



Aspirations for higher education: Evidence from youth living in Kenneth Gardens municipal housing estate (Durban)

Zethembe Mseleku

September 2015

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for degree, Master of Development Studies, School of Built Environment and Development Studies, Faculty of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.

Supervisors: Prof. Richard Ballard & Ms. Kathleen Diga

Abstract

Inadequate and unequal access to higher education has been identified as a major development issue internationally. This issue has received practical attention from different stakeholders in an attempt to increase youth participation and to promote equal access to higher education. However, it has been recognised that such attention was not adequate to ensure access to higher education for the majority of deserving youth. Similarly, in South Africa, limited access to higher education for the majority of youth remains a major development problem. This study was conducted at Kenneth Gardens which is the municipal housing estate in Durban KwaZulu-Natal. Most youth at Kenneth Gardens lack higher education. As a result, higher education is one of the possible aspects making youth vulnerable to non-participation in the economy. It thereby remains critical that the public, private and civil society sectors cooperate to develop appropriate strategies to improve youth access and participation in higher education. The enhancement of competences and skills for young individuals can contribute to development. There are many practical barriers that hinder youth to participate in higher education. This study goes beyond looking at these practical obstacles which hinder youth from accessing higher education. More specifically, the study explores the lesser known factor of “lack of aspirations” for higher education. This study demonstrates that although it is important to address practical barriers such as providing funding for higher education, increasing the number of tertiary education institutions, strengthening the capacity of primary and secondary education to prepare learners for higher education, increasing youth aspirations for higher education is very critical for youth to access higher education. The major finding from this study is that lack of aspirations is one of the major obstacles that hinder youth from accessing higher education. Aspiration for higher education is one of the main drivers for youth to become motivated to access higher education. This suggests the need to implement effective programmes that aim at increasing youth aspirations for higher education.

Declaration on Plagiarism

1. I declare that this dissertation is my own work and does not involve any form of plagiarism.
2. I also declare that all citations, references and borrowed ideas have been correctly acknowledged.
3. I am aware that using other's work without proper acknowledgement is a criminal offence.

Student Name: Zethembe Mseleku

Student No.: 210541645

Signature:



Date: 21 September 2015

Supervisor's Name: Prof. Richard Ballard

Signature:



Date: 21 September 2015

Co-supervisor's Name: Ms Kathleen Diga

Signature:



Date: 21 September 2015

Contents

Abstract.....	i
Declaration on Plagiarism.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	vi
Acronyms and Abbreviations	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1. Background of the study	1
1.2. Rationale of the study	3
1.3. Study context	3
1.3.1. Kenneth Gardens Map	5
1.4. Objectives of the study.....	5
1.5. The structure of the dissertation.....	5
1.5.1. Chapter 2	5
1.5.2. Chapter 3	6
1.5.3. Chapter 4.....	6
1.5.4. Chapter 5	6
1.5.5. Chapter 6.....	7
Chapter 2: Literature Review	8
2.1. Introduction.....	8
2.2. Understanding the notion of “aspirations for higher education”.....	9
2.3. Youth aspirations for higher education in the United Kingdom	11
2.4. Youth access to higher education in developing countries	11
2.5. The factors that shape youth aspirations for higher education.....	12
2.5.1. The family, school and community influence.....	12
2.5.2. Socio-economic status.....	14
2.5.3. Financial factors.....	14
2.6. Youth capabilities and access to higher education.....	15
2.7. Youth aspirations, access to higher education, and economic development	17
2.8. Higher education as a public good or commodity	18
2.9. Knowledge diffusion and youth aspirations for higher education	21
2.10. Conclusion	22
Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework	23

3.1. Introduction.....	23
3.2. Sustainable Livelihood Framework	23
3.3. Human Capital Theory.....	25
3.4. Social Capital Theory.....	27
3.5. Capability Approach	28
3.6. Conclusion	30
Chapter 4: Research Methodology.....	31
4.1. Introduction.....	31
4.2. Qualitative research methodology	31
4.2.1. Participant observation.....	31
4.2.2. Semi-structured interviews	33
4.3. Sample.....	33
4.3.1. Purposive or judgmental sampling.....	34
4.3.2. Availability of respondents	34
4.3.3. Basic respondent's information	35
4.4. Interview process	36
4.4.1. Interview setting.....	36
4.6.3. The effect of language.....	36
4.7. Data analysis.....	37
4.8. Research Trustworthiness	38
4.9. Conclusion	39
Chapter 5: Findings.....	40
5.1. Introduction.....	40
5.2. The extent of youth aspirations for higher education.....	40
5.3. The basis of youth aspirations for higher education	45
5.3.1. The drive to improve well-being.....	45
5.3.2. The drive for social change	46
5.3.3. The role of family members.....	48
5.3.4. The role of teachers.....	49
5.3.5. The role of community members	50
5.3.6. The role of peers	51
5.3.7. Higher education awareness.....	52

5.4. Youth capabilities and access to higher education.....	53
5.5. Challenges to access higher education.....	55
5.5.1. Financial barriers.....	55
5.5.2. Application and admission to higher education institution.....	57
5.5.3. Lack of aspiration and access to higher education.....	58
5.6. Conclusion	59
Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion	60
6.1. Conclusion	63
6.2. Recommendation	63
Bibliography	64
Appendix 1	72
Appendix 2	77
Appendix 3	82

Acknowledgements

This dissertation is dedicated to all those who contributed towards the accomplishment of this research study. If it was not for the meaningful support they gave me throughout the study, I would not finish this dissertation. Firstly, I would like to thank my family, particularly my mom who gave me emotional support in times of difficulties throughout this research project. My sincere thanks also extend to my friends who also gave me full social support throughout the project.

My special thanks also go to the Kenneth Gardens youth who participated in my study willingly. Also not to forget to humbly thank Prof. Monique Marks, Dr. Kira Erwin, Mr. Clive Greenstone and the entire project team for giving me a platform to participate in Kenneth Gardens Development Projects.

I would also like to appreciate the financial support I received from National Research Foundation (NRF) in 2014 organized by Prof Monique Marks. In addition, I would like to express my gratitude to the DST/NRF CoE in Human Development whose director is Dr. Linda Richter for the financial support for the year 2015 they awarded me to finish this dissertation. I remain grateful and privileged to be the recipient of National Research Foundation (NRF) funding.

Lastly, I would like to give my special thanks to my supervisors, Prof Richard Ballard and Ms Kathleen Diga for the guidance, encouragement, and general academic support throughout the study. I am really grateful and privileged to have them as my supervisors.

