

**CHALLENGES FOR VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE IN ACCESSING
HIGHER EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF ORANGE FARM INFORMAL
SETTLEMENT, SOUTH AFRICA**

By

WF MKWANANZI

(Student no: 2006 0000 59)

Dissertation submitted in partial requirement for the degree of
Master's in Development Studies

in the

FACULTY OF ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

at the

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

SUPERVISOR: Professor Melanie Walker

BLOEMFONTEIN

2013

DECLARATION

I declare that ***“Challenges for vulnerable young people in accessing higher education: A case study of Orange Farm informal settlement, South Africa”*** submitted for the Master's in Development Studies at the Centre for Development Support, University of the Free State, is my own independent work, and has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any institution.

Full Name: Wadzanai Faith Mkwanzani

Signature:

.....

Date:

.....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The successful completion of this dissertation is as a result of contributions from different individuals, whom I wish to acknowledge, with gratitude:

- I respect and thank my supervisor, Professor Melanie Walker, for granting me the opportunity to work on my dissertation under her guidance and support. I am grateful to her for introducing me to the capabilities approach. Her selfless sharing of knowledge and insights throughout the study has built in me an interest in social justice and higher education research.
- I am extremely fortunate and grateful to have received the research scholarship from the Centre for Higher Education and Capabilities Research (CHECaR). The funding made the completion of this dissertation possible.
- I am highly grateful to Doctor Sonja Loots for working through my drafts and providing valuable feedback throughout the writing process.
- I owe profound gratitude to my colleague, Oliver Mutanga, for dedicating time to go through my work and share ideas.
- I am thankful to the whole CHECaR research team for constant encouragement and support. My sincere thanks to Lucretia Smith for her timely support in administrative matters related to my study.
- I would not forget all the research participants who agreed to be interviewed, thereby making this study possible.

KEYWORDS

Access

Agency

Aspirations

Capability approach

Challenges

Conversion factors

Disadvantaged

Freedom

Higher education

Human development

Social justice

Vulnerable young people

Orange Farm

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CA – Capabilities approach

CBO – Community-based organisation

CHE – Council of Higher Education

DHET – Department of Higher Education and Training

DoE – Department of Education

HDR – Human Development Report

HE – Higher education

NGO – Non-governmental organisation

NPHE – National Plan for Higher Education

UNAIDS – United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNCRC – United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child

UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund

ABSTRACT

This study outlines the challenges for vulnerable young people in accessing higher education, based on a case study conducted at Orange Farm informal settlement. Statistics show that student enrolment in higher education (HE) institutions has dramatically increased over the past years, from 473 000 (CHE, 1999) in 1993 to 938 201 in 2011, a clear indication that HE is increasingly addressing issues of access. Despite these positive trends, which should greatly benefit previously marginalised communities, there are still marginalised groups in our society which we know little about. This study seeks to build wider awareness of one such group, vulnerable young people.

One way of highlighting what is needed by vulnerable young people to access HE is through the capabilities approach (CA). The CA addresses issues of aspirations, agency and conversion factors, and has been used to analyse the situation of deprived people and create policies that give them access to the necessary resources and the ability to make choices (Alkire, 2002). In approaching vulnerability, Misztal's (2011) three types of vulnerabilities, namely dependence on others, unpredictability and irreversibility will be used.

Since this study is concerned with individual attitudes, perceptions and opinions rather than statistics, the researcher adopted a qualitative approach. The primary data collection strategy was face-to-face interviews with selected young people living in care and with their caregivers. Two graduates were also interviewed to determine whether they experienced similar challenges than those faced by young people today. Participants were selected using purposive sampling. The findings from the data revealed little difference between the challenges that the young people are faced with currently and those experienced by graduates in the past.

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CORE ELEMENTS OF THE STUDY

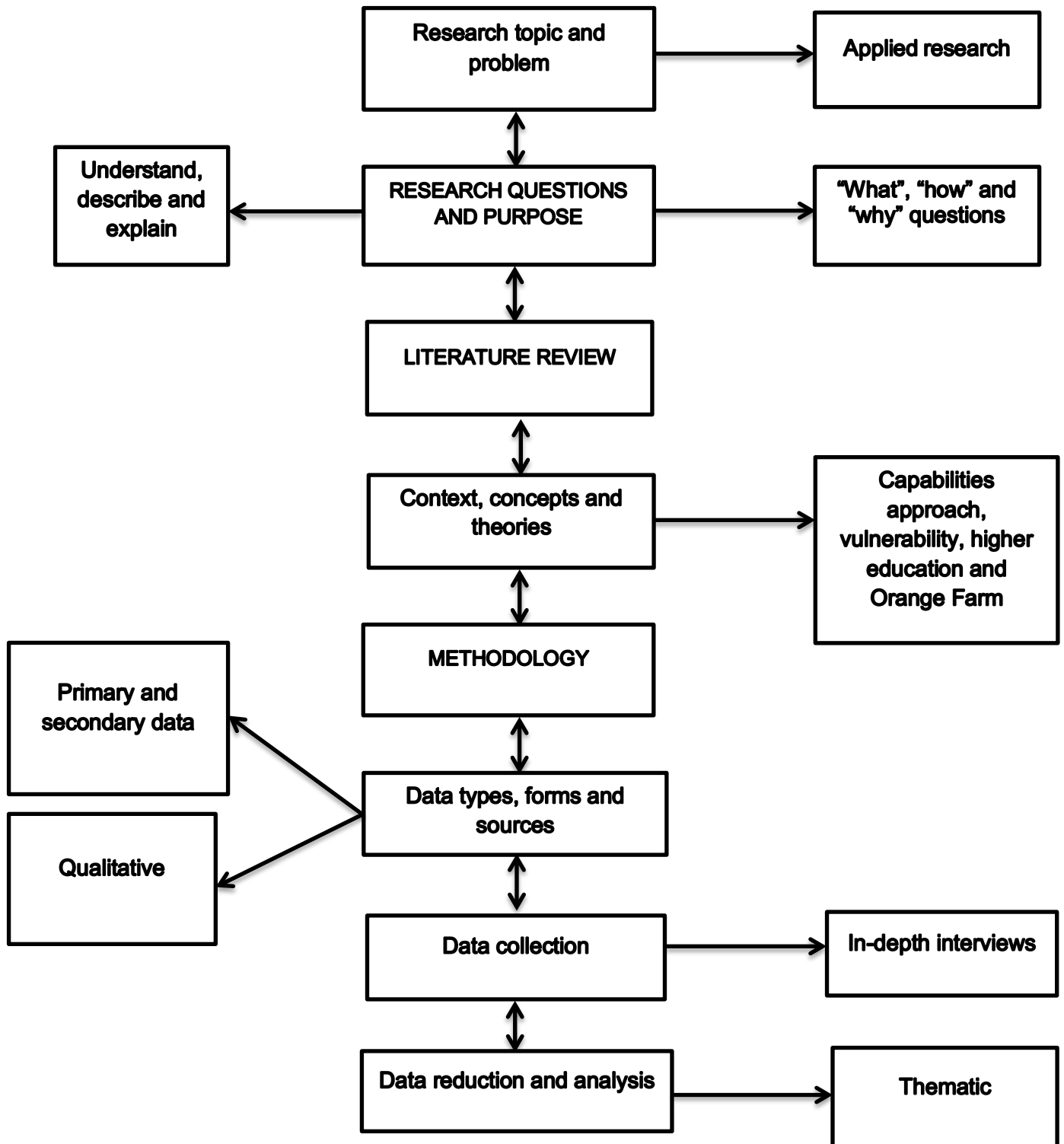


Figure 1: Core elements of the study

(Source: Blaikie, 2010:33)

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH PROBLEM

BACKGROUND

The United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS, 2004) estimated that the number of orphans at the end of 2003 was 2.2 million (12%) of all children in South Africa. The 2011 census data estimated the number of orphans had doubled since the previous census in 2001, with 3.37 million young people between 0 and 17 years of age orphaned as of October 2011 – about one orphan for every 15 people in the country (Statistics SA, 2012), and a clear indication that the problem is growing. As this population of vulnerable young people increases, concern over their development has become a priority in many countries. While their psychosocial well-being has been the central focus of most non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and government interventions, very little attention has been paid to enhancing their capability so that they can lead a life they have reason to value. Many vulnerable young people still have limited knowledge of and access to universities due to a number of reasons such as growing up in unsecure environments infested with disease, particularly HIV/AIDS, unemployment, war, political instability, and mass migration. These developments have left many young people orphaned, while millions of others remain vulnerable due to the effects of illness and poverty (UNICEF, 2003).

The subject of vulnerability has gained a great deal of attention over the past decade; however, studies have focused mainly on those orphaned because of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This highly specific focus has hampered the study and understanding of the many problems that all vulnerable young people face such as a lack of education (Subbarao & Coury, 2004; Motsepe, 2006; Osborn, 2007). Yet, according to the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the education of the child entails developing the child's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential (United Nations General Assembly, 1989).

Problem statement

The 2011 South African census results revealed that less than a third of South African citizens had completed Grade 12 and, by the age of 22, around 52.7% of youth were not attending an educational institution or working and were at risk of becoming unemployable and falling into systematic poverty (STATSSA, 2012).

Building on the above, the following problem statement was formulated for this study:

What are the challenges for vulnerable young people in accessing higher education (HE) in the Orange Farm informal settlement in South Africa?

Research argument

A number of government, NGO and community interventions have been employed to address the psychological needs of young people; however, little has been done to build their educational capabilities to help them become what they aspire to be. Psychosocial support is important for vulnerable young people in mediating the consequences of stressful life events and a lack of it may lead to problems such as crime, violence, teenage pregnancy and alcohol abuse (Bauman & Germann, 2005).

Since access to HE is one of the significant ways in which aspirations can be realised and capabilities enhanced, I argue that, specific focus only on the psychosocial and emotional well-being of young people is inadequate and fails to prepare young people fully for their future. Instead, the focus should shift to capability enhancement so that they can choose and lead lives they have reason to value.

Research aim and questions

Aim

The aim of this study is to describe and analyse the challenges of vulnerable young people in Orange Farm in accessing higher education.

Research questions

- What knowledge do vulnerable young people of Orange Farm have regarding HE?
- What are the young people's aspirations?
- What can be done to facilitate increased access to HE?

Value of the study

Very little research has emphasised the challenges that vulnerable young people experience in accessing HE in Orange Farm. In identifying the challenges, the results of this research study will be beneficial to:

Scholarship: The findings of the study will contribute to the body of knowledge on the accessibility of HE for vulnerable young people. Also, this study will contribute to the limited research that has applied the CA in addressing vulnerability and access to HE.

Orange Farm community: The results may inspire the community to create ways of addressing young people's needs pertaining to HE. The researcher hopes that the findings would inform the development of guidelines on supporting vulnerable children and indicate the nature of support needed by vulnerable young people.

Policy actors: The results will potentially help policy actors at local and other levels to gain insight into the nature of challenges faced by these young people.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

This dissertation comprises three sections. Section one introduces the study and provides background to the research argument and aim of the study. Section two provides the review of literature, conceptual orientation, context, and the theoretical framework. The last section, section three, focuses on the research design and methodology, presentation and analysis of the findings, as well as the recommendations and conclusion to the study. The chapters are organised as follows:

CHAPTER 1: Introduction and research problem

Chapter 1 provides background on the study, research problem, aim and objectives, as well as the value of the study.

CHAPTER 2: Literature review

Chapter 2 contains a review of relevant literature, including the definition of vulnerable young people. This chapter goes on to conceptualise vulnerability based on Barbra Misztal's three concepts of dependence on others, unpredictability of human action and irreversibility of past actions and experiences. Secondly, this chapter provides a contextual orientation to South African HE by briefly discussing

the current landscape and some of the major education policies that have been adopted over the years. The last section of the chapter gives the contextual orientation to Orange Farm.

CHAPTER 3: Theoretical framework

This chapter focuses on the emergence of mainstream development approaches and the capabilities approach, and ends with reviews of the literature on vulnerable young people's developmental needs. Special attention is paid to CA and education, human rights and social justice.

CHAPTER 4: Research design and methodology

Chapter 4 comprises an overview of the research design and the methods that were adopted for the empirical study. Motivations for qualitative research are also provided.

CHAPTER 5: Research findings and discussion

This chapter presents and analyses the data collected and shows how the CA framework, provided in chapter 3, was applied in the data analysis.

CHAPTER 6: Summary, recommendations and conclusion

Chapter 6 summarises the study and contains the recommendations, followed by the conclusion of the study.

CONCLUSION

This chapter introduced the readers to the research problem, and gave the background and rationale of the study. In the last section, I gave an overview of the chapter structure of the study. The next chapter offers the literature review and specifically provides a conceptual orientation to vulnerability. The last two sections provide contextual orientation to the current landscape of HE in South Africa, as well as an orientation to Orange Farm.

SECTION TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXT AND CONCEPTUAL ORIENTATION

The chapter starts with a discussion of the concept of vulnerability in the African context, as well as based on Barbra Misztal (2011). This is followed by a section that contextualises HE in South Africa by looking at the development of the education system since 1994 to the current landscape. Lastly, Orange Farm is described in order to orientate the reader regarding the context and landscape of the environment in which the study will take place.

VULNERABILITY

Defining “vulnerable young people”

There is no consensus as to the definition and categories of vulnerable young people. In most literature the definition of orphans and vulnerable young people has been coined in the light of the high number of children affected by HIV/AIDS (see Skinner et al, 2004; Foster et al, 2005). Conversely, the concept of “vulnerability” is not only used to identify young people, but also to define households that are poor (Mosser, 1998; Dercon & Krishnan, 2000; Ligon & Schechter, 2003). Though it remains important to deconstruct the generalisation of the concept, the merits of having a proper definition of vulnerable young people helps track their welfare and assists organisations and governments in directing interventions such as access to HE.

In 2007, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2007) estimated that approximately 20 million young people under the age of 18 had been left without parents due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, of which over half were living in sub-Saharan Africa. Between 1998 and 2005, approximately 3.8 million people lost their lives due to direct conflict and effects of the war (such as starvation and illness) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Ugarriza, 2007:65), leaving behind thousands of vulnerable young people and households.

As far as South Africa is concerned, the country's 2010 General Household Survey indicated approximately 3.84 million orphans, equivalent to 21% of all children in South Africa. This number had increased, with 845 000 more orphaned children in

2010 than in 2002, which is a 28% increase (General Household Survey, 2010). This highlights the need for urgent action to provide specific services to this group.

Various international conventions and other instruments of action have been put into place over the last two decades. For example, the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection, and Development of Children is a commitment to protect the rights of children and improve their lives.

In light of the definition of “vulnerable young people”, the next section introduces Barbra Misztal’s three types of vulnerability.

Conceptualising vulnerability

According to Misztal (2011:1), the term “vulnerability” stems from the Latin word for “wound” (*vulnus*) and has, for a long time, been defined in many different and unclear ways proving its multidimensionality and the need to approach the term in an interdisciplinary way. Traditionally, the term has been used to describe the powerless, precarious condition that limits the physical ability of the body, and requires protection, especially for the young with special needs (Misztal, 2011:2). The World Bank (2000) defines vulnerability as the present probability or risk of being in poverty or falling into deeper poverty in the future. The concept is also used to highlight defencelessness, insecurity, exposure to risks, and other forms of marginalisation (Chambers, 2006:1). Although it still lacks a developed theory and accepted methods of measurement, certain indicators such as a lack of access to shelter and education can be used to determine the extent of vulnerability (Chambers, 2006; UNAIDS, 2004). Misztal (2011) lists three forms of major vulnerability: dependence on others, unpredictability and irreversibility.

Dependence on others

This form of vulnerability can be defined in terms of the goods or things that one values and whose care one partially entrusts to someone else who has some discretion over one. In essence, the concerned individual’s interests are affected fundamentally by other people’s actions and choices (Misztal, 2011). This form of vulnerability is relevant, especially since young people depend on parents for their chances of receiving a better education, for instance. The choices that are taken by those who surround young people do have direct and indirect, long-term and short-term consequences.

Unpredictability

The unpredictability of human experience and action is an unavoidable feature of human condition and is manifested in the form of uncertainty, insecurity and fear of the future. People differ in their vulnerability to the unpredictability of action, largely because the reliability of social support networks also varies (Miszta, 2011:75). There are various reasons for the unpredictability of human experience and why the character of human action is inherently unpredictable. Firstly, each individual is different in his or her own way. Secondly, people's assurances regarding their future actions are unreliable due to the nature¹ of the human heart and, lastly, individuals are naturally unable to predict the consequences of future actions.

The concepts of dependence on others and unpredictability are valuable when analysing young people who are still dependent on guardians for their well-being.

Irreversibility

Irreversibility of past sufferings and painful experiences cannot be undone and "endows a life with past pains" and sufferings which limits people's capacity for self-protection, cooperation and individuality (Miszta, 2011:95). This form of vulnerability can be seen as a narrative of trauma that resulted from other people's wrongdoings. It points out that all people have, at some point in their life, experienced pain caused by harmful actions of other people. For example, none of us is immune to crime, which makes us all vulnerable, but there are also some individual experiences such as living in absolute poverty.

In this study the concept of vulnerability will highlight aspects of disadvantage, access to HE and poverty for orphaned young people, who are viewed as vulnerable in the study. The next section looks at the context of HE in South Africa.

CONTEXTUALISING HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Before the new South African political dispensation in 1994, access to HE was deliberately inequitable for all black students regardless of social status (see Sehoole, 2005; Bunting, 1994). After the attainment of democracy in 1994, various approaches to improve access to HE for previously marginalised groups were adopted. The national government identified the increase of access as an issue of

¹ "Unpredictability stems from darkness of the human heart" (Arendt, 1958, in Miszta, 2011:76).

priority, and an inclusive education system drove a radical restructuring within a framework of policies and regulations discussed below.

The South African Constitution

The South African Constitution cannot be understood without a historical analysis contextualising its evolution (Motala & Pampallis, 2001:16) as indicated by the preamble:

We the people of South Africa,

Recognise the injustices of our past;

Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land;

Respect those who have worked to build and develop our country; and

Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.

We therefore, through our freely elected representatives, adopt this Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic so as to-

Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;

Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by the law;

Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each citizen... (RSA Constitution, 1996: Preamble).

The Constitution entrenches a Bill of Rights that addresses the right to equality, freedom and education (Motala & Pampallis, 2001:16). The right to education set out in Section 29(1) is particularly relevant to this study:

Everyone has a right:

- a. To basic education, including adult basic education, and*
- b. To further education which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible.*

In addition to the Constitution, the 1997 White Paper on Education and Training attempted to further address previous inequalities.

The White Paper on Education and Training (1997)

The 1997 White Paper sets itself against a background which had distorted patterns of access to education and maintains that the central responsibility of provision of education and training lies with the state (Greenstein & Mabogoane, 2003). It further mentions the need to transform the HE system to serve a new social order. It does not, however, provide a breakdown of the social groups that exist within societies and the challenges that sections of particular social groups might be faced with in their endeavour to access HE.

Following on the White Paper, the government promulgated the Higher Education Act.

The Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997)

The Higher Education Act lays the foundations for a unified, equitable and well-planned system with the aim of overcoming the mismatch between HE output and economic and social development demands (Subotzky, 2000:110). The special emphasis in the Higher Education Act is on addressing past discriminatory practices and establishing transformation programmes that are able to improve human resources, economic development and other developmental needs of the citizens. According to Motala and Pampallis (2001), the Education White Paper 3, which preceded the Act, lists the following principles as guidelines to the transformation of HE institutions: equity, democratisation, development, quality, effectiveness-efficiency, and academic freedom.

Similarly, the 2001 National Plan for Higher Education also facilitates the democratic transformation of the national system of education to one which addresses the needs and interest of the citizens and upholds their fundamental rights.

The 2001 National Plan for Higher Education

The National Plan outlines the framework for implementing and realising the goals of the White Paper. It mentions increasing graduate outputs and the issue of equity and diversity. One of the strategic objectives is to provide access to HE to all, irrespective of gender, race, age, class and disability. It also emphasises the need to promote equity of access and to redress past inequalities so that student profiles reflect the demographic realities of the country (NPHE, 2001).

