appear to support them during times of adversity. These factors also allow them to reflect on the past and how it has shaped them.

Relationship 2: Empowering potential of programming and re-orientation of perceptions

In order to move towards overcoming marginalizing the study builds to explore the relationship between empowerment potential of programming and the re-orientation of participants' perceptions. We see that youth through the programme have in a way been able to conceptualize their opinion of themselves and improve their ability to believe in themselves; self-efficacy and self-confidence. The programme played a role in allowing youth to reconsider who they are, what they could be and thereby experimenting with various behaviours to see which felt compatible.

We see youth challenging preconceptions of themselves making sense of their situations in terms of their norms, values and behaviours before and after programming (action readiness). If we assume that identities are dynamically constructed in context nurturing and safe environments with a positive empowerment cycle approach may be able to assist youth to reconsider themselves and their behaviours and positive influence the latter. By applying skills learned and seeing results, it is possible that positive behaviour are then repeated even when the programme is no longer there to support them. Youth used words referring to the programme as giving them 'a foundation' or that it was 'grounding' and that nurturing and supportive environments appeared to have had a role to play in these perceptions. It is possible that individual attention and one-one sessions with youth allowed time for introspection and reflection on themselves and their futures. We see from the data presented that many youth emerged with a feeling of not just confidence, but awareness. Many described 'transforming' experiences of themselves and some described increased self-

awareness which they believed could be supported by giving themselves positive recognition and recognition.

Relationship 3: Empowering effect of training on graduates' success in the labour market

This relationship is expanded from solely income and economic outcomes to exploring improved and continued navigation of the labour market and better quality employment.

In terms of the empowering effect on graduates' success in the labour market, all respondents had at some point been employed in the four years since completing NFP. At the time of data collection 83% were employed and felt that in their current jobs skills acquired in NFP were useful for securing this employment and continued to be useful and relevant in their work. Proactivity through researching, attending career fairs and strategically applying for jobs that suited ability appeared to be new skills that were still useful four years after the programme had ended. For those currently unemployed believed in their ability to continue searching and hopes remained relatively high for finding employment and confidence remained for attending interviews. Findings show that the majority of youth connected continued success in navigating the labour market to approaches and ingredients, which fall outside of pure technical skills training. Concepts such as self-efficacy, knowing how to work with other people, handling conflict in the workplace as well as improved communication skills were of value to respondents.

From relationship 1 we saw that location appears to matter for job prospects. Economic pressures affect youth a young age and informal, insecure work opportunities become the most likely option to survive when moving into cities. From the data we saw that social structural factors narrow the work opportunity trajectory of young people as in phase II data we saw instances of short-term contracts and informal work opportunities. However we do see that for some youth previously bound to low-semi skilled work despite having a formal IT qualification, after completing NFP were able to find work in higher skilled jobs either taking part in IT internships or working in IT companies. Another respondent after volunteering to work at an NGO managed to secure permanent employment and has since been promoted. An important for reflection is the wider concerns of the labour market that affect youth regardless of their preparedness. These include the actual ability of the labour market to absorb young people, labour market discrimination and a general unwillingness to accept the risks of taking in a young and inexperienced workforce.

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6.4.1 Chapter summary

A strong theme especially from township environments was the structural condition of communities that included risk factors. Work opportunities appear to be affected by the socio-economic conditions youth have grown up in, especially for those from rural and township environments, in a sense creating a set of structures that appear difficult to overcome. Despite local hardships youth show a variety of protective factors such as hope, proactivity and altruism and remain hopeful for a better future, showing elements of resilient behaviour.

It appears that the education system as it stands has added feelings of frustration and despair of their futures. In its failure to equip youth for the realities of life after school, it has inadvertently created a false sense of hope about the power of education. Low quality colleges and universities leave youth feeling 'blank' and without practical application of skills. In addition the labour market appears hard to permeate, with youth believing this is due in part, to their lack of experience.

From the data it appears that more comprehensive youth programming to youth means practical, hands-on experience with a recognition of the importance of non-cognitive skills development. Findings show that attributes such as self-confidence, self-awareness and self-belief were key to what youth took away from the programme four years after programme completion.

7 Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter will begin by providing a summary of the research in terms of process and methodology and then move into a summary of the findings and interpretations from data presentation in Chapter 6. The latter will include an analysis of the findings regarding the three relationships explored within the study. Discussions on how the research questions were answered will be argued for followed by an analysis of the findings in context to the theoretical frameworks chosen to guide the study. Further points for action and consideration are presented at the end of the chapter.