Overall, the accomplishment of this dissertation would be highly impossible without the mercy of the Lord, I therefore thank God for the strength he gave me to finish this critical work.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

CAO.....	Central Applications Office
CoE.....	Centre of Excellence
DST.....	Department of Science and Technology
DUT.....	Durban University of Technology
ICT.....	Information Communication Technology
KG	Kenneth Gardens
KZN.....	KwaZulu-Natal
NPO.....	Non Profit Organizations
NRF.....	National Research Foundation
SA.....	South Africa
UCT.....	University of Cape Town
UJ.....	University of Johannesburg
UKZN.....	University of KwaZulu-Natal

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

Inadequate and unequal access to higher education remains a major development issue. In South Africa (SA) before 1994, participation in higher education was highly skewed with approximately 9% of Africans having access. Approximately 70% of higher education students before 1994 were whites (CHE, 2004: 62 cited in Statistics SA, 2004: 1). Although black South Africans constituted the highest percentage of the South African population compared to other racial groups, they constituted the lowest percentage in higher education. Further, Statistics SA (2011: 2) shows that more than 50% of the matriculants who applied for admission to tertiary education institutions were disqualified mostly due to the fact that they did not meet the minimum entry requirements. While the inequalities in accessing higher education between racial groups decreased after 1994, the percentage distribution of average graduate success rates in higher education remains unequal, and mostly determined by economic background (Statistics SA, 2011: 13).

Studies worldwide have demonstrated that there is a strong link between education and economic growth. It has been proven that even firm and factory workers require a substantial level of education in order to ensure productivity (Bloom et al. 2006). Therefore, this clearly indicates the importance of promoting citizen participation in higher education in order to stimulate economic growth. Of late, the shift to a knowledge-based economy due to globalisation has been recognized. Such transformations called for an increase of investment in education, particularly higher education as a way of achieving economic development goals (Bloom et al. 2006). In order to meet the requirement of the knowledge-based economy, government, private sector and civil society are expected to respond to the increasing demand for human capital. These expectations do not necessarily mean that labour intensive industries are irrelevant to the current economy; rather, it means that access and participation in higher education needs to address the demands of contemporary jobs. The enhancement of relevant competencies and skills for young individuals will contribute to development (De Meulemeester & Rochat, 1995). Therefore, the role of skilled and knowledgeable labour, information, technology and learning is increasingly recognised for economic performance. Nonetheless, it is common that the corporate sector only

invest in human capital to serve their interest; that is only when the sector is running out of qualified labour. As there are indications that without a demand for labour in the market, the corporate sector is often hesitant to invest in human capital (Bloom et al. 2006). Hence, investing in youths' education alone is not enough to attain development objectives. It is equally important that the youth should be inspired to aim for highly demanded jobs in the market and choose careers accordingly. It is also necessary to address the practical demand-led obstacles that hinder youth's access to higher education and also to improve their aspirations for future work which are met by higher education.

Since 1994, the SA government has been trying to promote equality in terms of access to higher education for its citizens (Lin, 2004). Billions of rands are invested in primary, secondary and tertiary education to ensure that all South Africans participate and benefits from education (Lin, 2004). Despite the government's effort to promote equal access to education at all levels for its citizens, there are many challenges and barriers that hinder participation in higher education by SA citizens. As a result, such challenges leave government, the private sector and also civil society with an increased burden to invest in possible solutions (Shaw & Allison, 1999). Financial constraints are often identified as a major barrier for the majority of SA citizens to access higher education. Analyses show that addressing practical barriers like lack of funding is not a guarantee that the citizens of a country will have access to higher education. Therefore, exploring other obstacles like the absence of aspiration in the youth is also deemed necessary (Shaw & Allison, 1999).

In this dissertation, I demonstrate that addressing practical barriers such as funding constraints for higher education is critical but not enough to increase participation in higher education. I also demonstrate that increasing the number of tertiary education institutions and strengthening the capacity of primary and secondary education to prepare learners for higher education is also crucial. I however argue that increasing youth aspirations for higher education is one of the important drivers for the youth to access and participate in higher education. This dissertation therefore suggests that effective programmes that are aimed at increasing youth aspirations for higher education should be supported and promoted.

1.2. Rationale of the study

Empirical evidence reveals that access to higher education is hindered by multidimensional factors. These factors lead to youth economic vulnerability (Wang, 2011: 280). Increasing access to higher education is one of the important tools for youth empowerment. It therefore stands to reason that addressing factors that undermine youth access to higher education is pertinent. The motivation behind this study is to particularly understand one important factor, youth aspirations for higher education and how aspirations are crucial for youth to access higher education. The study was conducted in Kenneth Gardens, which is a low income municipal social housing estate in Durban characterised by diverse socio-economic problems. The rationale here is that through discovering and addressing a specific factor: low youth aspiration, and how that undermines access to higher education; there is a possibility that other socio-economic issues within the community could also be addressed. Essentially, improving youth access to higher education can facilitate youth access to employment and other economic opportunities, and improve livelihoods, well-being and the health of citizens.

Investment in education, especially higher education is crucial; reason is that the benefits transcend more than just individual benefits. Such an investment is also beneficial to a society (George & Patrinos, 2004). Studying and investing in understanding youth aspirations for higher education can also be a useful platform for tertiary education institution policy development. Further, having this information on youth aspiration can be useful in developing integrated approaches for youth empowerment and development. Increasing access to higher education is one of the important ways to empower the youth. It is very important to understand firstly whether the youth have aspirations for higher education, because a lack of aspirations on its own can be an obstacle for youth to access higher education. It is also necessary to understand the elements that shape youth aspirations for higher education and the extent to which youth aspirations translate into realities. This study can be critical to inform programmes and policies that aimed at eliminating the factors that undermine youth aspirations for higher education and that thereby jeopardize the efforts to bring youth from difficult socio-economic backgrounds to join higher education programmes.

1.3. Study context

The study was conducted at Kenneth Gardens municipal housing estate (Durban). Kenneth Gardens is situated at Umbilo within EThekweni (Durban) and the area is characterised by poor

housing, high level of crime, unemployment, low skills level, low incomes and limited economic activities. In addition, a large portion of the residents have at least one member of their family with a serious physical or mental illness (Kenneth Gardens Community Project Report, 2013). This group of people is given first preference to access social housing by the EThekweni Municipality. This group of people suffers from a mental, physical disability or chronic illness; and they cannot afford housing on their own. However, this does not mean that all people who have disabilities have low or no income. There are approximately 1500-1800 people living in Kenneth Gardens. In addition, 282 units on the estate are in a state of disrepair. The estate continues to be run by the municipal housing department which has a contentious relationship with many residents who feel the department does not do enough to keep up with maintenance of both individual units and the neighborhood as a whole (Kenneth Gardens Community Project Report, 2013). Although Kenneth Gardens is approximately 1 kilometer away from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Howard College campus, relatively few Kenneth Gardens high school graduates attend university. This means that although there is a large number Kenneth Gardens youth who matriculate particularly from Glenwood High School, a former model C high school, only a few of them proceed to higher education. Below is a map which shows the location of Kenneth Gardens community at Umbilo in Durban. In the map, Kenneth Gardens community is located at the corner of Queen Mary Avenue and Deane Road (between Queen Mary Avenue and Hutchinson Road).