With the necessary instruments and frameworks in place to address access to HE, the National Development Plan, Vision for 2030, was formulated to develop and improve capabilities, including education and training.

The 2012 National Development Plan

The aim of the National Development Plan 2030 is to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. In order to realise this, South Africa, through the collaboration between the public and private sectors, as well participation of all South Africans, intends to translate political emancipation into economic well-being for all. Specific focus will be on human capabilities including education, health, social protection and community safety (National Development Plan, 2012). Against this background, the critical element I wish to pursue is that, notwithstanding all that has been done in creating a transformed and equitable HE system, the need remains to vigorously address access to HE for the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of society.

This section of the chapter gave a background of the South African education system as well as the current education landscape, and outlined some of the relevant policies and frameworks. The next section gives an orientation to Orange Farm.

ORANGE FARM

This research focuses on school-going young people in Orange Farm informal settlement in the Gauteng Province. Orange Farm is one of the most under-developed settlements in South Africa, situated approximately 45 kilometres south of Johannesburg's central business district. It is home to a predominantly black population, with 40% under the age of 18 (Public Citizen, 2004:8).

Established in 1988 by the Transvaal Provincial Administration, Orange Farm has become one of the biggest and most populous informal settlements in the country, as well as one of Johannesburg's most geographically isolated communities (City of Johannesburg, 2011). Its first inhabitants were from Wielers farm in the Grasmere area, most of whom were laid-off farm workers. Despite little development in the area, the settlement has, over the years, attracted many homeless people from nearby townships, parts of the Free State and other provinces as far as the Eastern Cape. Current estimates place the population at over 1.3 million people (Onyango, 2010).

Orange Farm faces numerous challenges such as high levels of poverty; low literacy levels; a lack of access to justice and health facilities; a lack of consultation between the local government and the community members; high levels of alcohol-related violence; and a lack of employment, which leads to increased crime (Foundation for Human Rights, 2013).

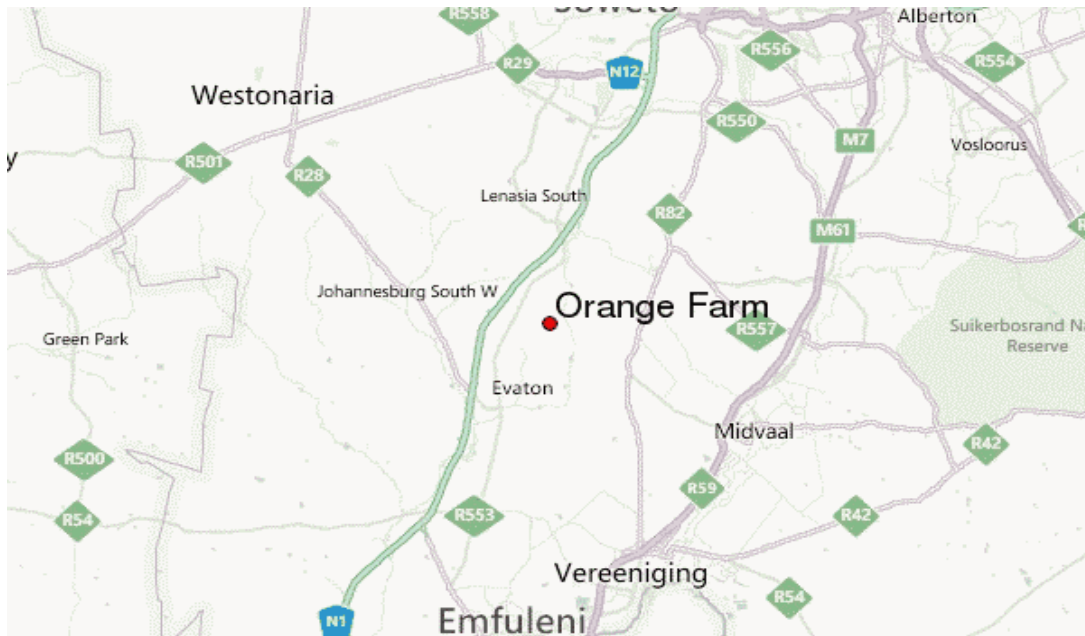


Figure 2: Map of Orange Farm (Source: Google maps, 2013)

Poverty

South Africa remains one of the highest ranking countries in the world in terms of income inequality and still has most of its citizens living in poverty (World Bank Report, 2006; Whiteford et al, 1995). Like “vulnerability”, the term “poverty” is complex and multidimensional (Misztal, 2011) and manifests itself in a wide spectrum such as hunger, poor health and isolation (Onyango 2010). In Orange Farm, 29% of the households rely solely on government grants, 50% of the households do some income-related work (informal, self-employment and formal), while not many residents have formal training (Public Citizen, 2004:10). Figure 3 shows a shack made from corrugated iron sheets in Orange Farm, which is the type of housing for a most of the Orange Farm residents.



Figure 3: Shack dwelling

(Source: http://www.joburg.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&id=932&Itemid=52)

Most of the unemployed are absorbed into informal activities such as hawking, and running fruit and vegetable stalls (see figures 4 and 5). These are some of the ways in which residents receive income through the informal sector.



Figure 4: A horse-drawn cart used for coal business (Source: Author, 2013)

The coal is sold to the community and is used for different purposes, including cooking.



Figure 5: A fruit and vegetable stall (Source: Author, 2013)

The extreme levels of poverty and unemployment bring about social problems such as alcohol and substance abuse, crime, poor housing, and high prevalence of HIV/AIDS.

HIV/AIDS prevalence in Orange Farm

The community has a high prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS and research (Onyango, 2010) estimates that, by the late 2000s, many people had lost their lives, leaving behind thousands of vulnerable young people. Owing to the government's policy on child grants,² many girls fall pregnant intentionally in order to access higher amounts of grants. Table 1 shows how the number of people receiving the child support grant has increased rapidly over a period of 10 years, indicating the continued poverty.

Table 1: Number of beneficiaries of social grants

Number of beneficiaries of social grants in 1999 and 2008 in South Africa		
	1999	2008
Old age grant	1 812 695	2 225 354
Disability grant	633 778	1 409 434
Child support grant	34 471	8 189 914
Foster care grant	71 901	446 994

(Source: Van Der Berg & Siebrits, 2010:38)

² Government's aid aimed at assisting unemployed mothers.

Education

Because of poverty, few people proceed to HE in Orange Farm. Table 2 shows the level of HE in Orange Farm.

Table 2: Highest level of education by age for person weighted, Orange Farm

Highest level of education by age for person weighted, Orange Farm									
AGE RANGE	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90+
Certificate with Grade 12	33	78	26	15	3	-	-	-	-
Diploma with Grade 12	24	119	60	42	3	3	-	-	-
Bachelor's degree	10	21	13	7	-	-	3	-	-
Bachelor's degree and diploma	3	6	7	5	-	-	-	-	-
Honours degree	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Master's or doctorate	-	4	-	4	-	3	-	-	-

(Source: Onyango, 2010:87)

As illustrated by the table, there are 111 people with ages between 11 and 30 with a certificate and Grade 12.

Developments

Despite other challenges, there has been significant development in Orange Farm over the last few years (Habitat for Humanity, 2013), including a new library, some paved roads, an information centre and a community centre for different purposes. Figures 6 and 7 show some of the latest developments in the area. Some of the developments, however, came with financial costs, which most of the residents cannot afford, for example, the forced installation of prepaid water meters.³ A research respondent interviewed by the Public Citizen indicated that she always has to buy water with her last money for food (Public Citizen, 2004:16). Some respondents said that this installation was a violation of human rights and human dignity (Public Citizen, 2004).

³ There are several types of prepaid water meters, though they all serve one goal. The main idea is that, if you cannot pay upfront, you are not able to access water (Public Citizens' Water for All Programme, 2004).



Figure 6: The Orange Farm Leisure Park (Source: City of Johannesburg, 2011)



Figure 7: The Ridge Walk Leisure Space in Orange Farm

(Source: City of Johannesburg, 2011)

CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the concept of vulnerability and referred to the three types of vulnerability. It gave a background to the South African education landscape and briefly discussed some of the policies and frameworks that are applicable to this

landscape. The chapter concluded with a background to the study site, its history, challenges and development. Chapter 3 now discusses the emergence of mainstream development approaches and introduces the CA framework adopted for this study.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Chapter 2 formed the literature review section and introduced the concept of vulnerability. It provided a context of the South African HE system, with particular attention paid to the current landscape and the policies adopted to address access and inclusion issues. Lastly, it provided an orientation to Orange Farm and discussed some of the challenges faced by that community. This chapter now provides the theoretical framework of the study. Adopted as the main theoretical foundation for the study, the capabilities approach (CA) will be discussed as an alternative development framework to mainstream development approaches. The CA discussion is aligned to vulnerability and HE, which are other core ideas of this study. Lastly, Young's (1990) five faces of oppression will be discussed as a social justice theory complementary to the CA, and will inform the recommendations and conclusions in chapter 6.

BACKGROUND TO MAINSTREAM DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES

For decades, mainstream development has focused on economic growth instead of people growth, which has led to criticism as issues of mass poverty and sustainability were neglected (Brohman, 1996). In the early 1990s elements of mainstream development were still visible in structural adjustment programmes. For example, the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Programme (GEAR) in South Africa in 1996, and the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in Zimbabwe in 1991, focused on the growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the respective countries.

According to Pieterse (2000), for development to no longer be seen as simply GDP growth but as a more appropriate goal and measure, alternative development practices were necessary. In this regard, four alternative approaches to development emerged, which are discussed below.

Participatory approach to development

A number of actors have played a significant part in the evolution of alternative development approaches. According to Chisinga (2003), the state should encourage effective participation by citizens and community groups in activities which complement and reinforce national objectives. However, Botes and Van Rensburg (2000) claim that conflicting interest groups within beneficiary communities is one of

the challenges to community participation, because some interests are accommodated only at the expense of others. This domination by some limits the individual freedoms and autonomy of others to make genuine choices and contributions.

Basic needs approach

The basic needs approach achieved clearer outcomes by setting specific production targets and deriving the desirable rate of economic growth implied (Emmerij, 2010). Development following the basic needs approach does not fully focus on economically productive activities that will help a society fend for itself in the future; rather it focuses on allowing the society to consume just enough to rise above the poverty line and meet its basic needs; hence focusing on subsistence more than fairness (Emmerij, 2010). According to Reader (2006), the basic needs approach is deemed limited in expanding individual freedoms and agency. It emphasises material needs and fails to capture issues of individual freedom and the opportunity to live a life that an individual has reason to value, which is highlighted by the CA.

Human centred approach

The human centred approach came into being as a response to traditional mainstream thinking with its focus on GDP. According to UNESCO (2012) a human centred approach advances the integration of cultural diversity into the sustainable development priorities by taking into account the complexities of different societies. This approach should be seen as development that empowers individuals and communities to be agents of their own development (UNESCO, 2012). Though it highlights the importance of freedom and agency, this approach does not sufficiently interrogate other concepts such as human diversity and influences of external environments (e.g. social, economic) which are critical concepts when addressing vulnerability in this study.

Human scale development

This approach is based on a view that human beings are driven by a limitless craving for material possessions. The major contribution provided by Max-Neef (1991) is his view that human needs are few, finite and classifiable, and that they are constant through all human cultures and across historical time periods. Max-Neef (1991) classifies the fundamental human needs as subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, recreation, creation, identity and freedom, and classifies

these in categories of being, having, doing, and interacting. This approach is helpful in identifying human needs; however, it does not take into account the capabilities needed to satisfy these needs. In addition, viewing human needs as constant and finite fails to capture the influence of different contexts and environments on each individual's needs.

Though modified over time, the above approaches are concerned specifically with the state's establishing extensive administration and political control over various aspects of development and not with the true needs of the individual citizens. This saw the emergence of the CA with its emphasis on the real freedoms and opportunities for people to become what they want to become. Therefore, in dealing with vulnerability, the mainstream development approaches miss some of the important aspects of development, which the CA addresses.

THE CAPABILITIES APPROACH

Economist Amartya Sen (1992, 1999a & 2002) disputed mainstream development approaches with its sole focus on income and wealth. He introduced a new way of thinking which argued for increased income to be viewed as a means to improve human welfare, rather than an end in itself. A normative framework, the CA is concerned with the freedoms individuals have to achieve beings and doings they have reason to value (well-being) (Sen, 1999a; Hart, 2009).

Well-being is described by Robeyns (2003a:7) in terms of people's effective opportunities to undertake the actions and activities they want to engage in and to be who they want to be. The CA has been advanced by Martha Nussbaum (1993 & 2003) and, subsequently, by other scholars in specialised areas of development such as gender equality (Robeyns, 2005), education (Walker, 2006; Hart, 2013), social justice and human rights (Sen, 2009; Nussbaum, 2000b, 2011), human development (Alkire, 2002) and disadvantage (Wolff & De-Shalit, 2007 & 2013).

In contrast to the basic needs approach, the CA goes beyond achievements to focus on opportunities and capabilities instead of resources. In its simplest form, the CA concepts are interlinked as shown in figure 8.

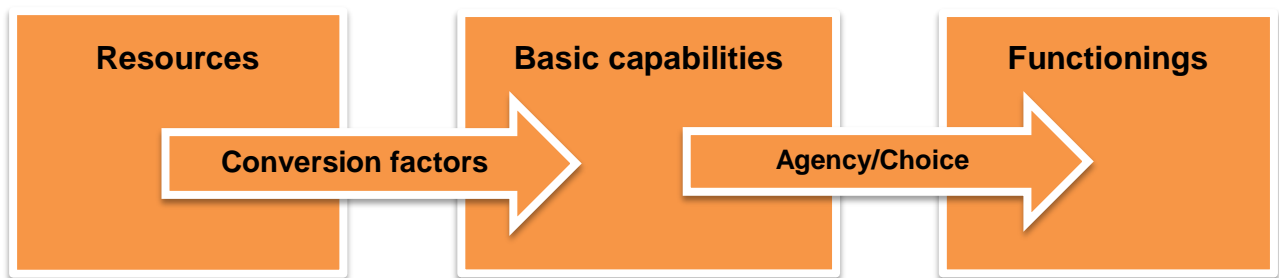


Figure 8: The core concepts of capabilities

There are different perspectives within the CA. Nussbaum (2005:14) gives a general list⁴ of what she identifies as the ten core central capabilities that should be incorporated in all constitutions and regards them as important entitlements (rights) that all humans should have. Though Nussbaum's and Sen's views are closely related, Sen (1999a) disputes the idea of endorsing a list of capabilities, stating that communities should come up with their own lists through a deliberation process. He highlights the concepts of "agency" and "freedom", arguing that when evaluating well-being it is vital to look at the real opportunities (capabilities) that an individual has in order to lead a valued life. In other words, the quality of life that an individual enjoys is not only about what he or she achieves, but also about the options that he or she had the opportunity to choose from (Sen, 1999a).

Regardless of these differences, the essence of the CA is that its core concepts focus on the development of individual well-being. Below I discuss the interaction of the CA with the concepts, geographical context, and objective of this study.

Why the CA for this study?

Firstly, functionings and capabilities are properties of individuals; hence, the CA is an ethically individualistic theory, meaning that each person is taken into account in normative judgements (Robeyns, 2003b:65). By applying social and environmental conversion factors, one is able to account for a number of societal influences such as community agency and cultural influences on aspirations. Secondly, the CA does not assume that all individuals have the same utility functions; rather, it acknowledges human diversity, such as geographical location and other

⁴ 1. Life. 2. Bodily health. 3. Bodily integrity. 4. Senses, imagination and thought. 5. Emotions. 6. Practical reason. 7. Affiliation. 8. Other species. 9. Play. 10. Control over one's environment.

interpersonal characteristics (Robeyns, 2003b:66). In addition, it seeks input from poor and vulnerable populations in order to generate contextualised data which reflect individuals' capabilities, interpretations of freedom and the values they ascribe to their lives (Srinivasin, 1994). These understandings of vulnerability and the challenges faced by the young people will allow for the field of development to herald new insights into poverty and the developmental gaps that still exist in other sectors of the community.

Lastly, due to its recognition of interpersonal and intercultural variations, and focus on freedoms and agency, the CA is a suitable framework for analysing the aspirations, access issues and challenges that vulnerable young people are facing. The CA concepts shown in figure 9 are all essential to this study; they direct the study by highlighting how each factor plays a role in understanding the challenges young people experience. The next section focuses on how these concepts relate to the issues of vulnerability, HE and the context of Orange Farm that were discussed in chapter 2.

Resources

These are the resources that individuals possess, for instance money, material goods or skills. The CA is close to resource-based metrics (Robeyns, 2011) because many functionings require resources for them to be achieved. For example, access to education requires resources such as money (for tuition, books and other related costs), and these vary from individual to individual. But the CA goes beyond resources to take other aspects into account as well.

Basic capabilities

Nussbaum (2000a:84) refers to basic capabilities as the "innate equipment" of individuals needed to develop advanced capabilities such as the capability of speech, language, eye sight and hearing, which influence where and how an individual accesses education. For example, blind individuals would require specialised facilities in their learning; therefore, they would need to identify an institution that offers the specialised services. Dubois and Trani (2009) assert that our capability sets influence what we are capable of being and doing through the realisation of functionings. Sen (1992:45), on the other hand, identifies basic capabilities as a subset of all capabilities that have the "ability to satisfy certain elementary and crucially important functionings up to a certain level". In other words,

it refers to the freedom to have access to basic things that are considered necessary for survival, for example, basic education, health and shelter which are necessary for the survival of human beings.

Functionings

Functionings are the different states of beings and doings that an individual can undertake (Sen, 1999a; Robeyns, 2011), for example, *being able* to access higher education. Functionings and capabilities cannot be separated; while learning (at an HE institution) is a functioning, the real opportunity (access) to learn is the corresponding capability. According to Walker (2005), the realisation of these functionings is dependent on individual and institutional conditions and contexts. These factors can, to a large extent, influence individual functionings; thus, the three concepts of vulnerability highlighted by Misztal (2011) can, for the purpose of this study, be understood as a deprivation of resources and capabilities that affects functionings.

Conversion factors

Conversion factors form the personal (e.g. age, gender, sex), environmental (physical environment and geographical location), and social (policies, social norms, class or race) conditions of each individual's existence (Robeyns, 2005:99). According to Sen's (1992:160) illustration, we may be interested in a bicycle not because of its colour or shape, but because it can take us to places we want to go in a faster way than walking. However, two individuals may not have the capability to utilise the bicycle effectively and efficiently in the same way due to their ability/inability to ride it. Thus, the bicycle may not provide the same function on enhancing mobility for the two different individuals. It might be effective for the individual who has been taught how to ride it, and not be effective for the one who does not know how to ride. Thus, the CA accounts for interpersonal variations in the conversion of available resources into functions. In doing so, it acknowledges *human diversity* (Sen, 1992) as an important factor not addressed by mainstream development approaches. The CA takes into account human diversity by focusing on (1) the plurality of functionings and capabilities as important evaluative indicators; these wide dimensions of well-being include some dimension that may be of importance to some groups of people than others; and (2) personal and socio-environmental conversion factors that makes it possible to convert resources into

functionings, considering that each individual has a unique profile of conversion factors (Robeyns, 2011).

According to Robeyns (2003b), these interpersonal variations in conversion factors can occur due to different personal and socio-environmental factors. This diversity is of importance to Sen (1992) as a fundamental of the CA's interest in equality. In the same notion, Sen (2009) acknowledges the influence of social arrangements on capabilities, an acknowledgement that is reflected in Stern and Seifert's (2013) argument that people's capabilities are influenced by social ecology. In this study, the location of Orange Farm influences the social and economic activities that take place in the area which, in turn, affect the young people's aspirations, opportunities and human agency.