7.1   Summary of the research

The purpose of this research has been to explore the significance of broadening the parameters of traditional youth programming when engaging with youth in overcoming marginalization. In order to do so, two specific research questions were formulated: *1) What is the significance of special post-school training programmes and approaches in overcoming marginalization in the South African context?* 2) *What seem to be the relevant 'ingredients' that can make the difference and how can these be put into place?*

To assist in answering the research questions three relationships were explored which have been touched upon in Chapter 6 in relation to findings: 1) The relationship between childhood and upbringing and their effect on programming goals, 2) The relationship between the empowering potential of programming and the reorientation of participants' perceptions of themselves and 3) The relationship between the empowering effect of the training on graduates' success in the labour market. In this chapter these relationships will be further explored in relation to theoretical frameworks and concepts emerging from data presented and literature reviewed.

The empirical research focused on a case study of a youth employability programme in South Africa from 2009-2010 in an attempt to explore the significance and ingredients that appeared to make all the difference to participants four years after programme completion. The study thus set out to understand human experience, attitudes and interpretations of the youth interviewed. Thus a qualitative approach was selected as each informant was seen as

uniquely filled with thoughts, feelings, and experiences and brought with them their own perceptions. This assisted the research to capture a diverse range of personal stories. In phase I semi-structured interviews were employed to capture the youth' experiences of the employability programme and their perceptions four years after programme completion. In order to better understand the life worlds of young people in South Africa, in Phase II three youth were selected representing rural, township and urban upbringings to participate in brief life story narratives. As the researcher was a previous staff member on the programme, in Phase III informal interviews with fellow staff members were carried out to assist the researcher in reliably depicting the programme. These contributions have been used to depict the New Futures Programme (NFP) in Chapter 4.

7.2   Summary of the findings

The most important findings and their significance are discussed below. Thereafter a summary of the findings regarding the three relationships under exploration will be presented in the context of theoretical frameworks and concepts emerging from literature reviewed and data presented.

Community conditions matter

From phase II life story narratives with youth from rural, township and urban backgrounds we see from the sample that various risk factors contribute to marginalising youth and are prevalent in all locations. Comparisons of the three locations show that the severity and degrees of risks differ. The literature shows that many children in South Africa experience maltreatment and suggests that children who are maltreated suffer large consequences in both cognitive and non-cognitive skills development. In the location with higher prevalence of violence, alcohol abuse, physical, sexual and emotional abuse and instability we see these factors impact on self-esteem and educational attainment. We see that in poor and isolated geographical locations with more stable family structures that despite poverty and poor educational opportunities youth may have the opportunity to learn valuable life skills critical to developing responsibility, accountability and an inquiring mind.

Findings from semi-structured interviews show that youth place education on a pedestal believing that it is the key to finding work after school. As so much faith is placed in passing

secondary school and gaining certifications, diplomas or degrees at tertiary level it is clear that youth have unrealistic expectations on the transition from school to work. For youth in marginalized environments it appears that educational opportunities are lacking in practical application of skills learned, youth have less access to job information and have small, homogeneous networks, which further constrains successful navigation of the labour market. These factors coupled with the reality of youth unemployment in South Africa have brought a sense of despondency and frustration to youths' lived experiences impacting self-belief, confidence and motivation.

Altruism and resilience

Another insightful concept that emerges from the data is that of altruism. Many participants reflected that if they were to improve their life situations, this would enable them to assist in preventing risk factors occurring within their communities. They displayed a sense of wanting to help others. In the literature reviewed altruism was seen as potentially connected to the character traits that relate to resiliency as despite local hardships youth in the Mosavel et al study (2013) "suggested that there were still opportunities for self-advancement and offered constructive strategies for improved" (Mosavel et al, 2013: 7). Risk factors such as poverty and violence were suggested to potentially mitigate by protective factors such as hope, humour. Findings seem to echo these protective factors and include altruistic tendencies in wanting to protect others from similar experiences or give back to the community.

From the findings we see that adverse experiences respondents were exposed to in their communities and life, youth appeared to value reflection that NFP encouraged as it made them more aware of their abilities and strengths. When youth experienced positive or worthwhile results they appear to want to repeat the thoughts and behaviours and make more informed choices. The literature supports these findings in that resilience could be an integral support mechanism for young people through difficult times (Mosavel et al, 2013). As with the Mosavel et al study, some youth interviewed from NFP showed that they were not only interested in their own personal achievement. This appears to be linked to discussions in the Chapter 2 on the importance of cultures and traditions particularly in South Africa with the concept of 'ubuntu' and solidarity. Could altruism be a source of resilience for marginalized youth in South Africa?

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Improved navigation

Youth thus felt that a programme such as NFP was relevant and without it they might never have found work. Findings show that youth displayed remarkably improved decision-making and employed critical thinking skills when it came to searching for work. This was predominantly based on youths' improved understanding of 'where they fit' as they had better understanding of their capabilities, strengths and weaknesses. After programme participation youth felt they had great understanding of expectations of the world of work and thus acquired more confidence to take initiative and be pro-active in job searching.