1.3.1. Kenneth Gardens Map



1.4. Objectives of the study

This study on youth aspirations for higher education has four key objectives. These include the following:

- To explore aspirations for higher education amongst young people at Kenneth Gardens.
- To explore awareness of higher education opportunities amongst young people at Kenneth Gardens.
- To explore challenges in accessing higher education amongst young people at Kenneth Gardens.
- To explore the extent to which youth aspirations for higher education translate into realities.

1.5. The structure of the dissertation

This dissertation consists of five further chapters.

1.5.1. Chapter 2

Chapter two makes a review of literature on youth aspirations for higher education. This chapter consist of several themes under the broader theme “youth aspirations for higher education”. I

reviewed literature pertaining to the concepts of aspiration by different authors and I discovered that there is no single definition for aspiration. In Appadurai (2004: 76 cited in Bok 2010: 3), aspiration is the ability to draw a roadmap towards your destination. There are several other definitions but the various definitions for aspiration share common features. I presented these definitions and commonalities in this chapter. Secondly, I presented the literature on youth aspirations for higher education in the United Kingdom (UK) and South Africa (SA). Following this section, I reviewed literature on the factors that shape and undermine youth aspirations for higher education. I also explored whether higher education is a public good or a commodity. I further examined how higher education accessibility and affordability links to youth aspirations. Also, I explored the barriers for youth to access higher education and the factors that contribute to youth aspirations for higher education.

1.5.2. Chapter 3

Chapter three outlined the theoretical frameworks. In this chapter I discussed four theories that are used to frame the analysis of my research findings. These theories include: human capital theory, social capital theory, sustainable livelihood framework, and the capability approach. In discussing these theories, I showed how they serve as appropriate frameworks for the analysis of the research findings.

1.5.3. Chapter 4

Chapter four is based on the research methodology. In this chapter I presented the qualitative methodologies used to collect data for this research study. I discussed in detail the research methods, sampling method, interview processes, and also the various measures taken to ensure trustworthiness of the research findings.

1.5.4. Chapter 5

Chapter five is based on the findings of the research. In this chapter I presented an empirical report from primary data which was gathered from in-depth interviews and observation research methods. I presented my findings about youth aspirations for higher education and the challenges the youth face with regards to access to higher education. Possible interventions, and how to address such barriers are also highlighted in this chapter.

1.5.5. Chapter 6

Chapter six is based on discussion and conclusion from research findings. I took an analytical approach in an attempt to address the research questions and objectives. I also presented recommendations as to how youth aspirations for higher education can be improved in SA, with a particular reference to the youth living in Kenneth Gardens. In addition, I also recommended how practical barriers for youth to access higher education can be addressed.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

Higher education is recognised as one of the important pillars of economic development worldwide. However, international studies on higher education have proven that lack of access to higher education is a major problem not only for developing, but also for some developed countries (Heifetz & Minelli, 2006: 2). Youth aspirations for higher education have been widely studied internationally, and it has been discovered that aspirations plays a pivotal role for young people to access higher education (Jeffrey, 2012: 248). This is due to the fact that when youth have high aspirations for higher education, they are likely to do well in their studies at high school level, and this gives them greater chances to access higher education. It is therefore important to address youth aspirations for higher education in order to attain intended higher educational outcomes. However, in Appadurai's (2003) perspective, having high aspiration does not necessarily guarantee one's access to higher education, rather, individuals have uneven capacities to aspire, and poor people have less aspirations because of two main reasons. One reason is that the poor have limited opportunities to various choices for commodities that influence their well-being (Heifetz & Minelli, 2006: 2). Again, due to poverty, the poor have fewer experiences relating to aspirations for commodities (Heifetz & Minelli, 2006: 2). This also demonstrates that to some extent youth aspirations for higher education are constrained by budget. In spite of the preceding, students may have aspirations for higher education given that they are provided with necessary information and experiences that enables them to make powerful choices in order to discover what the future holds for them. In most developed countries, programmes that aim at building youth aspirations for higher education have been initiated. For instance, the British and American governments are active in promoting support for youth to aspire to participate in higher education (Jeffrey, 2012: 248). It has been discovered that there are many obstacles faced by the youth regarding access to higher education. Yet the challenge for society is how to address these barriers as a way of promoting youth access to higher education. Despite these mainstream challenges, it has been acknowledged that aspirations have much to offer for young people to access higher education. Poor aspiration on its own can be a challenge for youth to access higher education. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate youth aspirations for higher education and this is central in this chapter.

This chapter presents a review of literature under the following themes: the first part provides a broad understanding of aspirations for higher education. A vast literature on youth aspirations and access to higher education in developed and developing countries is also explored. Part of the literature reviewed in this chapter focus on the factors that shape youth aspirations for higher education. The section on capability approach and youth aspirations is extended to cover the literature on agency and youth capabilities in relation to aspirations. Additionally, under the broad theme of youth aspirations for higher education and national development, a presentation of literature based on higher education and human development is made. The question of whether higher education is a public good or a commodity is also addressed. Also, the question of how higher education accessibility and affordability links to youth aspirations is also unpacked. It has been discovered from a body of literature that there are barriers for youth to access higher education; these are also discussed in this chapter. The last section of the chapter covers the literature on knowledge diffusion and youth aspirations for higher education.

2.2. Understanding the notion of “aspirations for higher education”

According to Appadurai (2004: 76 cited in Bok 2010: 3), aspiration is the ability to draw a roadmap towards your destination. In Conradie’s (2013) understanding, the notion of youth aspirations for higher education is linked to a drive for needs satisfaction and life sustainability. Furthermore, the term aspirations indicates an individual’s life dream as to how they could have a “good life” with the resources of health, material benefits, creativity and agency (Conradie, 2013: 191). Some scholars from developing countries suggest that poor youth aspirations for higher education may lead to poverty to some degree (Conradie & Robeyns, 2013: 561, Purcell et al. 2001). In this regard, a lack of aspirations for higher education is regarded as a significant factor that hinders youth access to higher education and this undermines upward mobility. An educated youth has the potential to break the cycle of poverty from a household level, to community level up to the national level. As a result, it is pivotal that youth remain inspired to pursue higher education. As a consequence, understanding youth aspirations may be an important base for poverty reduction strategies particularly in the third world (Conradie & Robeyns, 2013: 561).

Furthermore, Camarena & Sarigiani (2009: 7) draw on Appadurai’s (2004) notion of capacity to aspire, claiming that poor people might fail to escape poverty due to the fact that they lack the

capacity to aspire. They may also be socially discouraged, and this can create a situation where they cannot materialise their aspirations. However, a pertinent question is whether expanding aspirations can increase youth ability to succeed in accessing higher education and other economic opportunities such as getting decent employment. Boosting youth capabilities is thus important to enable them to realize their aspirations. As noted in numerous studies in developing countries, youth particularly those from disadvantaged families, school and home background often lack confidence in their academic abilities. As a result of this, they perceive themselves as being unable to gain entry into higher learning institutions (Kabiru et al, 2013: 3). This implies that even if they have a potential to gain entry into higher education institutions, they may hesitate to apply for admission because they lack confidence in their abilities.