Agency

The CA emphasises the role of freedom and choice in achieving one's capabilities. Sen (1999a) uses the example of two starving individuals. One of them is starving because he is fasting, thus doing it by choice, while the other is starving because of the inability to acquire enough food to feed himself, which is not by choice. In both scenarios, the two individuals are being fed insufficiently and so are not achieving the functioning. The individual who is fasting is doing this by choice; hence is exercising his agency, whereas the one who is starving lacks the capability to feed himself. Therefore, *agency* is seen as the freedom (agency freedom) to bring about one's achievements (Sen, 1992). This agency is identified by Griffin as allowing for an individual to autonomously deliberate, choose and act on what he or she perceives as a good life (Griffin, 2008). Without this agency, it would be a challenge to bring about any actions necessary for a "moral and purposeful life" (Liao, 2010:16).

Metric of interpersonal comparisons

Functionings and capabilities are a good metric of interpersonal evaluations (Robeyns, 2011). Functionings are the proposed conceptualisation for interpersonal comparisons of well-being, whereas capabilities are the conceptualisation for interpersonal comparisons of the freedom to pursue well-being. These metrics are conceptualised based on each individual's capability to function, that is, the opportunities to undertake actions and activities they have reason to value, and be

who they want to be (as can be seen in the form of individual aspirations). The beings and doings constitute what makes a life valuable.

The means–ends distinction

The CA does not focus solely on ends, but on the idea of whether individuals are put in the conditions in which they can pursue their ultimate ends (Robeyns, 2011). For example, being able to access HE could be seen not as an ultimate end in itself, since ultimate ends are more specific such as being educated in an individual's preferred programme (e.g. *graduating to be a doctor is an ultimate end, while access to HE is the means*). In more precise terms, the individual is educated, literate and able to hold a decent job. It is up to the individual to decide whether to become a family health practitioner or general medical practitioner. Therefore, the focus of the CA is whether a person has these capabilities in general terms.

With regard to the above CA concepts, Nussbaum (2000b) further articulates her position on the normative aspect of capabilities by relating them to human rights, understood both as “political and civil liberties and as economic and social rights” (Nussbaum, 2000b:97). But, she argues, that capabilities are required to secure these human rights to people so that capabilities goes beyond legal rights to the actual realisation of these rights.

CA, HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The works of both Nussbaum (2011) and Sen (2009) continue to influence discussions on social and other facets of justice. Nussbaum (2011) notes that capabilities and human rights go hand in hand – the language of capabilities gives important precision to and supplementation to the language of rights (Nussbaum, 2003). Though the CA does not provide explicit principles of justice, it offers a convincing formulation of the social goal of getting citizens above the capability threshold (Nussbaum, 2000b:5). She maintains that the political dimension of capabilities provides the philosophical underpinning for basic constitutional principles and, in that way, plays a role similar to that of human rights (Nussbaum, 2006:48-51). Figure 9 illustrates the interrelationships of CA, human rights and social justice.

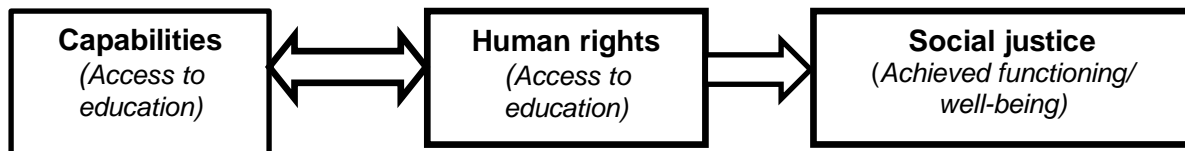


Figure 9: The interrelationship between capabilities, human rights and social justice

Simply put, the illustration shows that if human rights are not upheld for any individual, that individual is deprived of his or her capabilities, resulting in injustice. Because the CA is not a full theory of justice (Sen, 2009), the theory outlined by Young (1990) on oppression is also employed in this study, with particular focus on what she identifies as the five faces of oppression. These five faces are explored regarding the way they intersect in identifying and dealing with the challenges of access to HE experienced by young people.

Iris Marion Young on social justice

Iris Marion Young (1990) views justice as not only referring to distribution, but also to the institutional conditions necessary for the development and exercise of individual capacities and collective communication and cooperation. As the CA is centred in freedoms and opportunities of individuals, the idea of oppression by Young (1990) complements the CA. Referring to the example of the bicycle, if the two individuals who have the same resource but cannot utilise the resource to enhance the functioning equally, it becomes important to identify the limits the other individual is experiencing in fully utilising the resource. The example of the bicycle is a relevant description of the inadequacy of distributive policies, of which Young (1990) argues that distribution of resources may not benefit all in society equally. In this case, the disadvantaged groups suffer oppression. Young argues that oppression needs to guide discussions on social justice, and justice ought to be viewed as the absence of oppression (Eisenberg, 2006). It is against this argument that she identifies five faces of oppression: exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence (Young, 1990). These are discussed below.

Exploitation

Exploitation is often evident in social class systems that separate and classify individuals or certain groups of society. This type of classification leads those with power to discriminate against those without power and to benefit from the labour of the less dominant group.

Marginalisation

Marginalisation occurs when a group is pushed to the outer edge of society and expelled from useful participation in social and economic life and, as such, deprived of basic resources. When a group is deprived of access to resources, they cannot convert their capabilities into functionings. Young (1990) perceives this to be the most dangerous form of oppression as it restricts whole groups of people from participating actively in social life; thus, subjecting them to material deprivation.

Powerlessness

Powerlessness is oppression that results from a lack of “authority or power” (Young, 1990:56). This lack of power restricts people’s decision-making powers, inhibiting them to fully develop their capabilities. In many instances, the less powerful group lacks opportunities because of low levels of education compared to those who are educated.

Cultural imperialism

This refers to the universalization of a dominant group’s experience and culture, and its establishment as the norm. According to Young (1990), this usually happens unconsciously, but is often challenged when the dominant groups come into contact with other groups.

Violence

Young (1990:61) views this type of oppression as “systemic” because it is directed at members of a social group simply because they are members of that group. This violence is said to be instituted in various circles, for instance gender, race and religion, or in the form of xenophobia. Beatings, intimidation and harassment are forms of violence, which does not only refer to physical hurt, but to any situation that destroys, humiliates or ridicules a person.

On the foundation of the above faces, Young (1990) defines injustice as primarily two forms of disabling constraints, namely oppression and domination, and proposes that oppressed groups be given power regarding specific policies that affect them directly. The use of Young’s approach to social justice in this study complements the CA towards a full social justice theory. Arguably, these five faces of oppression justify the claims of social justice in the context of Orange Farm (environmental, social, and economic) as seen in chapter 2. Further, the five faces of oppression can be viewed as *influencing opportunities* and as the *cause of an outcome*; therefore,

allowing for both an outcome and opportunity theory of the injustices of access, with specific regard to functionings and the opportunities for development available to young people.

CA and vulnerable young people

In their work, Sen (1999a) and Nussbaum (2001) emphasise development as a process of widening individual capabilities and promoting the valuable functioning of people, and so expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy (Sen, 1999a). With human development and capabilities, people expand their potential and freedoms and enjoy a decent quality of life that they value (Alkire, 2009). The human development approach (HDA) calls for broadening the informational base on poverty by investigating the deprivation of functionings and capabilities that create freedom (HDR, 1990). In this sense, human development is essential for upholding human rights. It is, therefore, reasonable to suggest that vulnerable groups do need interventions in areas that can contribute to their development and capability enhancement.

CA and vulnerability

According to Dubois and Rousseau (2008), dealing with vulnerability requires that we consider capability as ability and potentiality. In this context, the CA is linked to Misztal's three forms of vulnerability. Dependence on others limits individual freedom, for example, economic dependence poses the threat of future poverty. The CA argues that individuals are poor if they do not have the freedom to achieve their goals of well-being and if they are vulnerable. The vulnerability of irreversibility can be linked to capability deprivation caused by a multitude of factors such as family background and poverty. Unpredictability of human actions can be linked to any unforeseen influences on future well-being and functioning of individuals, resulting in the inability to tell what one will be able to do and be in the future.

The relevance of the CA to the vulnerability of young people is that it provides a framework which assesses their potential for living the lives they have reason to value. It also helps identify the possibilities they have for the future.

Takayanagi (2010) conducted a study on the views of orphans and vulnerable young people regarding education in an urban slum in Zambia. He found that, despite the challenges these young people faced, all of them aspired to be successful in future

and all hoped to help improve the situation in the slum with their acquired skills. This indicates that using the CA in vulnerability settings provides an opportunity for individuals to engage with their communities and values and, at the same time, discover whether they are equipped with the capabilities and opportunities to change their situations. In addition, using the CA in his study gave young people a voice as well as the opportunity to reflect on their future.

CA and education

Education has been at the core of the CA from the start (Nussbaum, 2011). It forms people's existing capacities into developed capabilities and expands human freedoms (Walker, 2005). The 1990 Human Development Report (HDR, 1990:10) identifies human development as a process of "enlarging people's choices and the level of their achieved wellbeing", with one of the choices being educated and enjoying a decent standard of living. The report notes two facets of human development: the formation of human capabilities, and the use of the acquired capabilities (HDR, 1990), which can be enabled *through education*.

Similarly, in their separate studies on the CA and education, Walker (2006) and Hart (2009) describe how the approach would be of benefit to education in relation to an individual's well-being. Walker (2005) identifies education as influential in the process of identity formation, in other words, choosing to be a certain kind of person rather than another (e.g. choosing to be a doctor rather than a teacher). On its own, education is seen as a fertile functioning – it contributes to the development of other human capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011) and sets a foundation for other capabilities (Unterhalter, 2002). Promoting access to education for young people will, therefore, contribute to building their concrete set of capabilities (such as the ability to read and write), as well as condition them in a way in which they can pursue their ultimate ends.

Using the CA in her study "What can young people tell us about promoting equality and inclusion through widening participation in higher education in England?", Hart (2008) found that promoting the capability to aspire in a supportive environment provided a starting point for young people, which is a necessary dimension for my study, taking into account the environmental context of the study. She highlighted the ability of the CA to inform educational policies and practices that can enhance the

capacity of young people to determine, pursue and achieve their aspirations (Hart, 2008). In this way, their potential to reduce vulnerability is developed (Dubois & Rousseau, 2008).

Why HE for vulnerable young people?

The importance of post school education is that it has both intrinsically⁵ and instrumentally⁶ valuable dimensions; thus, it encompasses both personal and economic development (Walker, 2010). These dimensions enhance individual satisfaction and the equality of opportunities to participate in economic activities. According to Walker (2005), it is possible for education practitioners to help young people expand their capabilities so that they can make informed decisions about their lives. Kelly (2005:71) notes that education is critical for development as it restores lost confidence, leverages significant improvements in the lives of young people and prepares them for adult responsibilities.

With regard to employability, young people who have completed only secondary schooling do not necessarily perform well in finding employment in general; their poor education limits their chances of being employed (Mlatsheni & Rospabe, 2002). Therefore, the high demands of skilled labour as a result of technological advancement (Lam et al, 2008) call for higher levels of education to improve employment chances (World Bank, 2007), while a high rate of unemployment calls for a “strong case for further studies even for those that do have a matric certificate” (Lam et al, 2008:3).

Another important dimension of HE is that it helps young people to realise their own aspirations for life and build their capabilities (Kelly, 2005). The majority of the young people in Takayanagi’s (2010) study indicated that they wanted to get an education for a better life, followed by those who wanted to realise their own dreams. The realisation of childhood aspirations is supported by Appadurai’s (2004) notion that better educated people have wider horizons and aspirations, which is a fertile functioning (Wolff & De-Shalit, 2013) that has the potential to lift them out of poverty.

⁵ Being educated is a valuable achievement in itself and the opportunity to be educated is of importance to an individual’s freedom (Dreze & Sen, 1999).

⁶ Education can help an individual do many things that are valuable, such as increasing employment opportunities (Dreze & Sen, 1999).

This instrumental importance of education is reinforced by Walker's (2010) assertion on the importance of HE in bringing forth social change directed toward justice.

CONCLUSION

The last two chapters reviewed the literature on HE, vulnerability, mainstream development approaches and the CA. Chapter 3 discussed the need for human development and showed the link between human development and the CA. I linked the CA to the context of this study and, by doing so, laid a foundation for the actual empirical research. The social justice theory, which is used to complement the CA, will be applied after data analysis and will inform the conclusions of the study. In the next chapter, detailed information is provided regarding the nature of the research study. The research design and methodology, data collection, sampling technique, ethical considerations and limitations of the study, as well as the choice of research paradigm, are discussed.

SECTION THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

This chapter discusses in detail the methodology and methods used for the study. It outlines the research approach, data collection tools, and data analysis. Ethical considerations are discussed at the end of the chapter. The chapter also answers questions as to how the study was approached, why certain methods were used, and what other methods could have been used. Lastly, it explains how the data were gathered at the research site, which was an orphanage at Orange Farm informal settlement in South Africa.

METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

According to Sapsford (2006:175), methodology is the “philosophical” view of the world that informs the style and design of the research. The methodology adopted for this study was an instrumental case study. Rather than simply describing a case as in an intrinsic case study or investigating collective cases, an instrumental case study seeks to provide insight into an issue (Stake, 2000). A qualitative approach was followed to guide the planning and implementation (Burns & Grove, 2001) of the case study in an attempt to answer the research questions (Mouton, 2001) and to collect the primary data⁷. Secondary⁸ data that were consulted comprised books, journals, government census, official statistics and national and international reports. These formed the background information of the study.

Qualitative approach

Struwig and Stead (2001) identify quantitative and qualitative approaches as the two currently well-known approaches to research. In quantitative studies, data are usually collected in numbers and are analysed and reported in the same form (Struwig & Stead, 2001). Qualitative research is concerned with non-statistical methods and small samples, and deals with people’s lives, lived experiences, behaviour, emotions and feelings. It often attempts to understand the meaning of experiences of persons with problems by explaining social phenomena from the perspectives of participants (Hancock, 1998). Since this study is concerned with individual perceptions, opinions and experiences rather than statistics, a qualitative

⁷ New data used to answer specific research questions, which are gathered by the researcher responsible for the design of the study, collection, analysis, and reporting of the data (Blaikie, 2010:160).

⁸ Raw data that are collected by somebody else for general information purposes (Blaikie, 2010).

approach seemed relevant. By learning about the participants' social circumstances, experiences and perspectives, in-depth and interpretive understanding of their environment was obtained (Snape & Spencer, 2003; Johnson & Christensen, 2000). The approach allowed for conducting in-depth interviews, which are flexible for collecting data on individuals' perspectives and experiences.

In-depth interviews

The in-depth interviews allowed for open-ended questions, which provided responses that were more complex than simply "yes" or "no" as in quantitative studies. An interview schedule containing a set of pre-formulated, semi-structured key questions was followed. In this way, the interviews flowed naturally and participants were free and open to talk about their views and experiences (Walsh, 2001). There was also an opportunity to probe further in cases where responses were ambiguous. A digital voice recorder and field notes were used. Field notes served as both a means to capture data, as well as "enhance the trustworthiness" of the research (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:275). The interactive nature of the in-depth interviews allowed for detailed responses and for probing for clarification of ambiguous responses (Patton, 2002).

SAMPLING

Babbie and Mouton (2001:287) recommend a sampling framework of between five and twenty five participants for qualitative research studies in South Africa. One of the benefits of a small sample is increased trustworthiness of the study by "avoiding theoretical saturation" (Schurink, 1998:262) which is reached when the same information from participants is obtained over and over and no new information is generated. Blaikie (2010:172-179) discusses in detail the different sampling methods,⁹ of which purposive sampling was considered relevant to the study due to its emphasis on predetermined characteristics of participants which are required to answer research questions (Silverman, 2000). The use of purposive sampling enhanced the extent to which the research findings can be applied in other similar cases, what Babbie and Mouton (2001:277) refer to as *transferability* of the study.

Eight young people, three of their guardians, and two graduates of Orange Farm were interviewed. The purpose of interviewing the guardians was to explore their

⁹ Systematic, stratified, cluster, convenience and purposive sampling methods.

knowledge and experiences with the young people in matters relating to HE. The graduates shared their opinions and own experiences in accessing HE. I had planned to interview young people between the ages of 15 and 18 years; however, young people aged between 13 and 28 were interviewed as shown in the demographics section of the next chapter. This was not viewed as a limitation since the younger participants also gave valid concerns regarding access to HE.

DATA COLLECTION, PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

The interview stage and access to the orphanage

Permission to interview the participants was sought from the orphanage management as well as from the individual participants. After arrangements on interview dates and times, interviews were conducted individually with each research participant at the orphanage on different dates. In-depth interviews were conducted according to the interview schedule with its pre-set questions grouped in themes. Before each interview, I introduced myself, gave more information about the study, and explained the relevant ethical issues. All participants agreed to have the interviews recorded except one, who wished for the interview not to be recorded.

Ethical considerations

Research ethics deals primarily with the interaction between the researcher and the research participants; the researcher ought to evaluate her own conduct (Strydom, 2002). The moral theory of research requires that research not be conducted if it involves the violation of human rights or might result in some kind of harm.

Informed consent and voluntariness

All participants were informed as to the purpose of the study. This information was provided in the form of written communication to the orphanage, and repeated verbally before interviews. Participants were made aware that participation was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw at any time. They were asked whether they had understood all the information that was described to them, and all of them indicated that they understood.

Privacy and confidentiality

Participants were assured of privacy and confidentiality of the information that they shared. This was achieved by interviewing each participant privately in an office in the orphanage.

Anonymity

According to Babbie (1998), the identities of participants in research studies should be protected through anonymity by using pseudonyms. During interviews I assured the participants that their identities would not be disclosed. In the presentation of the findings, all participants were given pseudonyms.

Data processing

Soon after the interviews, the recorded data was transcribed verbatim from the voice recorder by listening to the recordings and typing notes in Microsoft Word format. Field notes were also captured in Word format. At this stage, all participants were assigned pseudonyms and data were translated into English. The questions on the interview schedule were arranged in pre-determined themes; therefore, data were already simplified and organised into the themes. The use of this method of analysis corresponds with the thematic content analysis of data in qualitative research described by Green and Thorogood (2004).

Data analysis

Data were summarised to a legible and meaningful form (Hancock, 1998; Devos, 1998) by employing the steps of thematic analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:429). Interviews were conducted in Zulu, which was the language that most participants were comfortable with, and transcribed verbatim and translated into English afterwards. Data were summarised using diagrams and descriptive text by selecting relevant data that answered the questions in the interview schedule. Themes and subthemes were already in place; therefore, after summarising the data, themes were linked to the relevant literature in the literature review section.

Validity, credibility and positionality

For purposes of internal validity,¹⁰ the project information was provided to the participants; therefore, they understood what the study was about. Relatability allowed for external¹¹ validity. Relatability entails the degree of relatedness on whether knowledge gained from one context is relevant or applicable to another context, or the same context in another frame (Dzakiria, 2012). However, similar to many other qualitative studies, the findings of the study cannot be generalised across all populations.

¹⁰ Validity is concerned with the meaningfulness and truthfulness of the research results (Joppe, 2000).

¹¹ External validity is concerned with the transferability of research findings, that is, the extent to which findings can be generalised to other populations and contexts (Drost, 2011).

According to Winter (2000), qualitative researchers embrace their role and involvement within a study. Patton (2002) claims that this involvement and presence helps the credibility and trustworthiness of the study since the researcher is the “instrument” (Patton, 2002:14) of the research. Mason (2002) concurs by stating the need for active reflexivity and self-scrutiny by the researcher regarding his or her actions and role in the research process. This is based on the belief that research cannot be “neutral, objective or detached” from the knowledge and evidence that researchers generate (Mason, 2002:7).

CONCLUSION

This chapter explained the research methodology, research techniques, the type of study and the identified population, and provided the rationale for using the chosen methods. The research methodology was presented and linked to the design, data collection methods and the data analysis. Similar to the theoretical foundation of this study, the methodology draws largely on the CA. The formulation of the themes and sub-themes in the interview schedule was informed by the CA concepts that I identified as core in answering the research questions. The identified concepts were *resources* in terms of access to knowledge, *agency and aspirations*, *conversion factors* and *capabilities*. In analysis, the data were grouped according to these themes and sub-themes. Because thematic analysis is not linked to any pre-existing theory, it was easily accessible and flexible to be used within the CA.