Confidence

Findings show that youth value a hands-on approach to learning technical skills and that a theoretical approach often seen in the education system was not enough to feel competent in real world situations. This approach increased their confidence in their abilities and this was made operational through engagement with technical staff, self-directed learning projects, research skills and hands-on, practical experience through the programme and job shadowing experiences. Confidence was improved further when youth received evaluations from the job shadowing employers and could come back to the programme to hone skills and work on weaknesses in a safe environment.

Youth place highest value on the soft skills component of the programme such as learning to work with different people, communication skills, presentation skills and self-directed learning. These components were seen to be the backbone of creating self-awareness and improving confidence. This appears to have a transformational effect as findings show that youth believed it instilled in them the will to master the art of positive self-reinforcement. It appears that important effects of programming boosting not only cognitive but non-cognitive skills was continued self-confidence, motivation and self-efficacy four years after programme completion. When positive results were seen from effort, youth were encouraged to continue employing the toolbox of skills learned.

It appears that youth are strongly affected with lack of confidence in relation to not mastering the English language and that any focus on improving communication skills and competencies in English was highly rewarding in both social and work life as it improved their ability and confidence to communicate with others.

A nurturing environment

Findings show that one of the most important approaches to youth was the nurturing environment of the programme. This approach created a safe space to practice skills learned and a culture of ensuring regular constructive criticism encouraged youth as they saw that others shared their weaknesses and were motivated that it was a normal process to then work on improving weaknesses. This in turn also contributed to developing confidence and self-efficacy. This might be a key ingredient for programming with youth development objectives, which results in developing closer social bonds between peers and facilitators, trust, commitment and deeper participation. In terms of participation levels on a whole it appears that NFP was successful in involving youth to steer curriculum topics and focus and to an extent design.

Lack of participation at all levels

It is evident however that youth were not consulted throughout all phases of the programme. While efforts were made to involve youth, there is an indication that youth were not made aware of the role they had to play in the programme and that communication lines in this regard had room for improvement. In addition funding constraints place a heavier burden on unemployed youth who do not have a disposable income to contribute to their food and travel during three-month programme participation.

7.2.1 The relationship between childhood and upbringing and their effect on programming goals

Through the data presented it is evident that there is a correlation between childhood and upbringing and their effect on programming goals.

As noted in Chapter 3 many children in South Africa experience maltreatment and while little is known about the effects on long-term development Pieterse (2014)'s work shows that children who are maltreated suffer adverse consequences in terms of both cognitive and non-cognitive skills development. The estimated effects of maltreatment were seen to be larger and more consistent for the most severe type of maltreatment. If we consider the life-course perspective and its emphasis on the family's role in shaping social and intellectual developments in children, the findings show that youth are not empty vessels. In fact Pieterse's study suggests that parents are an active ingredient in environmental influence

during childhood (Pieterse, 2014). It is recognized that these discussions are relevant to psychological dimensions of research which is beyond the abilities of myself as a researcher, however are integral for discussions on youth development in marginalized contexts.

From the data collected in my own study we see that youth entered NFP with both positive negative life experiences, which have equipped them with capabilities and skills, but have also affected their perceptions of themselves and their perceptions of the possibilities for people like them in similar life situations. From the findings we can deduce that youth from marginalized environments appear to benefit greatly from programming that recognises their life experiences and adapts by putting in place a greater emphasis on non-cognitive skills development. These include: encouraging motivation, perseverance, improving self-esteem, encouraging introspection and ultimately appears to bring about a heightened sense of self-awareness and self-efficacy. The findings suggest can therefore suggest that any engagement with young people benefits from considering how their life worlds have shaped their current perceptions and behaviours.

7.2.2 The relationship between the empowering potential of programming and the reorientation of participants' perceptions of themselves

It is evident from the programme that some youth believed their participation in NFP was transformational. The picture before participation and indeed a battle to overcome during participation was youths' concern of being 'seen as a fool' and a distinct fear of making mistakes in front of others. Many youth showed that they had negative perceptions of themselves, lacked confidence in their spoken abilities, which included their lack of English skills but also how they came across to others in interviews. This reinforced feelings of inferiority for some and negatively affected social interactions for others. Some youth did not even have the opportunity to attend interviews for skilled work, as they were unaware of how to navigate the labour market in general, despite all having attending higher education institutions. Reinforcing feelings of inadequacy was this lack of knowing how to navigate, lack of response from job applications, sitting at home unemployed as many had high expectations that their qualifications would mean a smooth transfer into the world of work.

Findings show youth valued overall the building of their confidence, increased self-awareness and a belief in themselves and through this developed the skills of personal

positive reinforcement to assist them when the programme had come to and end. Some respondents explained that for them NFP was 'a first job' and that the simulation of a professional environment led them to 'feel like professionals' moving away from a student mind-set. It appears that youth felt the programme's provision of a safe and nurturing space, enabled them to discover who they were in relationship to their prior perceptions of themselves and to the world around them. It also aided in helping them understand they had a role to play and how they could contribute to the world of work; a world that appeared unobtainable prior to programme participation.