Still on youth aspirations for higher education, Quaglia & Cobb cited in Walberg & Greenberg (1996: 179) provided a historical perspective on aspiration theory. They claim that aspirations are strong individuals' ambitions and drive to set goals for their future, and the enthusiasm they have to attain their goals. They also added that social groups may put pressure on the aspirations and educational attainments of the youth. This simply means that youth aspirations are also influenced by the people with whom they associate (Quaglia & Cobb cited in Walberg & Greenberg, 1996: 179). Such groups include family members, peers, teachers and associations within the community such as youth clubs. Likewise, Kao & Tienda (1998: 352) postulate that parents, teachers and peers play an important role for youth's early application for college or university entry. They also added that higher educational aspirations are partially influenced by major societal stakeholders who act as role models, and often convey their expectations for higher education qualifications achievements directly to those youth who are still pursuing primary or secondary education (Kao & Tienda, 1998: 352; Kiyama, 2010: 335). Also, Campbell (1983 cited in Flowers et al. 2003: 171) believes that educational aspirations refer to the students' views and perceptions on their strong devotion to have educational achievements that goes beyond primary education in the future. However, apart from the intention to obtain a higher educational qualification, the aspirations for higher education are influenced by desires to access a good paying job, better future and also to improve well-being with the income and knowledge gained through participating in higher education (Shakya et al. 2012: 70). There is a broad supposition that youth aspirations are influenced by their mind-sets which motivates and encourages them to strive for academic success.

2.3. Youth aspirations for higher education in the United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom (UK), fair and equal access to higher education is recognised as a policy objective (Jones & Thomas, 2005). This objective is set to ensure that the UK maintains the highest possible percentage of educated population in order to strengthen the country's economic base (Jones & Thomas, 2005). Nevertheless, it has been recognised that youth non-participation in higher education is due to lack of expectations and low aspirations (Jones & Thomas, 2005: 617). The UK government has engaged in diverse youth aspiration-raising initiatives. This is an attempt to motivate and encourage young people to pursue higher education (Jones & Thomas, 2005: 617). Given that youth non-participation in higher education can be the result of a lack of awareness, the UK government is committed in its support of the establishment and promotion of higher education awareness programmes in order to encourage youth to pursue higher education (Ball et al., 2002: 57). In most developed countries, governments aim to ensure that at least 50% of the youth population proceeds to higher education. The contention is that youth access to higher education is linked to high aspirations (Watts & Bridges, 2006: 267). Some scholars assume that low aspirations for higher education is equal to low achievements, therefore boosting youth aspirations should be a key global policy objective (Watts & Bridges, 2006: 267). Further, research evidence shows that at an international level, groups of young people that are underrepresented in higher education have been reported to have low aspirations for higher education. They are also disadvantaged by unskilled backgrounds; this consequently leads them to have low ambitions for higher education and there is a widening of the gap between them and their more advantaged counterparts (Gayle et al., 2002: 5). Based on the experiences of the UK one can argue that family, school and community background plays a critical role in building youth aspirations for higher education.

2.4. Youth access to higher education in developing countries

Access to higher education is highly unequal in many rich countries, as is also the case in many developing countries including South Africa. This has widened inequality among citizens in terms of wealth and per capita income (Staheli & Hammett, 2013: 36). Generally, majority of the youth from developing countries have poorer aspirations for higher education compared with those of their contemporaries from the developed world. Among other reasons, this is due to economic stagnation in some developing countries (Staheli & Hammett, 2013: 36). As noted in some literature, countries with poor economy are likely to experience education crises which

involve intensive educators' strikes or protests and lack of financial aid for students. These factors may hinder or discourage youth to seek higher education. However, this is not always the case, as some students from poor countries are eager to pursue higher education in other countries regardless of the economic conditions in their home countries (Staeheli & Hammett, 2013: 36). In addition, poor primary and secondary schooling system has been identified as one of the main challenges that undermine youth aspirations for higher education in most developing countries (Conradie, 2013: 190). Most young people in developing countries do not aspire for higher education because they are discouraged by the poor primary and secondary schooling system that cannot prepare them for entry into higher learning institutions (Conradie, 2013: 192). Nevertheless, academics and policy makers complain about the lack of discipline among educators and learners, claiming that a sense of commitment should be instilled in these actors so as to improve the educational system (Conradie & Robeyns, 2013: 560). Despite the above mentioned issues that have been associated with lack of discipline among educators and learners, studying youth aspirations for higher education to understand the factors that motivates and determines individuals academic success is necessary in developing countries. The study of youth aspirations in developing countries is necessary because it can enable decision and policy makers to formulate programmes to improve youth aspirations and thus increase their access to higher education (Conradie, 2013: 190). Therefore, as much as a corpus of literature demonstrates that youth access and aspirations for higher education is unequally distributed amongst the population between countries, it is critical to explore the major factors that cause this inequality.

2.5. The factors that shape youth aspirations for higher education

There have been global research interests on understanding the factors that shape youth aspirations for higher education. These factors include but not limited to family, school, community influence, socio-economic status and financial factors.

2.5.1. The family, school and community influence

Family, high school and community play a critical role in shaping youth aspirations for higher education. According to Ward (2006: 55), family background, school and community environments have a major contribution to the formation of youth aspirations for higher education. Families are powerful forces for young people's career planning. In that, family contributes to young peoples' aspirations for higher education. These contributions are

effectuated through their observations of the experiences of their family members (Ward, 2006: 55). Furthermore, Gayle et al. (2002: 6) found that youth aspirations for higher education are also influenced by other different societal structures. These structures include occupational and social class, parental education, ethnicity, community members and family size (Finnie, 2012: 1163; Wohn, et al. 2013: 424; Flowers et al. 2003: 41). Flowers et al. (2003: 41) state that family, school and student's characteristics are crucial to determining youth interest to pursue higher education. It has also been recognised that young people with parents who attended college or university and who probably have professional work are likely to aspire to attending a higher education institution (Seginer & Vermulst, 2002: 545). Correspondingly, Yowell (2010: 64) believes that parents who are uneducated and possibly unemployed often regard any job as a good job and encourage their children to choose work over higher education.