Though Young’s (1990) theory of justice is not discussed in the methodological process, the five faces of oppression were applied to the data gathered from the participants and thus informed the conclusions of the study. This helped to identify issues of injustice that emerged during data analysis. The next chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to describe and analyse the challenges that vulnerable young people in Orange Farm face in gaining access to HE. Based on the capabilities framework, the study identified some of the major issues of concern. In this chapter I present and discuss the empirical findings by highlighting the major issues which emerged from the data. The demographic profile of the participants is presented first, followed by the findings from the data gathered from the young people, and then by the findings from the data gathered from their guardians. Lastly, the data gathered from two graduates from Orange Farm are presented and discussed.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Demographics of vulnerable young people

Eight young people from the orphanage were interviewed. The majority of the young people were male (five out of eight). All but three were born in South Africa; however, all of them had spent most of their childhood in South Africa, specifically in Orange Farm. The three young people not originally from South Africa were born in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Lesotho respectively. Two of them indicated that they came to South Africa when they were young to live with their grandmothers after they each had lost their mothers. Another one reported that he had arrived from Lesotho with his mother when he was young; however, his mother passed away. Though two of them reported that their grandmothers were still alive, they ended up living at the orphanage because their grandmothers were old and could not afford to look after them.

The rest of the young people were also not originally from Orange Farm; they came from as far as the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and other parts of Gauteng, but through their different circumstances and backgrounds, Orange Farm has become home to all of them.

Five of them mentioned that they had younger siblings also living in the orphanage. One of the participants, a 27-year-old young woman, indicated that she had her own two young children living with her in the orphanage. Another participant had had two of his brothers living in the orphanage but they had left to make a living outside the

orphanage. Participants had been living in the orphanage between two and five years, and five of them were between Grade 10¹² and Grade 11¹³ in school. Two of the participants were in Grade 5 and 7 respectively, the eighth participant was the 27-year-old woman, who reported that she had not completed secondary school and is currently not registered at any school.

Only one of the school-going participants moved schools more than four times, the rest had progressed from one primary school to a single high school.

These demographics are summarised in table 3.

Table 3: Summary of the participants' demographic profile

Participants (Pseudonyms)	Gender	Age	Origin	Siblings living in the orphanage	Years living in orphanage
John	Male	18	Mpumalanga	2	5
Themba	Male	19	Eastern Cape	None	5
Ruth	Female	27	Zimbabwe	2 (dependants)	4
Antony	Male	18	Lesotho	None	5
Thabo	Male	15	Mozambique	1	5
Tshepo	Male	13	Gauteng	2	5
Thuli	Female	15	Gauteng	1	3
Abie	Female	17	Gauteng	1	2

Demographics of guardians

Sex and age of guardians

All three guardians interviewed were female; two of them were older than 50 years (51 and 53) and one was 35 years. Two of the guardians had been working at the orphanage for over four years, while the third guardian joined the orphanage only nine months previously.

Educational levels of guardians

None of the guardians had received post school training; two had not completed high school. One completed Grade 4, another Grade 5, and the other had completed matric and was enrolled for a teaching qualification.

¹² The tenth year in school post pre-school; it is two years before completion of high school.

¹³ This is a year before completion of high school. According to the deputy minister of DHET, learners may start applying to universities at this stage.

Graduates

The two graduates interviewed were female, one was 72 years old and had graduated in 1995, and the other was 28 years old and had graduated two years previously. They were both residents of Orange Farm. The 72-year-old graduate (Stella)¹⁴ was a retired teacher and had taught at a local school in Orange Farm. For income after retirement, she joined a programme within the community that teaches adults basic literacy. The 28-year-old graduate (Mpho) was employed as a social worker in the neighbouring township.

Discussion of demographics

The age range of both the guardians and graduates interviewed represented both young and old who providing adequate and appropriate insights and views on issues raised for the respective groups of participants. The experience of the guardians in working with the young people, combined with the number of years they have lived in Orange Farm, makes them knowledgeable about issues that the guardian's questionnaire addressed.

Though the number of graduates interviewed was small, these graduates provided valuable insight into the challenges they had faced in accessing HE, and those that young people continue to face. This painted a clear picture of the similarities of the challenges, then and now. The small number of graduates interviewed can be attributed to the fact that there are, in general, very few people in Orange Farm who can access HE; hence, it was quite a challenge to find graduates. This concurs with Onyango's (2010) study in which he reported that the number of graduates with a bachelor's degree in Orange Farm was around 21 among those aged between 21 and 30 years, which is 0.001% of the estimated population.

All young people interviewed have lost at least one parent, and most of them hardly knew anything about their extended families. In South Africa, like in many other African countries, the majority of orphaned and vulnerable young people are absorbed into extended family structures (UNICEF, 2003). Child rearing has, for a long time, been characterised by the involvement of multiple caregivers and participation of a wide network of kinship (such as aunts, grandparents, brothers and other extended family) in the upbringing of children without living parents; however,

¹⁴ All names referring to the research participants are pseudonyms.

this was not observed in this study. Very few of the young people interviewed reported having knowledge about their extended families. This could be as a result of migration into Orange Farm, as evidenced that most of them were from provinces far away. The young people arrived with their parents, who later died, and could not trace back their extended families.

RESEARCH FINDINGS FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

Higher education

Very few of the young people reported having knowledge about HE, though all of them indicated an interest in pursuing HE. Interestingly, these young people have HE aspirations but have no proper or formal knowledge about what HE entails. Given the geographical isolation of the settlement, it is not surprising to find that the majority of young people do not know anything about HE.

School experiences

All the young people interviewed reported that they were doing well at school and had good experiences. One of them indicated that he preferred being at school rather than being at home, stating that he had more “fun” at school and had friends whom he could trust there. This preference reinforces De Witt’s (2007:75) notion that, since there are many adolescent orphans growing up into adulthood without the support and guidance of their parents, schools play a role of important agents in addressing the needs of these young people.

Conversely, one of the participants noted:

The experiences that I have come across are that my brothers at the high school smoke too much. It affects me because these boys are not doing well because of drugs and nyaope¹⁵ as well. Most of them choose to live this life because they always want to be high. They are not people who want school. They just come to while up time. (Antony)

Both the positive and negative experiences of school indicate an influence of the external environment on the young people’s personal lives. However, it is worth mentioning that school plays a bigger role for most of the vulnerable young people,

¹⁵ Also known as whoonga. It is a highly addictive street drug that has, over the last few years, been used notoriously by most people in townships and poor communities.

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perhaps even more than to the “normal” young person with regard to support, friendships, and feelings of belonging. This makes the statement by Antony worrying, because of the negative influence that could come from the place that potentially has the greatest impact on them.

Also, this concern about issues that are likely to affect young people’s success in their schooling points, to some degree, towards a form of powerlessness of the young people in acting or speaking against these activities.

Responses on “doing well at school” were an affirmation from the young people that they were working hard in order to succeed. Though it might not be possible to measure or determine the degree of “doing well” being referred to here, this indicates that these young people do have self-confidence in their schooling efforts. This finding is in line with Kelly’s (2005:71) sentiment that going to school may help young people to restore some lost confidence and that education can leverage significant improvements in the lives of vulnerable young people.

Knowledge about HE

Of the eight young people interviewed, only two seemed to know something, or at least remembered hearing something about HE. Ruth said she is too old to learn formally and knew nothing about HE or any universities in South Africa.

Of the two who indicated knowing something about HE, one of them responded:

I know that when you finish school and depending if your marks allow you entry into university, if they allow you then you go. If you have problems with money, government has a way to assist, in issues related to money. That’s what I know.
(Themba)

This knowledge, though not enough on its own to suggest that the participant is knowledgeable about HE, does indicate some level of informal orientation to the sphere of HE.

Knowledge of South African universities

On which South African universities they had heard about, five of the eight young people reported that they had heard about the University of Johannesburg (UJ), and three of the five had also heard about the University of Witwatersrand (Wits). In other

words, of the 23 public universities in South Africa, the young people were aware of only two. One of the participants said he thought UJ was the most famous university in South Africa.

One of the participants responded:

I know Wits and UJ. I don't know the others. At Wits they take people who have high marks. I am not sure about UJ. (Thuli)

One of participants reported to he had heard about the Vaal University of Technology, another one Boston College (a private multi-city business college) and yet another about Masibambane College, which is a local community college.

Another participant indicated that he had heard about the universities from his friends, soccer teammates and coach:

I have heard about Boston College, UJ and Wits. I heard about them from teammates that I play soccer with, and the coach. My coach went to Boston, and my teammate goes to UJ. I don't know much about Wits. (Antony)

Other sources of information on universities emerged to have been teachers, magazines, and fellow learners at school.

Their knowledge about Wits and UJ could be influenced by the proximity of these two universities to Orange Farm. On the other hand, the North-West University has a campus in Vanderbijlpark, which is closer compared to Johannesburg (where the former two universities are situated). Vanderbijlpark is 34 km from Orange Farm, whereas Johannesburg is 55 km away. It can be argued that the reason they know about Wits and UJ is because most of their social networks are familiar with these two institutions.

This type of knowledge sourcing highlights the variety of roles played by informal social networks. The use of such networks reveals what Ball and Vincent (1998) term hot¹⁶ and cold¹⁷ knowledge in referring to the role of social networks and gathering and exchanging informal information. Since they know very few South African universities, this knowledge gathered and exchanged through grapevining is

¹⁶ Official knowledge, normally constructed for public dissemination (Ball & Vincent, 1998:240).

¹⁷ Grapevine knowledge, based on affective responses or direct experience (Ball & Vincent, 1998:240).

likely to influence their decisions on their already limited choice of HE institutions. Ball and Vincent (1998:238) further argue that choice is typically embedded in the local and in the circulation of social myths that tell us what we should desire and how to obtain it. This supports Appadurai's (2004) notion noted in chapter 3 that the capacity to aspire requires active practice to be able to expand aspiration horizons. He argues that the rich expand their aspiration horizons through the practice of the capacity to aspire. However, because of their fewer opportunities to practise and experiment, the poor have a thin and "brittle horizon of aspirations" (Appadurai, 2004:69). Expanding the poor's aspiration horizon, will help them find a voice so that they can decline unsatisfactory aspects of their environment and imagine other possibilities.

The challenge of their not getting sufficient formal information either from schools or from HE institutions themselves opens room for being influenced by opinions of their social networks, particularly if these consist of people whom they respect, for example, Antony is influenced by his coach or his teammate.

Again, Ball and Vincent (1998:237) refer to the "privileged" and "disconnected" choosers, who are strongly differentiated by social class. The disconnected choosers have low inclination and low capacity for choice. It is evident that most of the young people from Orange Farm are disconnected choosers.

Asked which university they wanted to attend and why, some of the young people responded:

Wits. Wits have lots of opportunities. There is also soccer there and I wish to be a professional player. (Antony)

I want to study at UJ because I think it's the one that I will be able to afford. (Thuli)

UJ. Because I think it will a better and easy university for me to gain entrance. Wits has high entrance levels, and I won't be able to achieve that. (Abie)

According to Moogan et al (1999:212), the information acquisition process in university decision making is being carried out with greater involvement by the prospective students and their parents – an issue that is a challenge for the young people who are at the orphanage. They need agency freedom in order to be able to

make any post matric decisions. Liao (2010:16) asserts that, without this agency, it would be difficult to bring about any actions necessary for a “moral and purposeful life”.

In the Orange Farm community as a whole, this does not seem likely, as data collected indicate that the parents were least involved and less knowledgeable about HE. They wanted young people to proceed to HE, but issues of disconnectedness identified by Ball and Vincent (1998) are a major challenge.

Moogan and his colleagues (1999:213) further argue that decision-making behaviour by prospective students hoping to gain entry into HE can be equated to consumers buying services. As indicated in the diagram below, the consumer has to first recognise the problem, and finishes with a purchase and post purchase evaluation. They argue that, when services are being purchased, alternatives are often evaluated without the benefit of any direct experience with the product and, since the services are associated with greater degrees of intangibility, the quality and quantity of information available to the consumer prior to the purchase is small (Moogan et al, 1999:213).

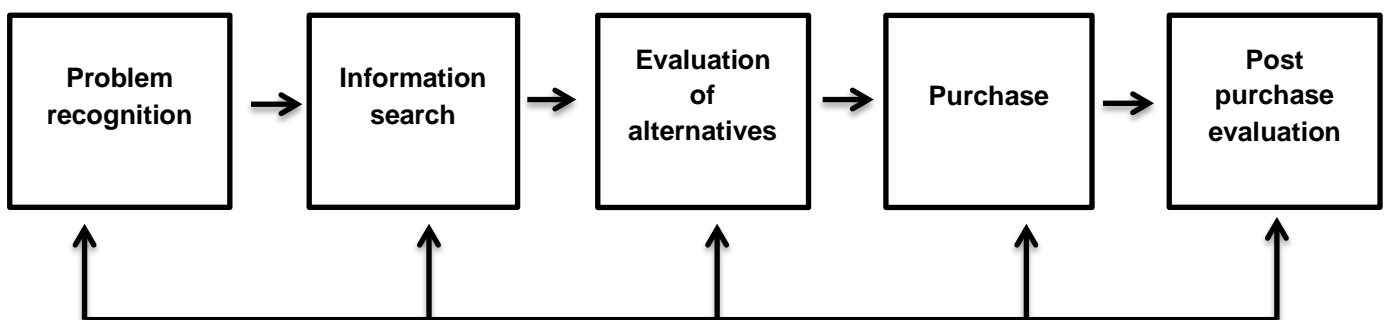


Figure 10: Decision process of consumer buying

(Source: Moogan et al, 2008)

It is, however, important to gain more knowledge in the relevant areas and increase the level of searching. These authors concur with Ball and Vincent’s idea of hot knowledge through the grapevine: “[B]y asking knowledgeable friends, consumers can obtain details about experience qualities and the acquisition of word of mouth information acts a risk reducing strategy for those embarking on HE” (Moogan et al, 1999:213).

These findings about limited knowledge on HE among young people are a major concern. In promoting the “apply now campaign”¹⁸ recently launched by the DHET, the deputy minister of the department, Mr Mduduzi Manana (2013), noted that learners could apply to HE institutions as early as Grade 11 to avoid late applications. Some of the young people interviewed were in that grade in school, and yet had no idea they could already apply to university.

Aspirations and agency

Continuation into HE

While most of the participants interviewed indicated that they would like to continue to HE, one of them said she believed she was too old to go into HE and had no aspirations for further studies. One of the participants indicated that he wanted to be a lawyer, one an electrician, another a policeman, one a life-saver, and three wanted to be pilots. On asking the participants how they will achieve these career goals, most of them were unsure; one of them even wanted to go out of the interview room to ask the guardians.

According to Berlant (2006), such optimistic aspirations, but with little realistic possibility of attaining them, is “cruel optimism” which is “injurious” to individuals (Roberts, 2013:384). This certainly applies to the young people interviewed; it seems their emotional energy is invested in ideal dreams and ambitions that might not be viable under their present conditions. In this regard, Hart (2013:111) suggests that, in order to convert aspirations into a “capability to realise”, conversion factors should be present. As indicated in figure 2, conversion factors are negative for the young people. The dilemma is how to encourage new possibilities for different choices and yet not deal in cruel optimism, which may leave young people worse off than before. Findings indicate that most of the young people hope to draw positive intrinsic and instrumental values from HE; however, the relation of their aspirations to the resources available to them may lead to a compromised possibility of realising these aspirations. This may be tragic in that it will restrict young people’s ability to identify themselves within society based on achievements they hope for, resulting in a predicament of identity.

¹⁸ The “apply now campaign” was launched by the DHET to ensure that learners apply early to institutions of HE and training in order to avoid the late applications that are received by most institutions at the beginning of each academic year.

The results of the data collected from the young people collate strongly with the findings of Moogan et al (1999) on students' decision-making behaviour. It is important to note the great influence of both internal¹⁹ and external²⁰ variables on making choices. The young people indicated a high level of aspirations and, although there was no data to show their school progress, for example in the form of school reports, they believed they were performing well at school. Again, a great influence seemed to emerge from their networking with other students at school, teachers, and the guardians.

On the contrary, and as discussed in the previous section, the high percentage of young people without knowledge of HE or the institutions they can attend after high school, does not raise concern only about the role of high schools, but strongly points to a low agency phenomenon which, understandably so, raises questions as to the possibility of realising these aspirations for both HE and their prospective careers.

Besides the cost of attending the institution, the choices made by friends regarding which institution to attend was of equal importance. Individual student choices were strongly influenced by their friends and where the percentage of classmates attending an institution is high, this will also increase the probability of others doing the same (Moogan et al, 1999:215).

From the data gathered and the above literature, three scenarios can be captured. Firstly, the influence can be noted on the three young people who all want to be pilots. Two of them were in the same grade at the same school and they indicated that they shared information on piloting. Secondly, the evidence indicates low aspirations and low agency by a majority of the young people of Orange Farm. This puts most of them at a greater risk because if their friends do not share the same vision of pursuing HE, they might find themselves unsuccessful in proceeding to university. Lastly, a significant number of the young people interviewed indicated that friends were not important to them. To a certain degree, this might be beneficial for them in the sense that they keep away from negative influences. Yet, the literature evidences that a high number of young people are influenced by their peers to

¹⁹ Aspect of student performance and level of aptitude and aspiration (Moogan et al, 1999:215).

²⁰ Influences from outside such as family, teachers or friends (Moogan et al, 1999:215).

proceed to HE, and isolated individual agency and unshared aspirations might not lead any further than just completion of high school. Oftentimes they lack motivation and family support in exploring and gaining more information related to their aspirations and the possible ways to pursue them (Hart, 2009).

The guardians suggest that most young people resort to seeking employment soon after high school due to a lack of financial resources, a motivating environment, and role models. Based on these suggestions, it can be argued that, the social environment has direct influence on decision making and the level of agency. For example, a lack of resources within society is likely to influence the agency that these young people have for achieving their own aspirations. Hart (2013) notes that an individual's agency depends on different factors, one of them being social arrangements.

Sen (2009) invites us to look at the social arrangements in practical terms by comparing the impact of different policies on different societies, for example, policies addressing access to HE, as well as social and economic development policies. He further notes that freedoms play a vital role in providing individuals from any society with an opportunity to approach the world with freedom and the capability to choose the life that one has reason to value.

Data gathered from all the participants suggested that most of the positive conversion factors, such as access to information, were absent, making the conversion of aspirations to reality more unrealistic. Dreze and Sen (2002) further indicate how societies which have an influence in determining government priorities (for example, the metropolitan over the informal settlement or townships; rich over the poor) have greater capability sets for realising their aspirations. These societies are able to ensure that their social arrangements are geared to addressing their own needs and providing them with opportunities, while the poor continue to be marginalised and excluded. Young (1990) identifies this type of domination as one of the primary forms of social injustice.

Reasons for choice of particular programmes

Half of the participants stated that they had chosen their careers so that they are able to help people in the community, and others mentioned the prestige associated with the professions, indicating both instrumental and intrinsic values for proceeding

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to HE. However, one of the responses indicated that the choice to be a lawyer was influenced by a reflection of own life experiences:

I would want to be able to take care of people, show them love and show them how life is. (Ruth)

Ruth later indicated during the interview that she was having challenges with a court case involving an accident of a vehicle and her child.

On becoming a policeman, Thabo responded:

So that I can arrest thieves and people who smoke nyaope. They shouldn't smoke nyaope. Nyaope kills. (Thabo)

This response indicates that, to some degree, aspirations are influenced by the community, environment and culture, confirming Appadurai's notion that aspirations are derived from larger cultural norms; they are never simply individual as the language of wants and choice might incline us to think, but they are always formed in interaction and in the "thick of social life" (Appadurai, 2004:67).

Though most of the young people were not sure of which subjects were needed for them to follow their career paths, they indicated that the education they were getting at school was enough. Despite probing, there was no evidence from young people to substantiate why they believed this to be the case. The response could be attributed to the fact that, due to the lack of information on the programmes they wanted to attend after matric, they did not know whether the subjects they are taking at school fulfil the admission requirements at an HE institution. For example, to be enrolled at a flight academy for pilot training, subjects such as Mathematics and a science subject are required in general.