7.2.3 The relationship between the empowering effect of the training on graduates' success in the labour market

From the literature we see that globally, employers often indicate young recruits are lacking in socio-emotional skills, reporting a "strong demand but lack of supply for attributes such as creativity, initiative, leadership and ability to work independently" (di Gropello et al, 2010 as cited in GMR, 2012: 187). In the Development Bank of South Africa's (DBSA) 2011 report reviewing youth employment programme in South Africa, a finding was that a lack of employability skills was perceived as a constraint/market failure with a gap that there was no significant initiative focusing on transitioning skills/soft skills. The proposed intervention of the report to address this constraint was to reform teaching methodologies to incorporate soft skills and ensure the offering of life skills programmes (DBSA, 2010). DBSA recognised that in order to improve youth employability in South Africa significantly "a much broader spectrum of programmes is required" (DBSA, 2011: 40).

Findings from the research show that the non-cognitive skills acquired during NFP continue to be useful and relevant for respondents four years after programme completion. The majority of youth connected continued success in navigating the labour market to approaches and ingredients that fall outside of pure technical skills training. Areas such as increased confidence, self-efficacy, proactivity, reflection, self-awareness, belief in oneself, communication and presentation skills and learning to work with other personalities were of value to respondents. Some respondents believed that without the soft skills component of the programme they might never have found quality employment. These skills appear to support resilience in a work life trajectory that is relatively unstable for youth. Despite youth feeling more prepared for the workplace and have a better understanding of how they can contribute,

they are still faced with labour market discrimination, short-term contractual work and a labour market with a general unwillingness to absorb an untrained labour force. Despite these factors youth remain hopeful and creatively continue to find ways to penetrate a rather unfriendly labour market using their strengths, positive attributes and new found marketing skills to bounce back better. We also see that some youth have managed to move away from low-semi skilled work despite having formal IT qualifications and that after completing NFP were able to find work in higher skilled jobs either taking part in IT internships or working in IT companies.

7.3   Answering research questions

This section will present how and to what extent the evidence presented answers the two main research questions. Two specific research questions were under investigation: *1) What is the significance of special post-school training programmes and approaches in overcoming marginalization in the South African context?* 2) *What seem to be the relevant 'ingredients' that can make the difference and how can these be put into place?*

7.3.1   The significance of special post-school training programmes and approaches in overcoming marginalization in the South African context

It is evident that youth growing up in marginalized environments are exposed to various risk factors that contribute to their disadvantaged states. Little hope for the future, social, racial and gender prejudices, labour market discrimination and a lack of technical and non-cognitive skills development can all work to reinforce one's disadvantaged state. This leaves youth with poor self-esteem and a poor understanding of the formal job market. In addition levels of education vary greatly among social classes and the alarming rate of youth unemployment in South Africa identified as a major socio-economic challenge hampers youths' chances in finding substantive work and adds to a sense of despondency. Youth felt that due to their location of upbringing and the economic hardships they had experienced 'caged' them into a future they did not know how to improve. It cannot be concluded that NFP was the sole reason that youth had managed to find employment as maturity and time are important contributing factors, however it appears it was a catalyst in motivating and better directing youth to find their own feet in the journey towards living a life they have reason to value.

Through the NFP case study we see that youth believe they might never have known how to navigate the world of work without NFP acting as a transitional step between school and work. Their confidence and awareness of themselves and their strengths and weaknesses were to an extent unexplored and the findings show that both participation in the programme and nature of approaches were valuable to youth. The programme and its particular ingredients and approaches appear to have provided a transitional period for youth to move from a student identity to believing in themselves as professionals. In this nurturing environment social bonds were made and trust was built, creating a safe space where mistakes were expected and welcomed, yet also a space where they could be improved upon.

It appears the importance of participation in such a programme is that the behaviours learned and the toolbox of skills youth acquired has remained relevant and useful four years after programme completion. Youth are better equipped to navigate the labour market with some having moved into more skilled work, better able to retain work and have found themselves promoted to better positions within the organisation. There appears to be evidence that through promising programming, positive habits can be reinforced as a way of life. Thus they positive habits can become a toolbox for surviving new adverse events.

7.3.2 The relevant 'ingredients that appear to make the difference and how can these be put into place?

For ease of presentation for the reader, the ingredients that appear to make a difference to youths' experiences and how they are operationalized, the potential positive effects and the dynamics required to operationalize have been summarized in the table 8 below.