In addition, low academic expectations from learners by teachers, family and community members tend to discourage young people from pursuing higher education. However, Gutman & McLoyd (2000, cited in Flowers et al. 2003: 41) conducted a study on African American youth aspirations for higher education and found that parents who are highly educated provided more support to their children to attain excellent high school results. This example demonstrates that aspirations for higher education are influenced by family background to some extent. It can therefore be argued that the manner in which higher education is perceived within a household and a community is critical in influencing youth aspirations for higher education. Young people may be motivated to attend higher education based on what they observe within their local communities (Ward, 2006: 60). The importance of role models in shaping youth aspirations for higher education is also highlighted in the literature. The presence of role models in the community provides indirect encouragement to young people living in a particular community to pursue higher education (Seginer & Vermulst, 2002: 549). Kirk & Day (2011: 1178) found that majority of the youth are ambitious for higher education, yet they have more challenges to overcome including dealing with discouraging words coming from their family and community members. Similarly, some cultures and traditional beliefs are unfavorable for youth access to higher education. For instance, parents or guardians may be very traditional in a manner which discourages the youth to aspire for higher education (Wang, 2011: 278). These parents or guardians are referred to as traditional because they do not believe that higher education is one of the main pillars for individuals' life success, and may thereby refuse to support their children's

efforts to pursue higher education. Similarly, high schools that are situated in urban settings are more likely to offer career guidance to their students and also link them with tertiary education institutions which shape their aspirations to higher education (Archer & Hutchings, 2000: 557).

2.5.2. Socio-economic status

The existing literature also shows that aspirations to some degree determine young people's access to higher education. Socio-economic status is another factor that affects youth aspirations for higher education. As there is a strong correlation between the drive for social status and youth aspirations for higher education, studies reveal that youth aspirations for higher education is positively correlated with intelligence, occupational aspirations and social status (Sewell et al. 1957: 6). It has been recognised that socio-economic status plays a critical role for young people to aspire for higher education. Youth from low socio-economic status tend to lose the confidence needed in order for them to attain their aspirations not only for themselves but also for their deprived communities (Camarena & Sarigiani, 2009: 12). Furthermore, it has been recognised that to some degree, social and cultural resources that are embedded in adolescents' social networks, their curriculum track placement and social class are also very significant in shaping youth aspirations for higher education. In this regard, social capital plays a critical role (Flowers et al. 2003: 171).

2.5.3. Financial factors

Higher education researchers and policy makers around the world are concerned about improving youth access to higher education and recognise the need to consider financial barriers in higher education policy objectives because most young people could not access higher education because of financial challenges. For instance, Watts & Bridges (2006: 269) draw the conclusion that youth aspirations for higher education are also affected by actual or practical constraints such as costs of attending university and distance which in turn decreases youth motivation and achievement. Additionally, Bridges identifies the drive for immediate financial benefits as also jeopardising youth aspirations for higher education. Youth aspire more for immediate material benefits such as income and expensive clothing instead of higher education that produces lifetime benefits such as long term high income (Bridges, 2005: 4; Hubbard 1999). Most young people are driven by economic interests which includes getting an early employment so as to meet immediate needs while disregarding higher education. It is a common global practice that youth may intend to start up their small businesses, and they may plan to get

married and start families (Ball et al., 2002:58). Furthermore, Bridges (2005: 3) believes that widening youth participation in higher education is not merely dependent on addressing material obstacles such as financial constraints, but it is also strongly linked to overcoming low aspirations and low achievements among potential students. However, it has been recognised that the cost of higher education remains an obstacle (Finnie, 2012: 1163). There are therefore many factors that should be taken into consideration in understanding what influences youth aspirations for higher education and finance seem to be a major factor.

2.6. Youth capabilities and access to higher education

It has been recognised that equal access to higher education does not guarantee equal opportunities. Therefore, individual capabilities and one's available financial resources should be taken into consideration as contributing to youth aspirations and access to higher education (Klark, 1960: 570). Equal opportunities and unlimited entry into higher education are both of public interest. However, capability is significant for one to access higher education. School systems are challenged to produce students with the ability to meet entry requirements for higher education institutions. There is a need to strengthen the capacity of primary and secondary education so as to ensure that matric learners are not disqualified by higher education institutions based on entry requirements. This will mean that university or college access is not limited by academic ability. This also highlights that even those who cannot qualify for entry into a university or college due to financial constraint but are naturally capable; they should still be afforded the opportunity of attending a publicly supported institution of higher education (Klark, 1960: 570). A case in point is the fact that it is through promoting expanded access to higher education that countries like South Africa can address inequality and thereby spread the benefits of higher education at the national, community and individual level (Archer & Hutchings, 2000: 557). Empirical evidence also demonstrates that intelligence does not only shape an individual's attitude for higher education, but it can also either encourage or discourage one's access to higher education (Kirk & Day, 2011: 1178). Several studies demonstrate that the working class is underrepresented in higher education. This is due to the fact that enrolment in higher education is still largely determined by individual capabilities of completing matric and their economic means and this further increase the gap between the working and middle class (Kirk & Day, 2011: 1174; Kiyama, 2010: 330). Likewise, it has been observed that excellent high school results are

extremely influential as to whether or not youth pursue postsecondary education (Walberg & Greenberg, 1996: 179).

Studies reveal that aspirations are socially created by individuals. People tend to build their aspirations in a social context where they compare themselves to others in their social groups (Conradie, 2013: 118). Aspirations can be explored and understood in relation to the capability approach. That is to say the ability of youth to realise their aspirations relies on their capabilities. In Sen's theory of the capability approach, it is postulated that aspiration formulation takes place when a person has capability set. This implies having the capacity to act or become agent in the attainments of goals (Clark, 2005: 1342). Further, people's aspirations are influenced by the standard of living they wish to have. Thus people aspire for higher education in order to have good standard of living. In most instances, this is what motivates people to aspire for higher education (Jeffrey, 2012: 247). Aspirations can improve youth academic performance and their capabilities. However, it has been realised that capabilities on their own can be constrained by diverse factors such as poor housing and lack of nutrition and thus limit one's options to realise aspirations (Clark, 2005: 1345; Kivinen & Ahola, 1999: 191). Thus, there is a strong relationship between capabilities and aspirations.

The debate among policy makers and academics is whether aspirations increase capabilities. The contention is that in order for young people to attain their educational aspirations, they should exercise their agency (Conradie, 2013: 110). As indicated in the literature, capabilities are important for one to attain aspirations, and in order for individuals to enhance their capabilities, they need aspirations for higher education (Conradie, 2013: 110). Furthermore, Ward (2006: 66) argues that achieving aspirations for higher education is widely dependent on motivation. There are various factors that motivate youth to pursue higher education, and these should be considered for policy making. One may have aspirations and stay motivated; however in order for their goals to become real, they should be pursued with a sense of agency (Ward, 2006: 67). This simply means that youth should put some effort in order to materialise their aspirations. For instance, they must take the initiative to apply for admission to higher education institutions and to apply for financial support (Ward, 2006: 67). However, this does not mean that there are no factors that constrain youth to pursue higher education; the underlying rationale here is that youth should be active in overcoming these constraints in order to achieve their goals. Aspiration

goes beyond just a general wish, but it is also an ability to take action. This means that aspirations are connected to life dreams, which is an important aspect that motivates the person involved (Appadurai, 2004, cited in Conradie, 2013: 110). Therefore aspirations are linked to having the ability to form significant dreams about your life, and work towards achieving such dreams.