The findings further revealed that less than half of the young people interviewed have any knowledge of the universities that offer their programme of choice. Five of the eight young people interviewed indicated that they were not sure which university they would like to attend because they did not know much about universities.

When Thabo was asked whether he had information on what it entails to be a policeman and where he would apply to become one, he said:

There are some things that I know and some that I don't know. I know that you need to respect. I will find someone who is a policeman and ask him how I can become a policeman. I just see on TV how they do it and how they use the guns. (Thabo)

On the question of having information on being a pilot, one of the participants said:

Yes it's there. I found it in the magazine. You fill in your details and post it. If I pass Grade 10 I will complete it. (Abie)

Asked if it requires Grade 10 or Grade 12 she responded:

I don't know, but it's written that you apply when you are 18.

This is in strong agreement with Appadurai's (2004) view regarding the capacity to aspire and its uneven distribution in society. The relatively rich and powerful have a fully developed capacity to aspire compared to the poor. The better-off in terms of power, dignity and material resources are more likely to be conscious of the links between the more and less immediate objects of aspiration. Appadurai (2004) states that the better-off have a more complex experience of the relation between a wide range of ends means and they have many opportunities to link material goods and immediate opportunities to more general possibilities and options. Wolff and De-Shalit (2007) concur by noting that particular aspects of being able to make good use of one's imagination and thought are "fertile functionings", with the speculation that better educated people have wider horizons and aspiration. Therefore, the capacity to aspire is a navigational capacity. The more privileged in any society simply have used the "map" to explore the future more frequently and more realistically, and to share this knowledge with one another more routinely than their poor and weaker neighbours.

However, one of the aspiring pilots said, despite not having found information on how she can apply for being a pilot, she knew UJ offered a piloting programme. However, after communication with the university, they indicated to me that they did not offer this.

When asked whether different universities came to their schools to talk about the different programmes they offered, all the participants noted that none of the universities had ever come to the schools to talk about themselves or the courses

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they provide. One of the participants said he thought it would help if universities would come and talk about the programmes they offer so that they can become aware of the different universities. This was echoed by one of the graduates who said:

It's very much important for universities to come to the schools; it's a necessity in fact. Sometimes you find that schools choose a certain date to go to universities for orientation and you find that the young people don't have money for transport. Those are some of the challenges. You find that you are now deprived of information because you don't have money. (Mpho)

In summary, Appadurai's (2004) argument, which is in line with the findings of this study, is that part of poverty is a diminishing of circumstances. If the map of aspirations is seen to consist of a dense combination of nodes and pathways, relative poverty means a smaller number of aspirational nodes and a thinner, weaker sense of the pathways. Again where these pathways exist for the poor, they are likely to be more rigid, less supple and less strategically valuable, not because of any cognitive deficit on the part of the poor but because the capacity to aspire, like any complex cultural capacity, thrives and survives on practice, repetition, exploration, conjecture and refutation (Appadurai, 2004:69). Against this background, it remains an issue of concern whether these young people can convert their aspirations into capabilities.

Conversion factors

Economic

All of the young people indicated that the orphanage is the only place they will be able to obtain financial assistance for HE. They said it is the only organisation they know they might get financial assistance from.

Most of the participants indicated that they will ask for financial support from the orphanage if they have to progress to HE. Despite identifying the orphanage as a possible financial source, six of the participants mentioned finances as a possible barrier to HE. Though there are a number of bursary schemes such as the National

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Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS),²¹ only two of the young people reported hearing or knowing about a bursary. Abie indicated knowledge of the availability of bursaries but not of the requirements for applying for financial support.

One of the participants said:

The financial situation will affect a lot because I have told myself that that's what I want to do. Law is the thing that I want to do and I don't have doubts about it so it's the issue of money that will affect my studies. It will be painful because there is no where else where I can say I depend on right now. The orphanage is the one that I depend on. (Themba)

Social

The young people had very little to say about their families, and most of them noted that friends were not important to them. Some did mention that friends are very important to them because they shared a lot and assisted each other with school work.

We never understood each other with the family, and they chased me away and I ended up coming up to stay here. Now I want to prove my nephew's wife wrong because there are words that she once said that "you know what, you will never finish school and you will never have a future," so that's why I want to prove her wrong and show her that those words won't work. (Themba)

This response indicates that negative comments intended to discourage may, in fact, inspire young people to work hard. Thus, hostility can be a motivator rather than a demotivator. A study by the Australian government (n.d.) evidenced that university aspirations are, among other things, closely related to the intrinsic value of HE and rests on the belief by young people that HE is a realistic and attainable choice.

Environment

Six of the young people said they thought the environment in Orange Farm was good for them:

At school they understand the situation that we live in an orphanage and they are trying to make things equal for the other school children and us. They don't

²¹ The National Student Financial Aid Scheme provides financial aid loans and bursaries to financially needy students.

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discriminate, however Orange Farm as a whole does not have a positive influence, I mean many people are living in their comfort zones, they just don't think that there are people who are needy like us here at the orphanage. (Themba)

Older people here at the home encourage me to focus on my studies because most people in Orange Farm don't succeed. They don't succeed because they say Orange Farm is poor when it comes to education. (Antony)

He says he thought this was true because most people are just at home with no jobs and some did not finish school.

In the community there are friends who are a bad influence, who might cause me to abandon my dream and think that being a pilot is not a good career. They might end up influencing me to do bad things. I used to have such friends, and I stopped associating with them. (Thuli)

Agency

All school-going participants reported that they listened to teachers at school, took part in, and submitted all school work on time. Abie said, after doing her school work, she “reads a lot of books about pilots”. Tshepo, who wants to be a life-saver, said he loves going to the swimming pool so he can practice.

Though most of the young people showed enthusiasm and individual agency to realise their HE aspirations, as noted above, one of them indicated the opposite:

I wished to grow up like other children and be able to see how my life is going. But life was hard. Even the teachers were complaining, wondering what the problem was and it was hard for me to tell them because it was where I used to stay. I wanted to study as well so that I could get a job and be able to support myself and be independent. What I see about myself is that I should just get a job, I don't think I can go to university because am too old to go to school, so what I want is to work, this thing of going to university, no. (Ruth)

This reflects the fact that Ruth internalised the harshness of her circumstances to such an extent that she does not desire what she never expects to achieve, a phenomenon of adaptive preferences (Wells, 2012). In addition, as shown in the literature, adaptive preferences depict internal limitations, in this case a lack of desire

to attain certain functionings. Nussbaum (2001) views this as adaptive preference formation, meaning individuals living in situations of deprivation often adjust their expectations, aspirations and preferences to their social contexts. Such failure/lack of aspirations illustrates what Hart (2013:111) calls “falling through the net” due to the experiences of multiple negative conversion factors. By this she means that, as young people pursue HE, some are left behind, while others progress towards realising their aspirations. On the other hand, this may be attributed to a lack of agency as a result of a lack of knowledge. According to Liao (2010), individuals must have the necessary information in order to be able to determine their life choice. This information makes possible the formation of what Sen (1999b:10) refers to as “informed and considered” choices to live a life that an individual has reason to value.

Experiences of stigma

Interestingly, the young people reported no personal experiences of stigmatisation, either within the community or at school. They claimed they are treated well in general by people in the community and other young people at school.

At school they understand the situation that we live in an orphanage and they are trying to make things equal for the other school children and us. They don't discriminate. (Themba)

This concurs with the findings from the guardians who noted that the orphanage had not received complaints related to stigmatisation from the young people, which could be attributed to the fact that they get everything they need at school. It would become a challenge at school were they to lack basic stuff such as school uniforms, books and other school requirements.

Challenges of accessing HE

The greatest challenges identified by the young people as possible barriers to accessing HE were a lack of knowledge, followed by a lack of finances, and surroundings. They did not think school grades were a barrier as all those who are at school indicated that they were doing well at school (although, as noted earlier, no evidence was offered in form of school reports).

Finances as a barrier to HE for vulnerable young people seem to be a widespread trend in Africa. Miller (2008) found that in Ethiopia many orphans faced challenges in accessing public education due to affordability, and prospects of funding were bleak. This is supported by Campbell et al (2010) whose study found that household wealth/income and region of residence are all more important predictors of educational outcomes than orphan/vulnerability status.

An argument can be forwarded based on marginalisation as a form of oppression (Young, 1990) evident here, namely that unequal access to education will continue in socially diverse societies. This is because the equal distribution of resources does not, on its own, address all forms of injustices that have an impact on individual's opportunities. In the case of Orange Farm, financial assistance programmes might be available; however, as indicated by the findings, availability of funding does not work in isolation. A lack of knowledge and a lack of access to information about the financial aid schemes are other forms of injustices that limit young people's opportunities to access HE. Therefore, access to basic financial aid cannot, by itself, address all other challenges that might have an impact on the failure of opportunities and achievements for the young people.

The above shows the influence of social arrangements on an individual's capacity to turn resources into functionings, considering the different profiles of conversion factors (Robeyns, 2011). In accordance with Sen's (1992) bicycle example given in chapter 3, two individuals may have the same bicycle, but the individual with a high conversion factor is the one who was taught how to ride a bicycle when he was a child and can therefore cycle efficiently. The individual who was never taught to ride a bike has a low conversion factor. Thus, conversion factors indicate how much functioning one can get out of a good service.

In sum, the following illustration indicates an imbalance between the challenges (in form of conversion factors) and the capabilities that the young people face in their endeavour to access HE.

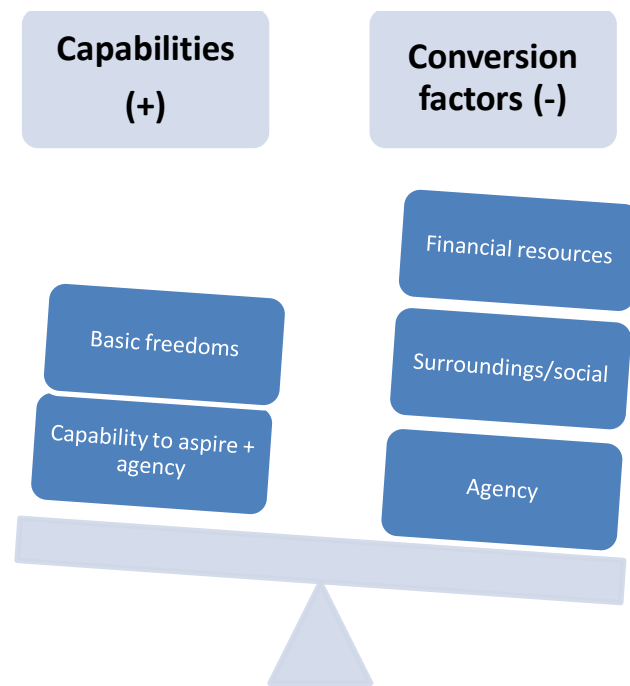


Figure 11: Present capabilities versus conversion factors

Figure 11 illustrates the comparison between the capabilities and resources available to aid the young people's development and the conversion factors influencing their success – and paints a grim picture. As discussed in the literature, the conversion factors relevant in this study are economic, social and environment. There were no positive conversion factors identified and although the basic capabilities are present, there is uncertainty as to the degree to which these young people can transform these into functionings. Arguably, they have low conversion rates. The basic capabilities allow them to have the same opportunities (access to basic education, shelter, food) as their peers; however, due to low conversion factors, they might not be able to achieve what their peers (e.g. in other geographical areas) might be able to achieve.

Agency is reflected as both constrained and positive because, though most of the young people indicated a desire to pursue their HE aspirations, doing homework or submitting school work on time does indicate motivation of wanting to do well at school, and doing well at school increases their chances of accessing HE. However, submitting school work on time is not, on its own, enough for achieving valuable functionings, in this case, accessing HE. A variety of other factors should work interchangeably, for example, going out seeking information about the types of programmes they wish to pursue, seeking knowledge about funding which, in their

case, is most important because most of them indicated that financial resources were a major obstacle for them. However, the lack of resources such as public libraries and limited technology to use at school restrict their possibility of agency.

This section identified and discussed the challenges as perceived by the young people, and provided a weighting on the balance between present capabilities and the conversion factors, which were identified as the potential challenges. The following section presents and discusses findings emanating from the data gathered from the guardians.

RESEARCH FINDINGS FROM GUARDIANS

Higher education opportunities

Current HE opportunities in Orange Farm

Data gathered from the guardians suggests that HE opportunities for young people are available only if they are (1) determined and (2) exposed and made aware of those opportunities. All the three guardians interviewed indicated that most young people do not qualify for bursaries, which points to a low matric pass rate among them. Not qualifying for bursary opportunities was reported as a serious problem because most people in Orange Farm are poor and cannot afford to pay for the HE of the young people. Another challenge that was identified was a lack of information and exposure to bursaries; however, this was attributed to “laziness” of young people. Despite all the information on the internet nowadays, one of the guardians noted that everything needs money, even access to the internet:

Young people have the opportunities for HE. Why I am saying that is because there are bursaries now, you just have to study hard in order to qualify. There is NSFAS, they are so many. It's just that they need to learn. Nowadays I don't think there is anyone who can have an excuse of not learning. (Othelia, 53)

Challenges faced by young people in accessing HE

Yet, from the interviews of the guardians, it is evident that the poverty situation in Orange Farm poses a huge challenge. Overall, parents and guardians do not have money for young people to proceed to HE. They indicated that not even all of those who pass matric will get bursaries, and guardians cannot afford to pay for further studies beyond high school.

Another issue of concern that emerged from the empirical findings is that HE is not an issue of priority for a large majority of the Orange Farm community. Soon after matriculating, young people are expected to go straight into employment or be involved in income-generating activities. This is evident in the following statements:

People struggle here; they struggle, they are not working. They can't get work. Even the young people who have completed matric, they send their CVs but they don't get anything. And as you see they end up being mischievous, smoking, taking drugs, smoking nyaope. (Tracy)

You know I wish we could just get jobs for them; even if they don't manage to go to universities at least they get jobs. (Othelia)

The above responses confirm the findings by Lam et al (2008:3) that, in general, even youth who have completed secondary schooling do not necessarily perform well in finding employment; hence, the need for them to acquire as much education as possible to improve chances of finding decent employment.

They also depict cultural and community solidarity and its influence which might see the young people's aspirations of HE soon turn to ideas of seeking work, indicating what Appadurai (2004:63) calls loyalty/total attachment to the community.

Asked about what they would do differently in order for young people to access HE, two of the guardians reported that they would make information more accessible to the youth of Orange Farm. Again, issues that seem to be troubling these young people include drug use at schools and teenage pregnancy.

What can be done to address these challenges?

On addressing the challenges that have been identified, the following were some of the responses from the guardians:

It's important to other young people to motivate them. If they can be motivated by a person of their age they will understand and see that this issue of education is serious. Sometimes you talk to them as an older person and they don't listen to you and they get the impression that perhaps they are troubling you. (Susan, 35)

Government should intervene through the schools. Teachers know the children who are in need – if the government can share ideas with the teachers on how to deal

with these challenges – I think the young people needing assistance will be helped.
(Tracy)

The above response captures one of Sen's concerns, as identified by Wells (2012), namely the difference between individuals in their abilities to convert the same resources into valuable functionings. For example, the young people in the orphanage need specific treatment in light of their circumstances. This does not suggest that they should be treated differently than other children either at school or in the community. However, their ability to convert, for example, the basic capability of access to education into valuable functions might be different compared to other young people who do not need to deal with emotional deprivations such as trauma, loss, and irreversible circumstances as identified by Misztal (2011).

Schools' role in preparing young people to access HE

The guardians indicated that they believed the schools were preparing the young people well. However, as a matter of concern, they all noted that teachers know about the children they teach; they should therefore advise and help parents on how to support young people to proceed to HE.

The following illustrates the hopes that guardians have regarding schools in Orange Farm:

I wish there could be tight security at schools so that the drug users are not able to go into schools, and that these young people don't hurt each other in schools, like stabbing each other.

If we can restrict drugs and weapons in schools, I think our children will have a future. It's the same issue with pregnancy. It doesn't go well with me that government allowed pregnant teenagers to come to school. The government should not have accepted that because these pregnant teenagers seem to be so proud of what they are doing and the next thing they become a burden to teachers. If a school child is pregnant she should be out of school, when she has given birth she can go back to school. (Tracy)

Aspirations

The guardians indicated that some of the young people in the orphanage are determined and work hard. This is evident in that they share their aspiration and dreams with them; however, this is not the same for all the young people:

Last year we had someone doing matric and she passed though she didn't pass well and she is not determined to go further she wants us to push her. We have been telling her to come and register, but still she is not interested. You know when they finish matric they like taking a gap year and once you take a gap year, the following year it not that easy to go back to school. The drive is no longer there. The person is used to loitering around the streets. Her friends don't give her the motivation to do something. So she sees this life as normal.

Out of 100 young people, I can say maybe 5% are driven and motivated 95% is not. We have too many challenges like drug abuse, nyaope – they are smoking left, right and centre. The challenge now is that the young girls have joined in the drug use, as young as 15 year is using nyaope. Once a young person is addicted, and sometimes the parents also, if they are illiterate they don't take these things seriously.

All this leads to crime, it's very high because you have to maintain taking this drug, and if you are not working you have to steal. Orange Farm is well known for crime, even in the news, so people look down upon it and if you tell people you are from Orange Farm they worry about you. (Susan)

The above response by Susan identifies a young person who lacks motivation, which is identified by Johnson et al (2009) as an important influence in the progression into HE. They found that the willingness to make an effort by learners and the overall motivation was a major factor for pursuing HE. Even in cases where guardians generally support high aspirations, they may be unable to influence the young person's decision-making process (Johnson et al, 2009).

Do guardians encourage them to enter HE?

All the guardians noted that they do encourage young people to pursue HE; however, those who do not pass well in matric do not want to repeat because they are scared that their friends would laugh at them. They indicated peer pressure as a

limiting factor for agency. Again, they noted that they can only do so much; the rest lies with the young person.

Conversion factors

The majority of the young people are said to be resilient because of their backgrounds and previous challenges and because they do not look down upon themselves. It is important for them that they live at the orphanage, but they are not ashamed of it.

Financial resources were again identified by all three guardians as a possible barrier for the young people in accessing HE. Also, most of the young people are said to have no motivation or encouragement from family members.

All the guardians reported that living in the orphanage had an influence; they all believed that it should influence them to work hard so that they are able to become what they want to become in future. However, when asked if they thought living in Orange Farm influences young people's school performance, they all indicated that other young people are affected because they end up getting into drugs. They concur that the drug problem is huge, and those who take drugs in schools might end up forcing other young people to smoke. This is evidenced in the responses below:

This place is full of drugs and they ruin young people. Some young peoples' lives are in danger. Once they start with drugs, they don't want school; they just want to be destructive. (Othelia)

In Orange Farm there is nothing that drives you to be like someone (there are no role models or inspiration). Unless if you go to the suburbs and admire the nice houses and cars. (Susan)

The next section focuses on the findings from the graduates.

RESEARCH FINDINGS FROM TWO ORANGE FARM GRADUATES

The graduates interviewed indicated the challenges they faced in accessing HE, specifically a lack of knowledge and a lack of finances, which are similar to those currently faced by young people.

Higher education

Current HE opportunities in Orange Farm

Asked about the current HE opportunities for young people in Orange Farm, one of the graduates said:

Opportunities are there but the thing is people don't know about them. Some of these things are here but the thing is we don't know about them. And you find out that there are organisations that sponsor young people to go to university, but when you are here and you don't associate with people who know information it means you are also closed out on the outside. (Mpho, a 28-year-old social worker)

This is in line with the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC, 2006) findings in a survey on vulnerable children in the North-West and Free State provinces. Evidence showed that, despite the availability of bursaries, very few individuals and families knew about how to access them. This is consistent with earlier findings that few of the young people interviewed knew about the different types of bursaries available.

Challenges faced by young people in accessing HE

From the information gathered from the two graduates in Orange Farm, two issues were captured. Firstly, the issue of poverty as a challenge to HE: Guardians and parents cannot afford to take the young people to tertiary institutions. Secondly, they confirmed that young people seem not to have any information regarding HE, let alone the availability of bursaries.