Table 8 Ingredients of special post-school training programmes

Ingredients	How	Positives effects	Relies upon
Non-cognitive skills development	- Communication and presentation skills - Personalized treatment - Constructive criticism	- Improved self-confidence, self-belief and awareness of oneself - Self-reliance and introspection - An awareness of how to contribute - Proactivity, initiative taking and perseverance	- Nurturing environment - Positive recognition and reinforcement - Room to discuss weaknesses and

	- Learning to work with others	- Improved decision-making skills - Effective communication skills - Improved interview skills - Improved capacity in working environments - Positive identity development	highlight strengths - Positive role modeling - Supportive relationships
Practical technical skills development	- Hands-on approach - Project-based learning activities - Based on real-world problems to find real-world solutions - Job shadowing	- Improved technical capacity - Improved problem solving skills - Confidence and self-efficacy - Opportunities to enter formal labour market	- Relevant equipment - Internet connectivity - Technically sound and supportive staff - Real world scenarios
Work place orientation	- Goals and visions - Connecting to the world of work - Job shadowing - Job searching skills	- Envisioning the future - Broadens social networks - Confidence - Motivation - Deeper understanding of expectations	- Connection to the working world (includes guest speakers and facilitators) - Simulating a professional environment - Job shadowing - Mentoring
Work place readiness	- CV writing - Interview skills - Communication and presentation skills - Mock interviews	- Improved confidence - Motivation - Proactivity and initiative taking - Improved decision-making	- Hands-on, practical approach - Job shadowing - Mentoring - Broadening social networks
Nurturing environment	- Youth participation and collaboration - Open lines of communication - Consideration of life worlds of youth	- Social bonding - Imitation of positive behaviours - Self-awareness, self-belief and self-efficacy - Self-confidence - Trust and hope	- Positive recognition and reinforcement - Constructive criticism practices - Understanding of context and life worlds of youth

			- Understanding of cultures and traditions - Respectful and supportive staff
Hands on Project-based learning approach to learning	- Recognize participants' drive to learn and place them at the centre of the process - Highlight challenging questions that lead to in-depth exploration of important areas of learning	- Critical thinking - Self-directed learning - Research skills and an inquiring mind - Problem solving - Learning to work with other people and personalities - Self-efficacy	- Effective planning, design and implementation - Strong staff and commitment - Reforming teaching methodologies - Simulating the world of work - Activity-based approach: learning occurs through doing
Non-static curriculum development	- Youth participation - Learning projects developed in ongoing process to integrate abilities, needs and areas of interest	- Addresses youths' needs - Remains relevant - Youth participation in design - Development of inquiring minds - Ability to 'pick up' on areas of focus important to youth such as in the case of English language skills	- Effective planning, design and implementation - Dedication of time - Youth participation - Staff competencies and commitment

As can be seen in the table above youth have contributed to defining key ingredients and approaches they deem valuable to their experience of NFP. There appears to be a clear need for the coupling of both technical and non-cognitive skills development, with a somewhat heavier weight on the effectiveness and relevance of non-cognitive skills. This appears to be the glue that that combines the programme together which seems to have contributed to youths' need for whole-person development for better chances in the labour market. It is recognized that table 7.1 does not provide a fully developed framework of ingredients, however provides an important building block to stimulate discussion on design, planning

and implementation of youth programming in the South African context. New areas in this list are the following:

- A *nurturing environment* with open lines of communication and consideration of the life worlds of youth. This factor is an added support to other theories of the importance of positive recognition and reinforcement
- In addition it is found that not only positive reinforcement in beneficial but that a *constructive practice of criticism* in a safe environment is critical to self-awareness and confidence building. Respectful and supportive staff are key ingredients in this
- *Understanding of context and life worlds of youth*
- *Understanding of cultures and traditions*

7.4   Findings in context of theoretical frameworks

In the following section the findings and their relevance to the chosen theoretical frameworks will be discussed. Here the extent to which theories and concepts were useful and where less relevant will be presented. New concepts that emerged from the findings will be included.

Re-thinking development
Amartya Sen's Human Capability Approach as a conceptual framework was vital for a study exploring the need to broaden the parameters of traditional youth training. They study appreciated and benefited from the freedom-orientated perspective as it challenged thinking behind development to be expanded to a concept of freedom. The concept of human capability itself rests on "the substantive freedom of people to lead the lives they have reason to value and to enhance the real choices they have" (Sen, 1999: 293). Sen's approach has been instrumental in expanding the concept of development to that of freedom, giving us a view other than a focus in economic terms, thus away from thinking of youth development as a purely technical skills development as an automatic response. This approach was pivotal in dedicating a study to the importance of non-cognitive skills development seeing that factors such as emotional well-being, relationships, confidence and self-belief effect youths' capacity to engage in programming and positively modify behaviours. Approaching youth programming in this way takes a social cognitive theory approach by seeing people as self-

organizing, proactive and self-regulating agents of their psychosocial development (Bandura, 2001) and this was at the core of the research carried out.

Re-orientating perceptions / life worlds

The model of Identity-Based Motivation (IBM) posed by Oyserman & Destin (2010) suggests that interventions focusing on the macro-micro level can work to re-orientate young peoples' perceptions of themselves and show that these perceptions can impact attainment potential and was instrumental in allowing the research to consider programming that considers these social structural factors that can impact youths' perceptions.