2.7. Youth aspirations, access to higher education, and economic development

There is a concern that access to higher education discourse overlooks the complexity of the barriers facing young people from lower economic groups to pursue higher education. According to Jones & Thomas (2005: 617), as much as providing information about higher education and encouraging youth participation in higher education remains necessary, it is also important to implement programmes that address practical barriers to higher education access. The utilitarian approach considers that low aspirations may be a problem, but the focus should be on the relationship between higher education and the economy. Higher education is dependent upon the economy and *vice versa*. This means that in order for a country to have a proper primary and secondary education system that enables youth to access higher education, it must have a viable economy to fund the system. Likewise, in order for a country to ensure economic prosperity, it must have sufficiently knowledgeable and skilled individuals with the potential to contribute to the economy. There is also a need for the individual's skills to be commensurate with the contemporary demands of labour. Therefore, higher education and economy are two sides of the same coin, and this should be considered in the study of aspirations (Jones & Thomas, 2005: 618). On the other hand, the transformative approach emphasises that higher education should seek to meet the needs of underrepresented groups. However, this idea is problematic because even the underrepresented groups should have aspirations in order to derive meaningful benefits from higher education (Jones & Thomas, 2005: 618). Therefore, it is necessary to view aspirations for higher education in relation to economic development. Attaining youth aspirations and access to higher education cannot be alienated from economic development.

Higher education has been recognised not only as an important tool for human development, but very significant for economic development. For instance, Bloom et al. (2006: 1) believe that higher education plays a critical role in developing the human resources necessary to stimulate economic growth. It is through education that human beings can become more productive and

active participants in economic activities. Higher education has various benefits; it has the potential to increase savings, investments, and tax revenue. It can help to strengthen political stability, improve technology and production, and ultimately, see such improvements lead to economic growth. According to Schuller et al. (2004, cited in Morley et al. 2009: 56), higher education has gained attention internationally not only as a facilitator of skills, knowledge and expertise, but it is also considered as a major platform for economic and social development. It is therefore critical that the distribution of higher education is fair and is for the advantage of all citizens (Morley et al. 2009: 56; Wang, 2011: 278). Thus the emphasis is that youth access to higher education and youth aspirations for higher education should be improved in order to ensure human and economic development which is associated with other social, political and environmental benefits.

2.8. Higher education as a public good or commodity

There is debate among development experts, academics and policy makers as to whether higher education is a public good or a commodity for trade (Brunso et al. 2012: 14). The commodification of higher education in South Africa has proven to affect youth aspirations and access to higher education. A further discussion for this argument is provided in the next paragraph. In reference to the South African context, higher education is a public good because it is extensively funded by the government. However, higher education in South Africa is also a commodity because the services are partially paid for by students. Although there are some private colleges, South Africa is dominated by tertiary institutions that are funded by the government. Some commentators believe that higher education has been largely commodified even in third world countries. This is due to the fact that monetary value is attached to higher education. In order for one to access higher education, a substantial amount of money has to be paid into higher education institution. Others contend that higher education should remain a public good as it plays a critical role in the production of other public goods that benefit not only the individuals, but the society at large (Brunso et al. 2012: 16). Tilak (2008: 449) argues that it is therefore necessary to deem higher education as a normal social service that is not private or tradable, but rather that should be accessible to all citizens. Further, it has been stated by Tilak (2008: 449) that it seems as if we have “lost the ‘public’ in higher education”; this is partially due to the fact that this public good excludes some people and its accessibility level is relatively unequal among citizens (as in between those who can afford to pay for its service and those who

cannot). Higher education as a public good should be non-excludable, equally accessible and should produce positive externalities.

The important consideration for this section is how commodification of higher education affects youth aspirations and their access to higher education. While youth have aspirations for post-secondary education, it has been recognised that there are many financial obstacles that hinder youth from low-income families in pursuing higher education. Hence, the commodification of higher education has further limited the opportunities for most young people from low-income families to access higher education. The commodification of higher education also undermines youth aspirations for higher education. This happens when youth is demotivated to apply to higher education institutions given that they assume that they may lack financial means to fund their studies. For instance, Kirk & Day (2011:1178) found that most youth from low-income families are financially constrained to access higher education and they lack information about financial support opportunities, procedures, eligibility criteria required to apply for funding; even if they are talented and do qualify to pursue studies with tertiary education institutions. In addition, youth from low-income and single parent families face even more burden because their parents cannot afford to pay their tuition in tertiary education institutions (Finnie, 2012: 1163). It has been noted that youth from low-income families are more likely to reside in rural areas where information about available funding sources is not easily accessible (Finnie, 2012: 1163). Likewise, tertiary education becomes more expensive as the governments continue to reduce public spending on higher education. In other words, universities and colleges tend to increase tuition fee which means those from low-income families are further hindered from participating within higher education institutions (Gray, 2013: 1245). The major problem faced by prospective students who cannot pay tuition fees on their own is that they cannot approach financial institutions for financial support in a form of student loans. Banks for example, are not interested in supporting people who do not have a reliable source of income (Chapman & Ryan, 2005: 293). In addition, some studies also reveal that majority of the youth in the developing countries were concerned about the limited nature of government support which was not sufficient to cover their other basic higher education expenses. Students also hesitate to take on substantial student loans because of the fear of falling into debt. Most of them call for “free education” (Shakya et al., 2012: 72). Research evidence demonstrates that inequalities in higher education continues especially between higher and lower economic classes and between rural and urban residences.

Therefore, this issue of inequality requires a cooperative effort on the part of the different stakeholders to devise approaches that aims at supporting equal access to higher education (Morley et al. 2009: 59). All the facts discussed in this section indicate that commodification of higher education constrains youth to access higher education and further undermine their aspirations.

According to Kao & Tienda (1998: 353) the blocked-opportunities framework is an approach employed to describe factors that undermine educational and occupational success. Based on this framework, barriers that hinder youth to access higher education or that makes higher education unequally accessible have been identified. Like commodification of higher education, the blocked opportunities negatively affect youth aspirations for higher education and thus result in downward mobility (Kao & Tienda, 1998: 353). Youth from disadvantaged homes, schools or communities have limited opportunities compared with those who are advantaged in these categories. Their opportunities are blocked by financial problems, geographical location and even access to valuable information and thus their aspirations for higher education (Archer & Hutchings, 2000: 557). According to Kirk & Day (2011: 3) youth experience many problems that reduce their likelihood to attend tertiary education; they are further challenged by low esteem which makes them fail to recognise their future potential. By implication, some youth often lack confidence in their abilities to succeed in tertiary education institutions (Kirk & Day, 2011: 3). In such circumstances there is a need for a strong social support to assure that youth can aspire to further educational goals. Kirk & Day (2011: 3) view social support as very complex and multidimensional. In their view, this support takes into consideration not only material support but instrumental, informational, physical, psychological and emotional support. They also believe that this support is provided not only by parents to their children, but that community members should also play a key role in providing support for the youth to realise their potential and build their aspirations for higher education. Likewise, Chapman & Ryan (2005: 293) believe that communication systems should be improved as a manner of sharing knowledge and awareness around tertiary education prospects. This could help to increase youth in seeking opportunities to access higher education, which are important for skills development and in preparing the youth for the world of employment. Furthermore, Finnie (2012: 1163) claims that to overcome the barriers to access higher education, policies should focus on addressing financial barriers through making tertiary education affordable. Factors like low aspirations that