When you talk about bursaries, it depends if they hear about them and the question is will they get it? And if the young people are willing to go ahead and learn. You see there is another mistake, that they pass, and they pass with low marks and they can't get bursary. So this way it becomes very difficult. (Stella, 72, a retired teacher)

One of the issues noted was that there is no motivation for progressing to HE for those living in Orange Farm. Most young people do not have role models:

For you to be a better person you must first see a better person, talk to a better person, then you can say "I like that one, I must be like her". So we need people who will be able to convince the young people to believe that it doesn't matter where you

Faith

come from, what's important is where you want to go. It does not matter how your background is. (Mpho)

One of the graduates noted a lack of motivation among the young people:

They don't have enough time or books. Previously we used to have sleepless nights reading through the night, but for them now it seems like it's a burden. (Stella)

Asked if they thought schools were playing their part in improving access for these young people, the following was the response from Stella:

I think schools that are lacking are those that are not under government – the independent schools. Sometimes they employ teachers that are under qualified, then those people have limited knowledge on the standards of education and sometimes they don't get to the level that is required by the government.

Aspirations

One of the graduates said some young people do not take education seriously, even those who do pass in high school. If they notice that there is no employment available, they will just loiter around, even though they have matric. This further reinforces the notion that completion of high school does not guarantee finding employment, which necessitates post-secondary school education. The World Bank (2007) notes that the higher the level of education of the youth, the better their chances of finding employment.

Stella noted that it is important for parents to know more about HE, which is not the case in Orange Farm. She believed that if parents knew more about HE and the different programmes available, they would be in a better position to motivate the young people. The fact that parents know nothing makes the young people become relaxed and have no encouragement to pursue HE. Similarly, Hart (2013) in the United Kingdom evidenced that some young people also reported that their parents' lack of knowledge was preventing them from achieving their aspirations.

The response below indicates that aspirations about a good life and happiness exist in all societies as a system of ideas which locates people in a larger map of local ideas and beliefs about issues such as the nature of worldly possession and the significance of material assets over social relations:

Faith

I saw myself as an MD, in a huge company, driving an X5, with a huge double storey house, with a pool, and travel outside the country for business trips. I had big dreams. And then I started to realise that okay, this is life. You only do what you can afford and what you can achieve. (Mpho)

However, as indicated in the response below, many a times these aspirations about the good life are quickly dissolved into more densely local ideas about marriage, work, leisure, convenience and friendship (Appadurai, 2004:67):

I ended up living with a boyfriend. Then I had to find piece jobs. Basically, I had a child when I was 16, doing Grade 10, then I dropped out. I stayed a whole year not going to school then the following year I went back to school. Then from there that's when I decided I needed to work so that my child can have a brighter future. (Mpho)

Conversion factors

Similar to the young people, both graduates reported the economic situation as their own main challenge in accessing HE, which they still believed to be a great problem, followed by the environment. Little was said about the social environment as a contributory factor in accessing HE.

On whether living in Orange Farm had an influence on performance at schools, the following responses were given:

Yes. A huge influence on your life. It might end up destroying you. It depends on the people that surround you.

The environment plays a huge role in an individual life. If you find that you live in a situation where next door, a sister has three children and is not educated, and this side, young people are selling tomatoes, and others sell in the train. This makes one have limited thinking abilities. I for one don't want my kids to grow up here. I want them to be in a better place where they will be enlightened and see that people are doing big things out there. You need people that will challenge you. But at times, for someone, poverty opens their brain. It depends how, as an individual you view life. (Mpho)

Orange Farm should not be a hindrance for any child. It should be a motivation for them to work hard and move to better place. Orange Farm helped us. We didn't have anywhere to live. (Stella)

Both graduates shared their own aspirations, and identified the challenges of access to information and finances as their major constraints. Though they eventually graduated, Stella noted that teaching was not her ultimate aspiration. She wanted to be a nurse, but her parents could not afford it; her sponsorship was only for a teaching qualification. Mpho said she had aspired to be a social worker when she was younger; however, she had got confused along the way. She noted that after dropping out from two programmes (Marketing and Security), she eventually pursued her childhood aspirations of being a social worker.

Summary of findings

According to the above evidence, the guardians think that the social surroundings (Orange Farm community) have an influence on the young people's performance at school. Strikingly, only two of the young people shared the same sentiments, although a majority of them expressed their concern about drug use, the high teenage pregnancy rate among their peers, the lack of access to information and other social factors. This could be attributed to the fact that the guardians have lived longer in Orange Farm and have witnessed more cases of young people with aspirations ending up being lured into the acts of others. Also, they have been working at the orphanage long enough to have witnessed what happens to the young people who live at, and eventually have to leave the orphanage. None of the examples of the young people who have had to leave the orphanage, either due to maturity or mischief, depict a positive influence on the young people either by friends or by the community.

The fact that few young people noted that the surroundings were good for them might point to two things. Firstly, they are either resilient with regard to the social challenges they are facing now due to previous experiences or they are just grateful for having a place where they can access basic capabilities and the nature of the surroundings are of no concern at all. Secondly, it might indicate that, indeed, the environment is good, at home and at school, and since they live under controlled care, they do not have to experience the negative social influence within the larger

community. All negative influences have minimum reach to them. They spend most of their time at the orphanage and at school and, as most of them indicated, they have good experiences at school.

The different views held by the graduates can be attributed to the fact that one of them is a young person who has grown up in Orange Farm and, because of her experience and her ability to overcome the challenges she has seen, she understands that living in Orange Farm is a challenge for young people. For example, she mentioned that she never knew there were opportunities for HE in Orange Farm; she only found out when she went to another province. She further argued that, for one to be able to aspire, one needs to see people who have done well and who will motivate you which, she says, is an absent element in Orange Farm. Owing to these reasons, as a young person, she said she does not want her own children to grow up in Orange Farm.

The older graduate argued that Orange Farm should not be a hindrance to any child's success or be a hindrance in proceeding to HE. The foundation of the argument is that Orange Farm had helped her and many other people when they were homeless.

It can be argued that these two different viewpoints indicate a generational gap and the different understandings of how big a role the environment plays in a young person's life. Again, individual experiences do matter. The young graduate indicated facing challenges from as early as 16 years when she had to work, support her child, and take herself back to school, whereas the older graduate did not have to struggle to gain access to university. As she indicated, all unqualified staff members at that time were sponsored to pursue HE, unlike nowadays where young people need to seek both financial and educational opportunities for themselves.

Other challenges limiting access to HE identified from data gathered from guardians and the graduates concur with the following challenges discussed in the literature review:

Family scepticism regarding the value of education – This was evident in the response of both the guardians and the graduates. Most people have not grasped

the importance of HE. Some families are usually too sceptical regarding the usefulness and importance of education (Kelly, 2005).

Poor educational quality – The lack of trained teachers and decreased teacher productivity, as indicated by one of the graduates, negatively affects the quality of instruction. Families become sceptical about the value of education because schooling quality in poverty stricken areas is also poor; there is little learning due to the frequent absence of teachers and few learning materials available, as well as fewer employment opportunities (Kelly, 2005).

CAPABILITIES

Though young people have the basic capabilities, reality is complicated and it is important to note the complexity rather than taking a short cut by excluding all sorts of information from consideration. For example, although it may seem obvious that shelter, food and basic education matter for how these young people are doing, it is not all obvious that these should be the only aspects that ever matter and so nothing else should be considered. Therefore, according to Wells (2012), evaluation of how well people are doing must seek to be as open-minded as possible. This can be noted in Nussbaum's (2011) version of the CA discussed in chapter 3 which provides the central capabilities for human development. These go beyond just having basic capabilities for a life of full human flourishing.

Figure 12 below illustrates how the challenges identified by the study can be constraints on other capabilities and human development in the young people's respective futures.

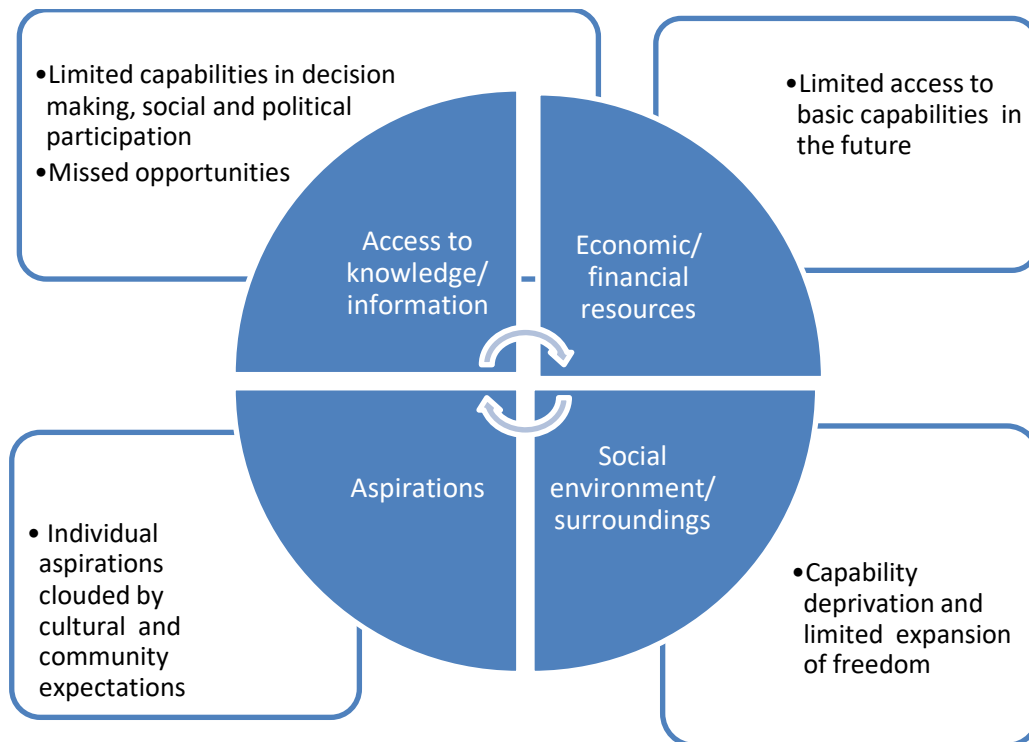


Figure 12: Capability deprivation versus human development

Limited access to information about HE may lead to capability deprivation with regard to decision making, social and political participation, as Sen (1992) indicates that capabilities are important for enhancing the achievement of wellbeing. Capability deprivation may lead to missed opportunities that could otherwise have improved one's life. For example, a missed opportunity for accessing HE may cause one to miss other opportunities such as employment and economic productivity. This does not reflect positively on one of the objectives of the Constitution which is to "[i]mprove the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each citizen" (RSA Constitution, 1996: Preamble).

Unemployment and economic unproductivity, in turn, lead to a lack of financial resources. This may cause one not to be able to afford access to basic capabilities such as shelter, education and other freedoms. Lives are precarious and insecure, and thus vulnerable, in Orange Farm.

This inability to access basic freedoms such as housing also limits freedom of movement, in other words, young people will not be able to move away from Orange Farm to places of their choice. Thus, this same environment limits them to expand

their freedoms in the social, economic or political spheres, creating a cycle from which they will struggle to escape.

Living in the same environment, with the same cultural and societal expectations, clouds one's capability to aspire. Though aspirations might be present, it might be difficult for individuals to break loose from these cultural norms due to limited capabilities in decision making, limited access to basic freedoms, and limited freedom to expand these aspirations.

One of the guardians noted:

People struggle here, they are not working. They can't get work. Even the young people who have completed matric, they send their CVs but they don't get anything. And as you see they end up being mischievous, taking drugs and smoking nyaope. (Tracy)

The above response notes the cultural influences, expectations and pressure in young people's aspirations, which limit the pursuit of individual freedom. Bakhshi et al (2003) and Bakhshi et al (2004) highlight that learning that stops after providing basic reading and writing skills would be insufficient to advance development and fight poverty. Therefore, in order to enhance the ability of the young people to fight poverty within the Orange Farm community, they need to study beyond matric, which some guardians might think is all that is necessary to get employment. Again, it is not only the lack of access to knowledge and information that is a challenge to young people; the community's lack of knowledge may be seen as a catalyst to young people's missed opportunities.

Based on the findings discussed to this point, the figure below outlines the interrelationship between capabilities and aspirations. It indicates how deprivation to access HE may lead to a downward spiral of the young people's aspirations. It further indicates that deprivation to access HE is the cause of aspirations failure and can be the cause of systematic poverty. Although there would be other causes of systematic poverty such as a lack of decent jobs within Orange Farm, access to HE improves opportunities beyond one's own environment. In other words, if young people are educated, regardless of being from Orange Farm, they can have employment opportunities anywhere in the country.

The outline indicates that a lack of access to HE leads to failure of the young people's educational aspirations, which might contribute to the inability to make good use of one's imagination and thought, which is a fertile functioning (Wolff & De-Shalit, 2013:142). Such failure of aspirations would raise concern since, among its other stated objectives, the 1997 White Paper on Education and Training sets out its framework and intentions for HE to "[m]eet the learning needs and aspirations of individuals through the development of their intellectual abilities" (DoE, 1997).

Again, the failure of educational aspirations deprives the young people of an opportunity to develop to their full potential and of a central socio-economic right that provides the foundation for life-long learning and economic opportunities.

Failure to access HE

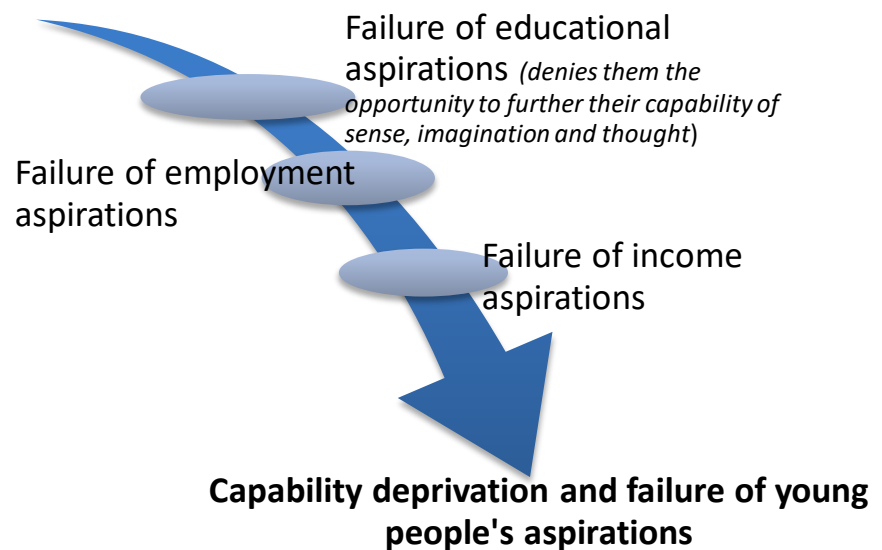


Figure 13: Downward slide of aspirations failure

This, in turn, leads to failure in decent employment and deprivation of income. Failure to achieve income leads to the identified social challenges such as crime, drug use and increased pregnancy rates.

Some of the beings and doings (capabilities) that the young people identified they had reason to value ranged from basic to complex functionings. Antony reported that he valued being safe at school, while Themba noted that he valued being recognised and respected for his singing talent and wanted to share it with people.

Though most had high aspirations and noted the need to be recognised in future for their achievements, with some indicating that they valued being of help to the community, there was no evidence of how they would realise these aspirations. This is clear in the findings on agency, which show very minimal levels of agency freedom among the young people. According to Sen (1992), agency freedom is necessary for an individual to realise the achievements that he or she values.

In a case where agency is present, the question would be: Are they given the capabilities to turn these aspired beings and doings into reality, taking into account that the conversion factors relevant here are against them? This takes us to the aspect of vulnerability which, in a way, contributes to the “unfreedoms” that hinder these young people to be and do what they have reason to value.

VULNERABILITY VERSUS ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Though the interviewed young people do not fall under the category of those vulnerable people who have experienced any particular natural disaster or catastrophic event, as some authors (Chambers, 1989; McEntire, 2005; Ebert & Kerle, 2009; Pelling, 2003) define the concept, they do fall under the three types of vulnerability that Myszal (2011) identifies: dependence on others, unpredictability and irreversibility.

Dependence on others (a lack of knowledge dependent on decisions by the orphanage)

Because interdependence is a fundamental feature of the human condition, and because of the commonly approved affirmations about interdependence, we oftentimes fail to notice the issue of dependency. In the wide context of interdependency there are stages where we depend on others (Myszal, 2011:48).

It emerged that the young people depend on the orphanage for all their basic needs and the realisation of their basic capabilities such as food, accommodation, shelter and education. It can be safely argued that, for a large number of people in Orange Farm, dependency is manufactured by society. This structured dependence is constructed by social policies and practices discriminating against them in matters crucial to their well-being such as income, education, housing and other social needs. These are natural and unavoidable dependencies that need to be addressed.

The manufactured dependence of most of the people in Orange Farm, created by the societal framework of institutions and rules, represents financial consequences of the past and present economic policies and social issues.

The predicament of unpredictability (of life after the orphanage)

The young people at the orphanage are faced with threats to security, particularly the issue of a home, because they might not live at the orphanage forever. As they grow older, they will need to leave the orphanage to make room for other younger people needing care. The reliability of their social support networks in the future is unpredictable, which is a cause for concern. As Misztal asserts (2001:75), the inability to predict what the future holds makes us feel “insecure and fragile”.

A bleak scenario for the young people is the risk whether they will have a source of income, since poverty and unemployment rates are extremely high in Orange Farm. With this issue at hand, their greatest uncertainty is that of entry into the labour market and the fragility of their social support system. These two factors of uncertainty and fragility infringe on the young people's need for security which, as a value, signify reliability and stability (Misztal, 2011:77).

The empirical evidence suggests that other uncertainties which pose as major vulnerabilities for these young people are associated with crime, drug use and high pregnancy rates among high school students. Rising unemployment is a major cause for concern in regards to the unpredictability of future experiences of these young people. The issue of crime and drug use among high school students contributes further to the unpredictability of human actions. Such actions pose a huge threat to social relations and security of the community of Orange Farm and lead to an unpredictable social environment.

Finally, the issue of high pregnancy rates among high school students and high HIV/AIDS in the community will, too, lead to unpredictable experiences of the future.

The predicament of irreversibility (of their situations)

The risk associated with the past is that we cannot free ourselves from the consequences of past deeds, wounds, pains and traumas (Misztal, 2011). This is a relevant truth for the young people who have experienced past pains and traumas,

not only of losing their loved ones, but of also finding themselves with no one within their families to care for them.

The experiences of the young people interviewed depicted ordinary lives with past pains and sufferings. Misztal (2011) states that this form of vulnerability stems from painful experiences that diminish the emotional capacities of individuals, lower the possibilities of realising individuality and reduce the chances of collaborative relationships with others who are seen as responsible for the experienced trauma and emotional vulnerability.

Even though the guardians indicated that the young people are resilient, more than half of the young people indicated that they either had no relations or good relations with their families or extended families. This emotional vulnerability is shown below:

We never understood each other with the family, and they chased me away and I ended up coming up to stay here. Now I want to prove my nephew's wife wrong because there are words that she once said that "you know what, you will never finish school and you will never have a future", so that's why I want to prove her wrong and show her that those words won't work. (Themba)

One of the graduates also noted this form of vulnerability in her response below:

I didn't have enough money. My uncle was paying for me and due to family problems and his wife did not approve of it, then I had to drop out when he was no longer paying. Not having parents is a challenge on its own. At times you might not get the support that you need from family, like family members. Some will want to crush you, sometimes like, your mother died without a qualification, isn't it, you say you want to go to university, what do you think you will go there and do, will you pass, you are from a disadvantaged background, you have nothing, how will you pay for the university fees? (Mpho)

In spite of the challenges identified by the young people, guardians and the graduates, a majority of the young people had high hopes for the future and many pictured themselves living their dreams. Hope is important because it raises moral and gives zeal to deal with difficult circumstances. It is therefore crucial to provide young people with the necessary support in order to promote their potential

aspirations, as well as for public policy and social arrangements to expand their capabilities.