The programme appeared to allow youth to re-conceptualize old perceptions, norms, values and behaviours. This was valuable for interpreting youths' belief that they had had been through a 'transformational' programme seeing themselves experiment with changing roles from being treated and thinking of themselves as inexperienced students to believing in themselves as working professionals. They saw themselves move from feeling inferior and severely lacking in confidence to believing 'anything was possible' and discovered 'the real me'.

The model was also instrumental in considering the empowering potential of programming as it consider that how youth interpret difficulties. The model suggests that if a young person experiences a behaviour that feels compatible with his/her identity, difficulties engaging in the behaviour will be interpreted as meaning the behaviour is important, not impossible and therefore effort is meaningful, not pointless (Oyserman & Destin, 2010). As participants experienced positive results through programme participation this appeared to have positive habit changing results on behaviours and ways of thinking. Youth expressed that what they had learned during NFP was still relevant and used in their lives four years after programme completion, which appears to suggest that the behaviour seems rewarding to them. When faced with difficulties in their work and life experiences effort appears to seem meaningful and not in vane. It appears from the findings that this model's postulates have been important for understanding the following concept of resilience and supporting protective factors.

Resilience

Mosavel et al (2013) describe that South African youth in low-income, urbanised communities are exposed to vulnerable to a variety of daily stressors, which increase risk of

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negative outcomes. "Resiliency can provide avenues for youth to transcend adversity and may contribute to their positive development" (Mosavel et al, 2013, p.1). While risk factors such as poverty, violence or maltreatment are said to increase the chance of negative cognitive and behavioural outcomes, this could also include negative impact on non-cognitive outcomes (Pieterse, 2014). Protective factors such as self-esteem, humour and hope resilience research poses can mediate and prevent negative results (Gilgun, 1999 as cited in Mosavel et al, 2014). It is believed that programmes recognizing and harnessing inherent protective factors, can work to enhance these elements and potentially shape experiences and perceptions of the future. This seem to be very important and it could be worthwhile to explore to what extent this could be put into strengthening resilience. For this study however, resilience as a concept did not arise until after interview guides had been created and fieldwork completed, therefore there is insufficient evidence to support this area.

Cycle of empowerment
The positive cycle of adolescent empowerment by Chinman and Linney (1998) has been useful to anchor thoughts and to explore how concepts and ingredients could be operationalized. It was also a guiding tool in developing the interview guide for semi-structured interviews in Phase I of the research. The cycle adheres to a definition of empowerment that compliments Sen's Human Capability Approach, being a way that people gain control of their lives.

Chinman and Linney's cycle also allowed the research to consider the importance of the nature of activities in empowerment programmes in that should be meaningful, useful and involve the learning of relevant skills. This is coupled with positive recognition and reinforcement, which the cycle links has beneficial effects on maturing self-esteems and on developing self-efficacy. While this appeared evident in the findings, Chinman and Linney emphasize in particular that there should be a focus on strengths rather than weaknesses. This was seen differently from the findings of this study as youth prized constructive criticism and the highlighting of weaknesses. Not only did this make them aware that weaknesses existed that had a detrimental impact on their success in the labour market but it also allowed them to see a likeness in others; seeing that others too had weaknesses and making a mistake did not have to be considered a taboo. As Chinman and Linney's cycle refers specifically to adolescents, it is possible that youth being in a more mature phase and transitional phase of life react differently to this than adolescents.

In relation to the nature of activities, one area that was not given weight in Chinman and Linney's cycle but that came through strongly in the NFP case study findings was the nurturing nature of the programme. This appears to be critical in giving participants the feeling that the programme was a safe space for learning and for making mistakes. Findings show that in part self-confidence, a better understanding of strengths and weaknesses and a belief in one's self increased dramatically because of this programme characteristic.

In Chinman and Linney's cycle, the bonding development process is seen as action – skills – development – reinforcement in a space where youth are encouraged to learn about themselves and the world around them through interacting with others (Chinman & Linney, 1998). In the cycle bonding is linked to becoming connected to positive institutions and this is seen as an integral part of the cycle. While this is valid to the research, through the findings this study suggests that bonding should also be extended to the close friendships that develop between people, often as a result of profound experiences. Findings show that to South African youth, relationships are very important. Youth described the programme with words such as 'nurturing', 'community' and 'family'.

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Future programming

Future programming of youth development interventions may benefit from considering various elements of the frameworks and concepts emerging from the findings. Chinman and Linney's cycle and its merging of identity development, rolelessness and bonding theories advocate for youth to be part of developing a stable and positive identity. Programming could benefit by expanding this cycle's view of the nature of activities to include the nurturing natures of the intervention as a whole and expand the social bonding process to include the value of relationships formed and their impact on positive developmental gains.