undermine students' academic performance should also be considered. If the wide range of barriers to access higher education is not urgently addressed, they could prove inimical to the society by stymying the advancement of economic development and other relevant societal benefits (Finnie, 2012: 1163). These unaddressed barriers could also lead to other negative consequences which include loss of talent, loss of opportunity for individuals, downward mobility, and loss of person's lifetime income and the perpetuation of inter-generational inequality (Chapman & Ryan 2005: 293).

2.9. Knowledge diffusion and youth aspirations for higher education

The anticipated rewards from higher education qualifications remain critical in influencing youth decisions to pursue higher education (Heifetz & Minelli, 2006: 2). Arguably, the reason that youth lack aspirations for higher education is linked to a lack of knowledge regarding the benefits of higher education; youth are in some cases uncertain about higher education benefits (Hubbard, 1999: 368). On the other hand, Bridges (2005: 15) believes that some youth that have college or university aspirations is as a result of their familiarity with the reality that higher education can produce lifetime benefits. As a result, youth without higher education aspirations are not familiar with the benefits of tertiary institution options and thereby do not perceive investment in higher education as the best choice. These factors as such, are not limited to financial reasons, but they incorporate a lack of informational resources including career guidance, knowledge around grants and students loans. Such information plays a critical role in evoking the interests of the youth for higher education (Wohn et al. 2013: 424). Again, youth higher education aspirations are closely related to attitudes and beliefs about the relevance and intrinsic value of higher education. It is therefore necessary to seek a broader understanding of the nature of youth attitudes and beliefs in relation to higher education (Hubbard 1999: 370).

Studies that focus on youth aspirations for higher education in developing countries have demonstrated that lack of knowledge diffusion about higher education is a major constraint in the promotion of youth participation in higher education. The contention is that once a person is supplied with necessary information about higher education, they will be motivated to pursue higher education (Heifetz & Minelli, 2006: 9). However, it has been recognised that although information about higher education is easily available on the media, this does not guarantee youth access to higher education (Heifetz & Minelli, 2006: 9). Youth may be provided with

information about higher education, but there may be a failure in the effort to make them aspire for higher education. The reason for this failed effort may be that youth are constrained by other factors in their bid to access higher education such as financial barriers (Hubbard, 1999). As much as young people may be driven by immediate benefits instead of pursuing higher education, Kabiru et al (2013: 8) discovered that most young people have aspirations but the achievement of their aspirations is constrained by a lack of opportunities. Young people should be informed about the importance of higher education and higher education awareness programmes should be widely implemented as a way of enabling youth to make wise decisions regarding their future (Bridges, 2005: 8).

2.10. Conclusion

In the literature presented in this chapter, it can be argued that aspirations are critical for young people to access higher education. Youth aspirations for higher education are multidimensional, meaning that they are shaped by different factors ranging from capabilities, family and community background as well as practical barriers such as financial constraints. This chapter has presented a vast literature from different sources on the area of youth aspirations for higher education. Before drawing this conclusion, this chapter has presented a body of literature from the broad theme of aspirations up to the specific theme of how knowledge diffusion may increase aspirations for higher education. The question whether higher education is a public good or a commodity and the question of how higher education accessibility and affordability links to youth aspirations were also addressed. The literature reviewed in this chapter also revealed that there are barriers for youth to access higher education. Access to higher education by youth from low-income families was also highlighted. From the review of literature, it has been recognised that parental education, social class, ethnicity, community and family background play a critical role in shaping youth aspirations for higher education.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

3.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines four theories to be used in examining the subject of youth aspirations for higher education. These theories include the sustainable livelihoods approach, human capital theory, social capital theory, and the capability approach. These theories were chosen based on their suitability for this study. Furthermore, the theories are relevant to the research topic, and they are useful for the analysis of the study findings and the interpretation of the results. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to discuss these four theories in relation to how they are relevant to the research topic and how they serve as the best framework for the broader knowledge considered in the study of youth aspirations for higher education. This chapter thus discusses the four theories in relation to each other and the manner in which they serve as the best theoretical framework for the study of youth aspirations for higher education.

3.2. Sustainable Livelihood Framework

The major question that this study intends to address is how youth aspirations for higher education translates into their higher education attainments, and the sustainable livelihood approach is useful to understand this complex situation. According to Neefjes (2000: 82), “a livelihood depends on the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities which are all required for a means of living. A person or family’s livelihood is sustainable when they cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance their capabilities and assets both now and in the future, without undermining the environmental resources”. Most people have a drive to secure their livelihoods (Brocklesby & Fisher, 2003: 188). However, it has been recognised that although it is anticipated that a major investment in human capital in the form of education can improve livelihoods in some instances, this does not always translate to sustainable livelihoods. In addition to an individual’s labour, skills, and knowledge (human capital), social capital, infrastructure, natural resources are all combined assets necessary to create sustainable livelihoods (Knutsson, 2006: 91). Capital is commonly defined as “a stock of wealth or property or the value of either existing at an instant of time” (Gort et al. 1999: 21). In political economy, capital is a stock of valuable exchangeable commodities possessed by individuals or a community (Gort et al. 1999: 21). Consequently, diverse capitals are integral to the sustainable livelihood framework. More specifically, efforts to maintain and sustain livelihoods are linked to the combined strength of human and social capital.

Individuals' capabilities should not be overlooked and it is important to view how capabilities, to some extent, are dependent on human capital investment.

The sustainable livelihood approach is a framework that is concerned with the issue of poverty relief and also with the enhancement of the well-being of poor (Farrington, 1999). Poverty relief is a central goal for most governments particularly in the developing world. The notion is that poor and the marginalized people should be able to recognize their capabilities, assets, resources, and thereby be able to use such to create and sustain their livelihoods (Farrington, 1999). Furthermore, government departments, private sector and civil society are committed to support activities that are geared towards improving and sustaining the livelihoods of the poor and marginalized groups. These institutional supports of activities are critical to assist citizens to cope with shocks and recover from stresses (Krantz, 2001). Sustaining livelihoods and addressing poverty requires people to act either individually or collectively to identify opportunities that can be turned to sustainable livelihood strategies. This indicates that if one intends to create and sustain a livelihood they cannot overlook its capitals particularly human and social capitals (Ashley & Carney, 1999). Likewise, Solesbury (2003: 7) notes that in order to address poverty, enhancing capabilities for the poor, socially and economically excluded people is a key that should enable them to adapt and exploit diverse resources and opportunities. With enhanced capabilities, people would be able to recognize the assets and resources within their communities. Hence, they can make use of such opportunities to create and sustain livelihoods and thereby overcome poverty and other similar socio-economic issues (Solesbury, 2003: 7).