CONCLUSION

Contributions of various policy interventions aimed at improving HE systems are widely recognised and since the national government has set about redressing disparities within the HE sphere, access for previously disadvantaged groups has been an important agenda of policy creation and implementation. However, much of the focus is often at university level, and seldom at community level. For example, bridging courses, access courses and extended programmes usually support those students who have already taken the steps to apply for enrolment, even though they do not yet qualify for direct enrolment for their choice of programme. Most often, these students already know what they wish to study, and have conversion factors necessary for access to HE in place. However, as the results indicated, young people from marginalised and socially excluded communities lack the knowledge on where and how to apply, which disqualifies them from accessing HE even before their grades disqualify them. A young person may have the necessary grades to qualify for access; however, his or her limited knowledge about HE and the application procedures puts him or her at a disadvantage compared to peers who have access to information and other resources. On the other hand, young people from advantaged societies (where there is access to information and knowledge on HE) may not have the necessary entry level requirements for accessing HE, but because they have access to information they know about programmes such as bridging courses and career preparation programmes, which puts them at an advantage compared to those who have no access to such information.

The inability of vulnerable young people to access HE has negative consequences on their well-being and on that of the community. Though poverty and vulnerability are interrelated, poverty in general seems, in this study, to be the most important indicator of educational disadvantage instead of vulnerability of the young people.

Poverty was a major reason for negative conversion factors and deprives the young people of the opportunity to expand their aspirational horizons. Without information and the absence of positive conversion factors to exercise and practice the capacity to aspire, the future continues to be bleak. This cripples agency to achieve both HE

and career aspirations. Therefore, I argue that increasing enrolment at HE institutions, as indicated by statistics over the years, does not indicate equity²² and equality²³ in their full sense among students from varied social structures.

The challenge of drugs among the youth within school environment also creates more problems by trapping and destroying young people's futures.

Using the CA, the challenges faced by young people have been tabled and implications of the results discussed are clear, given the importance of post matric education in dealing with poverty. I conclude that there is a need to develop comprehensive and vigorous intervention strategies to support possible access to HE for these young people. Basic capabilities and aspirations, which were identified to be present in all young people, alone, do not provide equitable access to HE. Public policy has to recognise the critical importance of addressing conversion factors such as resources, social class, and geographical location to promote equitable and equal access. The long-term contribution of HE on development is too important to ignore; for example, improved literacy levels and critical thinking skills; individual, community and national poverty reduction through employment and creation of job opportunities; improved health and nourishment; and freedom to exercise political and civil rights.

The next chapter provides a summary of the findings based on the research objectives, conclusions based on social justice, and recommendations on addressing the plight of these young people.

²² The equity approach holds that individuals should be treated according to their particular circumstances and requirements and recognises that some people have to overcome obstacles to access resources or opportunities (Habitat, 2013).

²³ Adopts that everyone should be treated the same due to the fundamental equality of all persons (Habitat, 2013).

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes the study by presenting the summary of the findings based on the main research questions. General conclusions are drawn, followed by a discussion of the limitations of the study and the recommendations that emerged from the study. Lastly, the main conclusion is provided.

As discussed in the theoretical section, the general conclusions will be based on the social justice framework outlined by philosopher Iris Marion Young, in which she pursues an argument that equalising education opportunities require the elimination of oppression, not just strategies of distributing resources equally (Eisenberg, 2006). Young (1990) argues for inclusive democracy that is realised by adopting interventions aimed at compensating for social and economic inequalities of unjust social structures.

The recommendations are meant to guide policy makers at all levels of government, civil society organisations that deal with issues regarding access to HE, as well as HE institutions.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

This study aimed to describe and analyse the challenges of vulnerable youth of Orange Farm in accessing HE. The challenges were identified and described as was intended.

Research question 1: *What knowledge do vulnerable young people of Orange Farm have regarding HE?*

The findings of the study revealed that the majority of young people did not have any information on either HE or institutions of HE. Few indicated that they knew about HE or had heard of it from friends, teachers and peers during social conversations; however, this was not formal knowledge intended for information purposes. This type of knowledge, if not from knowledgeable individuals, can be misleading. For example, UJ does not offer a pilot training programme as suggested by one of the participants, yet her aspirations are centred on studying for a pilot's qualification at UJ. At the same time, the lack of knowledge of institutions that do offer this programme reflects that the person might not have any information on the admission requirements for the programme (further contradicting most of the participants'

statements that they believed the education they were getting at school was sufficient). Since she was not aware that UJ does not offer the programme, it is most likely that she was not aware of what UJ might require if they had offered such a programme. The research findings further indicate that, of the 23 public universities in South Africa, only four were known by the participants, along with a few community colleges. This study has evidenced that little information is at their disposal about the different types of HE institutions, for example, details such the types of programmes offered and application procedures.

Research question 2: *What are the young people's aspirations?*

The young people do have desires of becoming better people in the future. Even though they all had aspirations, their lack of knowledge on how to realise these aspirations makes the achievement of the goals unlikely, an example of “injurious” cruel optimism (Roberts, 2013:384). Without intervention, the likeliness of realising these aspirations will grow less and less.

Most of them had their aspirations influenced by their past experiences, and the current community and social settings in which they interact. Despite these aspirations for both HE and professional careers, as indicated above, there seemed to be a lack of information and knowledge on how these aspirations could be realised. This lack of access to information and the enabling social arrangements restricted their ability to expand their aspirational maps and limited their agency freedom. This agency limitation is problematic in relation to human rights and capabilities since it denies young people the opportunity to autonomously deliberate, choose and act on what they perceive to be a good life (Griffin, 2008).

Most of the participants' career aspirations were geared towards fulfilling both internal and instrumental values. Some of them indicated an intension to help people and the community with their professions, while some indicated self-fulfilment.

Research question 3: *What can be done to facilitate increased access to HE?*

This question was directed specifically at the guardians and the graduates who had experienced challenges while they tried to access HE previously. They all indicated a need for intervention by the government to effect changes that will benefit vulnerable young people. Most importantly, they suggested collaboration between the

government and the teachers, since the teachers are the people who deal directly with the young people. Another suggestion was that the community should be involved in trying to motivate the young people.

In the following section, I provide general conclusions to the study based on the social justice concepts of the five faces of oppression forwarded by Young (1990), namely cultural imperialism, marginalisation, exploitation, powerlessness and violence, as they relate to this study. I further relate Young's (1990) framework to my overarching framework of capabilities as the foundation of development and a just society. As noted in the theoretical section, the conclusions provide a link between the CA's core concepts used in this study and Young's five faces of oppression. In essence, all CA concepts used in the study forward the notion of freedom which provides a basis for the interrogation of justice/injustice.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS TO THE STUDY

The general conclusions presented in this section are based on Iris Marion Young's social justice concept of the five faces of oppression²⁴ which was introduced in the theoretical framework section. Sen (1999a) presents development as a process of expanding the freedoms that people have reason to value. Some of these freedoms include economic freedom, access to education, health care and rights. In his view, these are part of the major indicators of development; therefore, unfreedoms can be a limiting factor to this development. These unfreedoms include a lack of access to education, sanitation, civil rights equality and adequate income, resulting in social injustice.

Among other things, Young (1990) asserts that development involves knowing and recognising each individual's needs and the organisation of power in institutions in addressing these needs. Similar to the findings by Lopez-Fogues (2012), the study found oppression to be the various "forms and impediments" (Lopez-Fogues, 2012:11) that individuals face, which limit their freedom to exercise their functionings. She further asserts that this form of oppression in exercising valuable beings and doings can be translated into a lack of agency freedom.

²⁴ The advantages and disadvantages experienced by some people, not because of tyrannical power, but by the practices of a well-intentioned society (Young, 1990:74).

Table 4 below presents the summary of the findings as well as the concepts of CA, social justice and vulnerability used in the study. The CA concepts link with the five faces of oppression, which are affected by the three types of vulnerability, either currently or in future.

Table 4: Summary of CA, social justice and findings

Faith

<div> <div>DEPENDENCE</div> <div>UNPREDICTABILITY</div> <div>IRREVERSIBILITY</div> </div>					
<div> <div>SOCIAL JUSTICE</div> <div>FIVE FACES OF OPPRESSION</div> </div>	Cultural imperialism	Marginalisation	Exploitation	Powerlessness	Violence
	CAPABILITIES				
Resources	Experience domination by others in society (those with resources)	Social and economic marginalisation = inequitable access to HE	Lack of resources expands room for exploitation	Constrained freedom for achieving valued beings and doings	Exploitation and marginalisation
Basic capabilities	Limited resources for expansion of aspirational map – limits political inclusion, participation and empowerment	Limited resources – lack of information on accessing HE – leads to inability to realise aspirations	Increased unemployment = might resort to minimum wage paying jobs	Limited resources to convert basic capabilities to concrete capabilities	Constrained educational dignity
Conversion factors	Low conversion factors, for example, lack of knowledge on how to make use of available bursary schemes	Social, economic and environmental challenges – lack of information			
Agency	Restricted exercise of voice, debate and contest	Restricted participation in valued activities			

Cultural imperialism

To link cultural imperialism to the issues of social justice, it is important to first familiarise oneself with the definition of culture.²⁵ As Appadurai (2004) noted, the capacity to aspire is a future-based cultural capacity and the culture of aspiration needs practice in order to expand it to realise future success. Against this background, it can be concluded that aspirations and culture are related; therefore, culture is important in development and poverty reduction.

Earlier findings in the study indicate that young people lack the resources to expand their aspiration horizons. This lack of resources leads to the richer groups' dominating the disadvantaged young people's cultural capacity to aspire. Furthermore, Appadurai (2004) and Young (1990) both address the reality of cultural influence on both aspirations and justice. Appadurai emphasises the strengthening of the idea of aspirations as a cultural capacity so that young people are able to exercise voice, debate, contest, and *oppose* vital directions for the collective social life they wish, whereas Young (1990) cautions of the unconscious dominant meaning of a society that leads to stereotypes involving the universalisation of a dominant group's experience and culture.

Appadurai's (2004) notion that the capacity of the poor needs to be strengthened not only identifies the need for political inclusion, participation and empowerment, but also indicates that superior groups in society are dominant over others due to their experiences, cultural expressions and history.

In reinforcing the above-noted cultural influences, Sen (1999a) echoes that a lack of material goods associated with poverty is caused by social behaviour (*influenced by culture*) which is a form of rejection, exclusion and isolation by those whose culture is dominant.

Marginalisation

It is evidenced by the empirical findings that young people of Orange Farm have long been socially and economically marginalised. The continued lack of social support, the lack of information resources, the growing population of the unemployed, and the

²⁵ Culture covers diverse and general ideas about human creativity and values regarding issues concerning collective agency, social organisations, cultural integrity, and property to issue of heritage, monuments and expressions (Appadurai, 2004:60).

failure of the government to respond effectively to the desperate economic needs of this community all give rise to vulnerability and marginalisation of the young people.

Firstly, as identified by the young people, the fact that most universities do not visit some schools or communities, but go to others to share information, indicates a form of marginalisation. This lack of information resources leads to a lack of knowledge, and both are a result of marginalisation and exclusion. In addition, these young people end up being left out from accessing information, either directly from universities or through research on the internet, due to their lack of monetary means (as one graduate put it). Lastly, the fact that the young people still face similar challenges with regard to resources (conversion factors) than the graduates interviewed (of which one graduated over 15 years ago) is an indication of persistent inter-generational marginalisation.

Young (1990) perceives this to be the most dangerous form of oppression, as it restricts vast groups of people from participating actively in social life, subjecting them to material deprivation. For example, if young people are not able to realise their HE aspirations, it will result in a lack of professional skills and they will be left out of the high-skill labour market. They will be unable to get decent, career-based employment because of low educational levels, a lack of jobs in their community, and the conditions of poverty, in this way increasing marginalisation.

Finally, in addressing marginalisation, fair equality of opportunity needs to be realised. Mandle (2007:108) quotes Moellendorf (2002) who states that, in order to realise fair equality of opportunity, “a young person growing up in rural South Africa must be just as likely as the child of a senior executive at a Model C school in the city in terms of their capability to reach the position of the latter’s parent”. According to Brighouse (2000:112), young people should not have “significantly better access to education simply because they have wealthy parents, or live in wealthier communities than others”.

Exploitation

Its geographical isolation has contributed to Orange Farm’s being pushed to the outer edge of society and expelled from useful participation in social and economic life. A lack of resources, both with regard to financing and information on access to HE, opens room for exploitation. Also the desperation for opportunities such as

employment and access to HE may put young people at risk of exploitation by those who have resources and some unscrupulous colleges that notice the gap of accessing HE. Finally, owing to their lack of skills and minimum education, they are prone to go for minimum wage paying jobs in future, which will expose them to further exploitation.

Powerlessness

Freedom (*equated to capabilities in this study*) is the first principle (Ballet, Dubois & Mahieu, 2006) to be realised in a society and needs to be transformed into capabilities. Although young people have basic freedoms for survival, most of them have their freedom impeded if they do not have the power to communicate their thoughts and feelings. In other words, they might not have the necessary power to convert the basic capabilities to concrete capabilities.

The issue of powerlessness can be further linked to Misztal's (2011) notion of the vulnerability of dependence on others and the predicament of irreversibility, which are additional examples of cases that young people have no power or control over. Again, in the case of Orange Farm, poverty is a key issue for social justice and a problem for freedom.

As a result of the low levels of education, they will end up in lower status jobs; thus, they will experience more powerlessness, both on the job and in the sphere of political participation, compared to their peers with professional jobs.

Violence

According to Young (1990), violence is usually directed at members of a social group simply because they are members of that group, for example, it can be in the form of exploitation or marginalisation due to poverty, vulnerability or orphanhood. Such oppression reduces and humiliates people by reducing their abilities to freely interact with their surroundings. This relates to violation of the right to human dignity identified in Section 10 of the Constitution as well as by Giesinger (2011). It states that everyone has inherent dignity that has to be respected and protected (RSA Constitution, 1996). According to Giesinger (2011), the concept of dignity has at least two different functions in educational thought. Firstly, a young person's dignity can ground a demand for education. The idea of this concept is that the young person – or the adult that he or she will become – is in need of education. Without

education, he or she would not live a good, autonomous life and he or she would be deprived of certain social and economic capabilities. Further, he argues that dignity is not something that must be realised; it is a given in every young person and it functions as the normative ground for respect in education (Giesinger, 2012:1).

Conversely, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, marginalisation and exploitation are all some forms of oppression in any community, which are evident in unemployment rates, poverty, poor infrastructure and a lack of basic services, particularly in informal settlements (Burger, 2009). In order to resist these forms of oppression some people resort to violent protests which are, in effect, the consequence of marginalisation and exploitation due to powerlessness and the failure of political institutions to address these challenges. One of the ways to eliminate this oppression is by welcoming what Sen (1992) refers to as human diversity in addressing equality by reforming processes and structures that sustain these distributive policies, as Young (1990) suggests.

CONCLUSIONS ON ACCESSING HE

As a liberal concept, the CA advocates for the freedom of individuals as its first principle; thus promoting individual choices and freedoms. But these freedoms vary from context to context. Firstly, in a just society, access to knowledge and information is a freedom allowing for informed decision making on, the choice of programme and the choice of HE, as well as the choice as to whether or not to proceed to HE. Secondly, in a just society, conversion factors are positively in place for the freedom/capability to aspire, allowing for a positive force that drives agency. Therefore, deprivation of freedoms can be viewed as a form of injustice, and failure to address these injustices can lead to the “continuation of the elite reproduction” in HE (Singh, 2011:484). This means the marginalised will remain marginalised, while those who have access to resources progress, and continue to progress over a lifetime.

Based on the findings and discussions of the study, figure 14 presents the relationship between capabilities and social justice. It illustrates how the process of converting basic capabilities into accessing HE is dependent on various conversion factors (economic, social and personal), which are absent, according to the evidence from the research findings. Also, it illustrates that conversion factors influence both

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individual's agency and aspirations for HE. Access to HE leads to achieved functioning, whereas a lack of access leads to the deprivation of individual well-being and what the person value being and doing. Achieved functionings allows individuals to live a life that they have reason to value, as well as to "be and do" what they value, which leads to social justice. On the other hand, deprivation of functionings and well-being leads to social injustice.

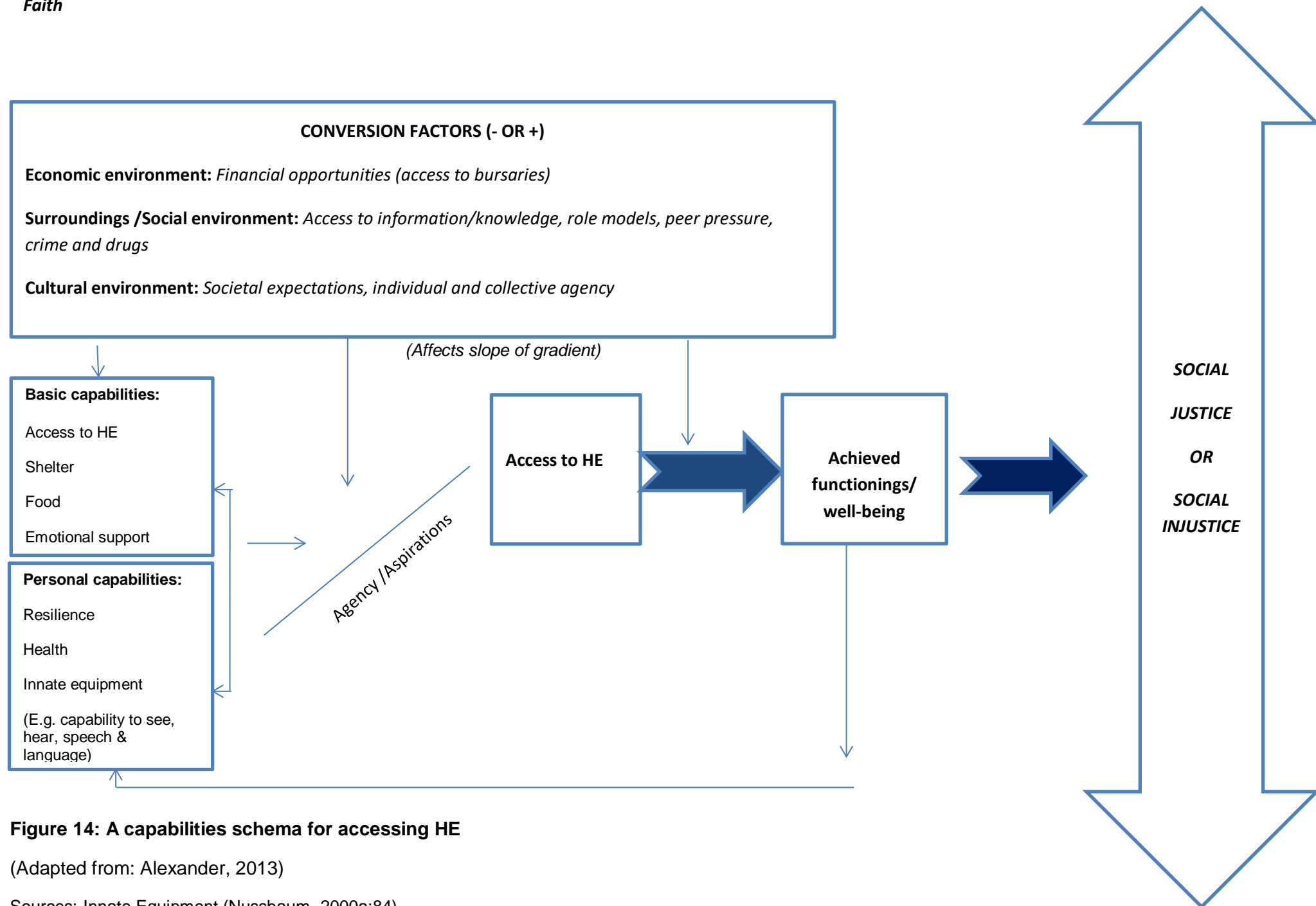


Figure 14: A capabilities schema for accessing HE

(Adapted from: Alexander, 2013)

Sources: Innate Equipment (Nussbaum, 2000a:84)

If concerns about access to HE are not addressed, the scenarios below describe what might happen to the young people of Orange Farm:

Scenario 1

A scenario of adaptive preferences

This is a scenario in which young people are comfortable with what they have and do not foresee a possible life outside of Orange Farm. In this case, they prefer not to move anywhere. Even if there might be a possibility of moving out of Orange Farm, without education, it will be a challenge to enjoy a life elsewhere. As long as they do not have skills for employment, they have limited freedoms to participate in political decisions. In an era where everything is run by technology, most of them might not be competitive in the different industries, except in self-employment, as noted in the literature (e.g. running vegetable stalls), which is not a bad idea as it does generate some income. However, as a young person, you want to fully achieve your functionings and influence policy, take part in political decisions, and be instrumentally valuable within the community.