The findings have show that work done with youth particularly from marginalised environments should take into account the life worlds of young people. The IBM model has been useful for considering that social structural factors can impact attainment potential,

acknowledges that youth are not empty vessels and that they enter programming with a set of values, norms and behaviours.

7.5 Contributions to literature on youth training in general

Important for this study's focus is that an increasing amount of studies suggest that attributes such as self-confidence, motivation, perseverance and self-efficacy are critical for success in both education and social outcomes (AED, 2009; SAIDE, 2011; Hinchliffe & Jolly, 2011; Krishnan et al, 2012). "Evidence suggest that the important effects of…interventions are not in raising cognitive ability particularly…but in boosting motivation and aspiration and improving outcomes such as school retention and productivity at work, as well as better social outcomes…" (Krishnan et al, 2012, p.6). From the literature we see that an array of surveys referenced in the EFA Global Monitoring Report (2012) show that transferable skills are important for labour market outcomes, however "less evidence exists on how they can be cultivated through targeted interventions" (GMR, 2012: 189). As seen in the literature, this is important as clear definitions and a framework of employability skills are relatively elusive (Collura, 2010).

Although at Masters level, the study believes it has tried to gain qualitative insight from youths' perspectives of the significance of programming that includes a more comprehensive range of skills and capabilities. Expanding the parameters of traditional, technical skills focused training to include non-cognitive skills development and has suggested approaches and key ingredients that could contribute and cultivate these skills through a targeted intervention. The research found it was evident that special post-school training programmes are well served by recognizing the life-worlds of young people as this can better shape design, implementation and consideration of the nature of activities.

7.6 Follow up actions and/or further research, which could be useful

It could be useful for the education community to consider an exercise to map and then clearly define the nuances between various definitions such as non-cognitive skills, transferable skills, life skills, employability skills and skills for life coupled with the four pillars of the learning from the Delors Report of 1996. These sets of skills appear to hold different meaning for different actors. A defined framework of definitions, their positive effects and how they can be operationalized could be very useful in advocating for youths' right to whole-person development.

Mosavel et al's research on resilience and emerging concepts of hope and altruism are seen as critical. As the scope of this study was not able to delve deeper into these discussions, future research should look to anchor in pragmatic ways how altruism could be a source of resilience. In addition it appears that special post-school training programmes have the ability to enhance protective factors. This appears to be a worthwhile area to explore to what extent programming could support the strengthening of resilience. In addition Mosavel et al explain that to date studies on resilience have been more focused on European and American setting, which means little information appears to be available on these processes in lower resource settings (Mosavel et al, 2013).

Many children in South Africa experience maltreatment and while little is known about the effects on long-term development Pieterse (2014)'s work shows that children who are maltreated suffer adverse consequences in terms of both cognitive and non-cognitive skills development. If we consider the life-course perspective and its emphasis on the family's role in shaping social and intellectual developments in children, the findings show that youth are not empty vessels. How youth programming can responsibly take these life worlds into account it is recognised are for discussions in psychological dimensions of research beyond the scope and area of expertise of this study, however are integral for future research and discussions on youth development in marginalized contexts.

7.7 Conclusion

We see that historically the experiences of young people today are not unique but resemble similarities over the decades. As it stands there is exists gaps and misalignments as across the globe we see a widening chasm between the role of education in preparing young people for the world of work. Severe gaps exist in knowing how skills for life can be cultivate through targeted interventions although there is recognition that a much broader spectrum of interventions is required. Maintaining the status quo with traditional approaches to youth interventions with a predominant focus on pure technical, vocational skills with expected outcomes in economical terms alone (increased wealth, mobility) is a one dimensional approach and does a disservice to harnessing the potential for creating sustainable lives and whole-person development. This is inadequate solution to an increasingly desperate picture of future lives for young people.

A central argument has been that programming needs to take into account the life-worlds of youth by supporting them to re-orientate perceptions of themselves. It is believed that social structural matter, influencing in part perceptions of what is possible 'for people like us'. Identity formation is not a passive experience and interpretation of difficulty matters because it influences judgment, choice and behaviour. Re-setting old perceptions and outlooks of what is possible is a kind of personal renaissance that can provide a renewal of life, of vigour and interest to make truly substantive changes for oneself. Resilience is critical, and there is potential that confidence, self-efficacy and a critical awareness of how to contribute and/or put newly learned skills into place aid proactivity. If youth are not encouraged by the nature of the programme to believe that they have ability to produce desired outcomes through their own actions, then participants will have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties. If people have the power to exert control over their lives and if their behaviour seems meaningful in that it can affect change, they become more resilient to face the challenges of the future.