Scenario 2

A scenario of “corrosive disadvantage” (Wolff & De-Shalit, 2007)

This scenario depicts a situation where the disadvantage of not accessing HE may cause other disadvantages. With multiple disadvantages in a community that is already marginalised, it is likely to become a “poverty haven”, with most of the children in Orange Farm being born into systematic poverty. Economically, there will be no incentive for investment; hence less employment opportunities. There might be a need to increase the capacity of social development services such as grants, orphanages, feeding schemes and free services.

Figure 15 illustrates the cycle of corrosive disadvantage.

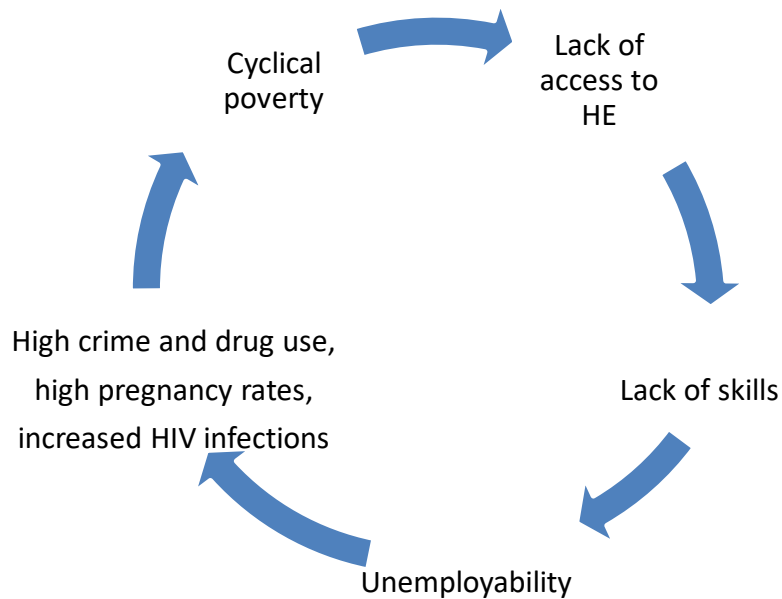


Figure 15: Cycle of corrosive disadvantage

A lack of skills will lead to unemployability which, in turn, will result in high crime and drug use. Some young girls will fall pregnant, drop out of school, and look for jobs to take care of their children. Most girls are likely to be single mothers due to the economic hardships facing both young men and young women. This is a challenge culminating from the high prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS, which might see the younger generation dying at an early age. This cycle of poverty is likely to continue.

However, if HE access and social justice (*marginalisation, exploitation, powerlessness and cultural dominance*) concerns are addressed, the following scenario could take place:

Scenario 3

A scenario of “fertile functionings” (Wolff & De-Shalit, 2007)

This is a scenario where all young people have the required resources to access HE, have freedoms to enhance their aspirations, are living the lives they value, and have a brighter future ahead. Young people live in a society where information is easily accessible, which opens up doors in other respects too. For example, access to information and resources leads to the freedom to make choices and to the expansion of aspiration horizons. Knowledge gained in HE institutions develops their critical thinking skills, improves employment chances and freedom to participate in

the community and in political spheres. Consequently, human development improves and an opportunity is created to break the cycle of poverty.

This scenario is possible only if the challenges identified in this study are addressed. In the next section, I give recommendation that I believe will contribute to efforts directed at addressing the identified challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Action is required at all levels of national and local stakeholders such as government, community, CBOs and institutions of HE. The following recommendations are based on the results obtained, as well as the social justice concerns raised. I make some suggestions, not to provide a detailed blueprint, but a guide to further deliberation about turning the findings of this study into actual methods of intervention.

Improve information available to the community

Since Orange Farm is known to be geographically isolated from the major city centres and access to university career days is a challenge, it would be important to open information centres so that young people who want to obtain information on HE are able to get guidance and advice.

National authorities and institutions of HE should provide information to young people about the admission requirements and procedures to access HE. This information should include the different types of institutions in South Africa, entry requirements for each institution, type of programmes being offered and any opportunities for financial support.

Encourage and support the role played by high schools

It is important for high schools to play a liaising role between young people and universities as well as community organisations that offer educational support. This way, learners may receive guidance and advice without their having to incur any costs trying to access the resources. In this case teachers should also be fully informed by the universities.

Collaboration between government and civil organisations

With the National Development Vision increasing participation rates in further education and training by 2030 (National Planning Commission, 2012), clearly, there is a great deal that needs to be done to widen access. It is important to encourage partnerships and collaboration among government, institutions of HE, and civil organisations and the community in the implementation of policies and frameworks discussed in chapter 2. In addition, stakeholders should intensify support for inclusive interventions that seek to address issues of the marginalisation of those informal settlements that lack resources for young people to access HE.

The drug abuse both within the community and at schools contended to by all the research participants calls for urgent intervention. Although there are policy frameworks²⁶ in place aimed at addressing drug use at schools, strategies need to be adopted at both local and national level by all stakeholders to implement, manage and evaluate these policies effectively. The effectiveness of these policies needs to be strengthened by working closely with both learners and parents in implementation.

Encourage young people's aspirations and agency

In poverty analysis, policy makers should account for the aspirations of the young people, examine the obstacles they face in achieving their aspirations and come up with intervention strategies. Such intervention strategies could be at high school level through programmes or workshops which link young people with role models, for example, with graduates in Orange Farm who have made it through HE.

Undertake further research

Further research may be undertaken by government, particularly the DHET, on ways of improving access to HE for those in disadvantaged communities. In addition, research may be undertaken by institutions of HE to determine and identify the academic potential of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and how to nurture it.

²⁶ Regulations for Safety Measures at Public Schools (2001), Policy Framework for the Management of Drug Abuse by Learners in Schools and in Public Further Education and Training Institutions (2002), and the National Guidelines of Drug Use and Abuse in all Public Schools and Further Education and Training Institutions.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitation of this research is that a small case study sample was used, which implies that the findings of this study cannot be generalised to apply to all vulnerable young people living in orphanages in South Africa. If resources and time allowed, the results of a national study would have yielded results that could be generalised for the population of the vulnerable groups. Nonetheless, vivid illuminative data have been presented on an under-researched group in relation to HE access.

In this section I have acknowledged the limitation inherent in my study. In the following section I propose areas not covered by this research that need further investigation.

AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- There is a need to explore fully the number of young people in communities such as Orange Farm who make it to universities as well as their transition to these institutions. Unfortunately, in the present study, all young people are still in high school and there were too few of them to allow for a further study on transition to universities.
- Urgent discussion is needed regarding interventions to motivate the young people of Orange Farm towards post matric qualifications.
- The use of drugs at schools is a major concern for most of the participants. There is a need to investigate the causes of this as well as come up with possible solutions to address this challenge. The influence of drug use and high teenage pregnancy on successful completion of high school could also be investigated. Furthermore, research into the role of schools in improving access to HE for these young people might prove valuable.

Above all, this study provided a useful platform to discuss the challenges of vulnerable young people in accessing HE that could be scaled up and replicated in other communities within Gauteng and other provinces so as to yield locally generated and empirically based evidence. Moreover the presentation of the research findings of this study will help generate additional research questions.

CONCLUSION

The principal objective of this study was to identify and discuss the challenges faced by young people of Orange Farm in accessing HE, with the intention of making recommendations that can be adopted by policy makers, civil organisations, HE institutions and advocates for education, human development and social justice. The findings solidified the research argument that specific focus only on the psychosocial and emotional well-being of young people is inadequate and fail to prepare young people for future well-being.

I believe this study and its findings shed light on the issues affecting young people in their endeavour to access HE and, equally important, economic and social challenges that face the Orange Farm community as a whole. The main challenges affecting the young people were distinguished and recommendations were made. The next critical step is to identify priority issues, and collaboration is needed from government, civil society organisations and institutions of HE in order to address the issues that the young people are faced with.

Use of the capabilities approach

The CA, as the main framework of this study, provided a new dimension in approaching this study and in identifying the challenges; thus expanding the conceptualisation of the problem. All core concepts of CA necessary for well-being functioning (basic capabilities, agency, conversion factors) were directly linked to all the responses obtained from the participants, and this helped to not only identify their challenges, but also to identify the actual opportunities available to them in pursuing their valued lives and improving their well-being.

This further proved the usefulness and multi-dimensionality of the approach. Although basic capabilities were similar among all young participants, agency and the perceptions on the influences of conversion factors varied from individual to individual based on different aspirations and varied contexts of their backgrounds – a finding which is consistent with the CA because of the idea that human beings are different.

Using the CA as the main framework in the study and incorporating social justice in the conclusions, allowed for insightful findings, by not only addressing young people's issues of access, but issues of development and social justice. The social

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justice framework identified first the influence of conversion factors on individual freedoms and agency and, secondly, the need for intervention to promote human development. Thirdly, it has expanded these findings into a broader social justice perspective and provided a more inclusive approach to all dimensions that influence access to HE for the vulnerable young people. Lastly, young people were given a voice to share their unique insights about their everyday lives and their views and hopes for their future.

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Appendix 1: Introductory Letter

Centre for Higher Education and Capabilities Research (CHECaR)

University of the Free State

Bloemfontein

Email: faithmkwananzi@gmail.com

11 May 2013

The Project Manager

Orphanage Centre

Orange Farm

Dear Sir,

Ref: Research study on the challenges for vulnerable young people in Orange Farm informal settlement, South Africa in accessing higher education.

Our previous discussion refers.

I am a Masters in Development Studies student from the Centre for Higher Education and Capabilities Research (CheCar), University of the Free State in Bloemfontein. In partial fulfilment of the requirement of the degree, I am expected to submit a research study.

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyse the challenges of vulnerable young people in accessing higher education at the selected research site.

Objectives

The objectives will be:

- To understand the aspirations of the young people in Orange farm
- To determine the challenges to accessing higher education by vulnerable young people of Orange Farm.

Faith

- To identify potential ways of enhancing access to higher education for the vulnerable young people

The research study is expected to complement studies that have already been done about access to higher education. Although some of the studies done are quite recent, very little research has been done regarding the challenges that vulnerable young people experience in accessing higher education and no studies are available on Orange Farm.

The results of this research may give the community ideas on how they can contribute in addressing the needs of the young people pertaining to higher education. The results will also help the reader develop an understanding of the nature of challenges faced by these young people and contribute to the body of knowledge about the accessibility of higher education for vulnerable young people

Your organisations knowledge and experience in working with the vulnerable young people would be of great benefit to the research and would be much appreciated.

I am proposing to conduct the interviews in May 2013, on different dates that will be convenient to your organisation. Kindly inform me if the suggested date is acceptable to your organisation.

Yours faithfully,

Approved By:

.....

Faith Mkwanzani

Masters Student

082 9786 351

.....

Professor Melanie Walker

Study Leader

051 401 9856

Appendix 2: Project Information

UNIVERSITY OF FREE STATE

BLOEMFONTEIN, SOUTH AFRICA

**CENTRE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAPABILITIES RESEARCH
(CHECAR)**

RESEARCH TOPIC:

**CHALLENGES FOR VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE IN ACCESSING HIGHER
EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF ORANGE FARM INFORMAL SETTLEMENT,
SOUTH AFRICA.**

PARTICULARS OF RESEARCHER:

NAME: Faith Mkwanzanazi, Masters Student

PHONE: 082 9786 351

EMAIL: wmkwanzanazi@yahoo.com

1. TITLE OF STUDY

Challenges for vulnerable young people in accessing higher education: A case study of Orange Farm Informal settlement, South Africa

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyse the challenges for vulnerable young people in accessing higher education at the selected research site.

2. POSSIBLE KNOWN RISKS OR DISCOMFORT

There are no possible known/identified risks.

3. POSSIBLE BENEFITS

There may be no direct benefits to the participants; however, the findings of the study will contribute to the body of knowledge about the accessibility of higher education for vulnerable young people.

4. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There is no financial compensation for participation in this research.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY

Participants' identity will be treated as confidential. Should the results of the study be published, identity will not be revealed and no identifiable references will be used.

6. TERMINATION OF PARTICIPATION

Participants are free to choose whether or not to participate in this study. There will be no penalty if they choose not to participate

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

Any further information or questions regarding this study may be directed to the researcher

Appendix 3: Informed Consent

INFORMED CONSENT

I hereby acknowledge that I have been informed about the nature of the study. I have also received, read, and understood the information regarding the study. I agree to take part in this study and understand that the names of the children will not be used in the research report.

I agree that the children may at any stage withdraw participation in the study and that I have an opportunity to ask questions and hereby agree to the participation in the study.

Parent/Guardian name.....

Parent/Guardian Signature.....

Date.....

I hereby confirm that the above parent/guardian has been fully informed about the nature, risks and benefits of this study.

Researchers' Name.....

Researchers Signature.....

Date.....

Appendix 4: Guardians Declaration

I,..... (PARTICIPANT), declare that:

1. I understand that I do have to take part in the research study. I will participate voluntarily and I have a right to withdraw from participating in the study at any time.
2. I understand that my name and that of the orphanage will be kept confidential and should the results be published, my identity and that of the orphanage will not be revealed.
3. The information I share will be between the researcher, and me and I understand that this information will be treated as confidential.
4. I understand that I will not receive any gift for my participation in the interviews.
5. I understand that I will not be penalised if I choose to withdraw from participating.

Signed:

Place..... Date.....

Participant Signature.....

Appendix 5: Interview Schedules

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE- YOUNG PEOPLE

Demographic Information

1. Name

2. Age

3. M/F

4. Nationality

5. Do you have any siblings?

a. If yes, how many / how old are they/ where do they live/ what are their highest educational qualifications?

6. How long have you been living in the orphanage?

7. What grade are you currently studying?

a. How many schools have you attended?

RESEARCHER: Faith DATE:	RESEARCH TOPIC: CHALLENGES FOR VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE IN ACCESSING HIGHER EDUCATION IN ORANGE FARM, SOUTH AFRICA
THEMES	SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
THEME 1: HIGHER EDUCATION	What are your experiences of school? Are you doing well? (both positive and negative)
	Can you tell me anything you know about higher education
	Which SA universities have you heard about? What do you know about them?
THEME 2: ASPIRATIONS	Do you want to continue to higher education? If not, what do you want to do? Which university would you like to attend and why? What would you study? Why do you want to study this? What job do you hope to get?
	Is there anything in particular that made you want to follow that route and how do you intend to realise that?
	How do you think the field you anticipate following will help you when you have completed your studies?
	Do you have any information regarding where and how you can apply to do that programme? Do you know the universities/colleges that offer the programme you want to do?
	Do you think that the education you are getting now is enough to get you to study the programme that you want to do?
THEME 3: CONVERSION FACTORS	Economic: Where would you get funding for your higher education? How do you think your economic situation will influence your chances of accessing higher education
	Social:

	<p>Tell me about your friends</p> <p>Tell me about your family</p>
	<p>Do you think they are in any way influencing your opportunities for Higher education?</p>
	<p>Environment:</p> <p>How do your surroundings here in Orange Farm (school, home and OF) influence your access to HE?</p>
	<p>Self:</p> <p>How have you / how are you preparing yourself for HE</p>
	<p>Other:</p> <p>What do you think is your greatest challenge for accessing higher education?</p> <p>If you were maybe in charge of the education department, do you think there is anything you could do differently regarding access to HE for people in your situation?</p> <p>What do you think schools could do to improve access to higher education for people in your situation?</p>
THEME 4: OTHER	<p>Is there anything that we didn't talk about that you think is important for accessing higher education?</p>
	<p>How do you think the concerns you raised can be solved?</p>
	<p>Would you be willing to be contacted again in a year or two to follow up on your progress?</p>
	<p>Do you have any specific area or concern that you perhaps would like researched on in the future?</p>

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE- GRADUATES

Demographic Information

1. Name

2. Age

3. M/F

4. Nationality

5. When did you graduate?

6. What degree/diploma did you do?

RESEARCHER: Faith DATE:	RESEARCH TOPIC: CHALLENGES FOR VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE IN ACCESSING HIGHER EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF ORANGE FARM INFORMAL SETTLEMENT, SOUTH AFRICA
THEMES	SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
THEME 1: HIGHER EDUCATION	Please tell me about current HE opportunities for young people in Orange farm
	What challenges do young people face in accessing HE in this community
	What can be done about these challenges – by the community, DHET, HE institutions or directly by government?
	Do you feel young people are putting enough effort into their secondary studies for them to be considered for HE? How do you know? Do you think the schools are preparing the students adequately to be ready for and have access to HE?
THEME 2: CAPABILITY TO ASPIRE	What were your aspirations when you were young? Is this what you studied for?
	If not; Is there anything in particular that you changed the career path? Do you think young people are aware of how they need to realise their dreams?
	Where did you get the information regarding where and how to apply for HE?
THEME 3: CONVERSION FACTORS	Tell me about the challenges you faced in accessing higher education:

	Social: Do you think the social environment (at school, home, family and friends) is in any way influencing opportunities for Higher education?
	Economic: Tell me about how you think the economic situation affects chances of accessing higher education
	Environment: Do you think living in Orange Farm influences performance at schools? How do you think the environment impacts on their access to HE?
	How did you overcome all these challenges?
THEME 5: OTHER	Is there anything that we didn't talk about that you think is important for young people in accessing higher education
	Do you have any other suggestions of how any concerns you have regarding higher education may be addressed
	Would you be willing to be contacted again in a year or two to follow up on your progress?
	Do you have any specific area or concern that you perhaps would like researched on in the future?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE- GUARDIANS

Demographic Information

1. Name

2. Age

3. M/F

4. Nationality

5. How long have you lived/ worked with the vulnerable children?

6. What are your formal qualifications to do this job and/or highest educational qualifications?

RESEARCHER: Faith DATE:	RESEARCH TOPIC: CHALLENGES FOR VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE IN ACCESSING HIGHER EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF ORANGE FARM INFORMAL SETTLEMENT, SOUTH AFRICA
THEMES	SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
THEME 1: HIGHER EDUCATION	Please tell me about current HE opportunities for young people in Orange farm
	What challenges do young people face in accessing HE in this community
	What can be done about these challenges – by the community, DHET, HE institutions or directly by government?
	Do you feel young people are putting enough effort into their secondary studies for them to be considered for HE? How do you know? Do you think the schools are preparing the students adequately to be ready for and have access to HE?
	Is there anything in particular that you wished was available now that would improve their chances of accessing HE?
THEME 2: CAPABILITY TO ASPIRE	Do they share their hopes for the future with you?
	If so; Is there anything in particular that you think makes them want to follow that career path? Are they aware of how they need to realise their dreams?
	Do they have any information regarding where and how they can apply for HE? Do you or other guardians encourage them to enter HE?
THEME 3: CONVERSION	Social:

FACTORS	
	Do you think the social environment (at school, home, family and friends) is in any way influencing their opportunities for Higher education?
	Tell me about how you think the orphanages 'economic situation affects their chances of accessing higher education
	Do you think living in Orange Farm influences their performance at their current schools? Do you think living in the orphanage influences their performance at school? How do you think that impacts on their access to HE?
	Do you think they are resilient and prepared for HE?
	What are your hopes for these young people and their futures? What kind of jobs are they hoping to get?
THEME 5: OTHER	Is there anything that we didn't talk about that you think is important for young people in accessing higher education
	Do you have any other suggestions of how any concerns you have regarding higher education may be addressed
	Would you be willing to be contacted again in a year or two to follow up on your progress?
	Do you have any specific area or concern that you perhaps would like researched on in the future?

Appendix 6: Gauteng Map



(Source: Google maps, 2013).