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Appendix I

Phase 1 Face fact sheet
Name: Age: Gender:
Where were you born:
Where did you grow up:
Where did you attend school:
Are you currently employed:
If yes, what industry and for how long:
If no, when did you last have employment and for how long:
Since NFP how many jobs have you held:
What kinds of jobs/work have you been involved in:
Where do you feel you need to be more successful in terms of your capabilities:
What kinds of assistance do you need to fulfill this and who would be able to help:

Appendix II

Phase 1 Semi-structured interview
1. How did your interest in NFP first begin?
2. What do you think was most useful about the programme?
3. What were the most important skills that you have strengthened or gained from participating in NFP (what did you learn that is still applicable today?)
4. How do you think the interactions between facilitators, peers and others you met affected you?
5. How did your experience after participating in NFP change the way you make decisions now?
6. What soft skills learnt at NFP still benefit you today?
7. What hard skills have helped you the most?
8. How did NFP challenge and stimulate you?
9. How do you feel about your ability to complete tasks required of you at work and to reach goals?
10. How do you feel about the power you have to affect or direct your work life?
11. How do you motivate yourself to seek employment after NFP ended?
12. How do you search for jobs?
13. What affects your decisions about the types of jobs you apply for?
14. What did you expect when leaving school in terms of employment?
15. What in your opinion is the experience like for young people in South Africa for securing the jobs they want?
16. What is your opinion on how being employed and the type of jobs (i.e. status) affect what people think about others?
17. How did NFP impact this experience for you?
18. How do you feel about the job you have now/last job you had?
19. Describe any promotions/changes in position since joining the working world
20. Describe a time when you had to be adaptable at work. What happened?
21. How do you feel about the freedom and control you have with regards to your work situation?
22. How do you feel about the way you were supported during NFP?
23. How were your strengths and knowledge used to make a contribution to NFP?

Appendix III

Phase 2 Narrative life story interview
1. Tell me about your life growing up
2. Tell me about your experience of school
3. Describe your life after leaving school
4. Tell me about the day you decided to join NFP
5. Tell me about what you hoped to gain from the programme
6. Tell me about the memories that stand out the most from your time with the programme
7. Can you tell me what it was like starting your first job after NFP
8. Describe your life compared to your parents
9. If someone in your life that you know very well had to describe you before and after NFP what would they say?
10. How have your feelings about yourself changed since being in NFP personally and professionally?
11. Describe a time during NFP about a role that you played where your strengths were useful and helpful to others
12. Describe an experience where you could see changes in the way you acted because of your experience with NFP. What did you do differently?
13. Do you feel that you have given a fair description of yourself?

Appendix IV

Informant Codes		
P	Participant	Semi-structured interviews
R	Rural	Life story narrative
T	Township	Life story narrative
U	Urban	Life story narrative
S1	Staff member 1	Informal Skype interview
S2	Staff member 2	Informal Skype interview

Appendix V Consent form part A

Purpose of study and request for participation:

The study aims to specifically explore how specific programme dimensions of NFP impacted the participants sense of empowerment in terms of the goals of NFP which was the gaining and securing of decent employment opportunities. The focus is not simply whether or not youth have found employment but their experience of the transition three years after programme completion. The study hopes to understand their changing aspirations, attitudes and perceptions towards employment in the South African context and its impact for their futures. Through deeper understanding of youth and their experiences, the study hopes to better inform future youth interventions in the South African context and follow up on the sustainability of the NFP three years after completion.

Due to your enrollment in NFP your participation and insight into the programme would be highly appreciated and will add immense value to the project. Due to the length of interviews and the length it will take to interpret them, it must be noted that all interviews will be audio recorded. By no means will this audio be shared with others, it is only intended for use by the researcher. The researcher has been assigned a supervisor who will help to understand the findings, however your personal details will not be shared.The project has been reported to the Data Protection Official for Research at the Norwegian Social Science Data Services. This ensures that your privacy is respected and that the usage of information gathered with be used ethically and with respect.

Upon completion:

The information gathered during the study will be used for the compiling of a Masters Thesis project in the subject of Comparative and International Education which is conducted at the University of Oslo in Norway. The proposed date of completion is June 2014. Upon completion all personal data will be anonymized and stored for potential further study and research. If you would like an electronic copy of the final thesis project, you may request the researcher to send you the final product in 2014. Contact details have been provided for you in part b of this consent form.

Your participation is highly appreciated and the researcher looks forward to sharing this experience with you.

Appendix VI Consent form part B

Participant Identification Number: P1

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CONSENT FORM
Creating Sustainable Lives. A case study of youth in South Africa

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Name of Researcher: Sophia Kousiakis

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Please initial box

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1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated XXXX for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

3. I understand that any information given by me may be used in future reports, articles or presentations by the research team.

4. I understand that my name will not appear in any reports, articles or presentations.

5. I agree to take part in the above study.

_____ _____ _____
Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____ _____ _____
Researcher   Date   Signature

<div align="center">

When completed, please return in the envelope provided (if applicable). One copy will be given to the participant and the original to be kept in the file of the researcher at:
Oslo,
Norway
sophia.kousiakis@gmail.com
+47 948 02729
Skype: sophia.kousiakis

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