Based on the sustainable livelihood framework, it is assumed that the findings from a study of youth aspirations could reveal that the eagerness to sustain livelihoods is among the driving factors for young people to pursue higher education. The sustainable livelihood framework is a great tool to understand the determinants of household and individuals' ability to increase well-being (Rakodi, 1999: 322). Investing in human capital is crucial for poor and vulnerable groups to improve their well-being (Toner, 2003: 780). Using the sustainable livelihood framework as an analytical tool, the findings from the study of youth aspirations for higher education can aid an understanding of why people either fail or succeed in sustaining their livelihoods (Allison & Horemans, 2006: 759). In addition, this framework will inform the areas that need to be improved to help people to sustain their livelihoods. One of these areas could be a change of

policies, as such would help to improve youth access to and aspirations for higher education (Allison & Horemans, 2006: 759). Most people pursue higher education with the aim of improving and sustaining their livelihoods. Therefore, this approach is critical for analyzing the extent to which youth aspirations for higher education translates into intended outcomes.

3.3. Human Capital Theory

According to Schultz (1993 cited in Marimuthu et al. 2009: 266) “human capital refers to the processes that relate to the training, education and other professional initiatives in order to increase the levels of knowledge, skills, abilities, values, and social assets of an employee which will lead to the employee’s satisfaction and performance and eventually on a firm’s performance”. Many nations, including South Africa are shifting towards adopting a ‘knowledge based’ economic developmental strategies, and as a result, education has become one of the main engines for growth and key to development in every society (Winters, 2014: 196). Through education, people can become productive in economic and social life and thus contribute to economic growth. There is an increasing recognition of the role of knowledge and technology in economic growth. Industrial development is strongly dependent on the production, distribution and the use of knowledge. This shift to a ‘knowledge based economy’ requires an investment in ‘human capital’ in order to produce skilled, knowledgeable and productive labour (Winters, 2014: 196). For instance, in the development of many other aspects of a society, human capital plays a critical role for industrial productivity and development. Therefore, it has been recognised that in order to make a significant contribution to economic growth and development, access to higher education is required (Winters, 2011: 4447). It is common particularly in developing countries that most people have primary and secondary education, but they could not access higher education normally due to financial constraints (Winters, 2011: 4447). This is one reason why higher education should be given greater attention. However, this does not necessarily mean that primary and secondary education should be overlooked, but it means that all levels of education should be made accessible to all citizens. Hence, primary and secondary education system should be strong enough to prepare learners to access higher education and higher education should be strengthened to produce competent human resources to contribute to the growth of an economy.

Human capital is based on the notion that formal education is a critical tool and it is necessary so that the productive capacity of a population can be improved (Winters, 2011: 4447). Human beings are essential resources not only for economic development, but also for social, political and environmental development and their capacity is improved through education. The provision of formal education is an investment in human capital; it is considered as equally or even potentially more worthwhile than that of physical capital (Winters, 2014:196). Bhattacharyya & Sarip (2014: 486) state that the economic growth, development of a country and the quality of life for all citizens is largely dependent on an extensive investment in human capital. Therefore, education along with other forms of social spending such as healthcare should be prioritized because they play a key role in improving human capital and ultimately increasing the economic outputs of a nation (Bhattacharyya & Sarip, 2014: 486).

Based on a corpus of literature, an enhanced human capital provides societal and individual benefits. It has been discovered that the more individuals acquire higher levels of education, the more they will earn (Marimuthu et al. 2009: 267). This is the major reason why most young people may have aspirations for higher education. Therefore, an application of the human capital theory as a lens for analyzing the findings generated from the study of youth aspirations for higher education is crucial. The justification for this position is that the human capital theory could enhance one's understanding as to why young people aspire for higher education and why it is critical to invest in programmes that would enhance youth aspirations for higher education. As understood by Winters (2011: 447), increasing local human capital through improving youth access to higher education is important to improve the quality of life of those who acquire this capital. Similarly, Blundell et al. (1999: 2) suggest that for every investment in human capital or in individuals is the same as investment in other capitals such as physical and financial capital. Hence, there is high probability of great returns from human capital particularly to individuals in a form of increased income and well-being. Investment in human capital is critical to empower individuals to gain control over the quality of their lives, thus this becomes the main reason why they should strive to acquire higher education (Olaniyan & Okemikinde (2008: 479). Considering the essence of human capital, it is reasonable to draw the conclusion that the human capital theory is a good analytical tool for the findings from the study of youth aspirations for higher education as this theory serves as a tool to understand why youth aspire for higher education.

While many authors found that investment in human capital is the best option for every societal good, Malgen (1990 cited in Quiggin 1999) took a very critical approach to human capital model. He identified the pitfalls of the human capital model based on the lack of evidence on its claim that there is a link between education, productivity and earnings. The human capital model does not recognise that people might be educated but still remain jobless. As Jeffrey et al. (2004) research findings also demonstrate that people can be educated but still be excluded from securing white-collar employment since they could not pay a bribe to acquire it. Maglen's view relies on a lack of data and the difficulties of conducting a conclusive test as to the benefits that human capital provides to society (Malgen, 1990 cited in Quiggin, 1999: 138). Again, Malgen assumes that it is not always the case that investment in human capital could produce meaningful societal and individual benefits. Given this opposition, one can also use the human capital model as a critique when analyzing findings from the study of youth aspirations for higher education as to why sometimes young people with higher aspirations may fail to realise them (Malgen, 1990 cited in Quiggin, 1999: 139). Therefore, it is critical to note that as much as the human capital model plays a critical role for society and individuals' prosperity, it has some limitations. Economists nonetheless provide strong evidence that a community that invests in its human capital is likely to reap great returns of investment in education using income per capita, gross domestic product and other relevant measures (Baptiste, 2001: 198).

3.4. Social Capital Theory

It has also been recognised that social capital plays a significant role in facilitating the investment in human capital. According to Mathie & Cunningham (2003: 475), social capital is a critical asset in community development because it serves to strengthen other forms of capital including human, physical and financial capital. Likewise, Dufur et al. (2013: 1) submit that social capital refers to the resources that accrue from the relationships between actors and such relationships facilitate a range of social outcomes. In short, social capital is construed as the links, shared values and understandings in society that enable individuals and groups to trust each other and work together. When talking about social capital, one may think of alliances, cooperation and networking between individuals, and these linkages are very important to facilitate the development of human beings. Social contacts also affect the production of individuals and groups which grow and become competent due to collaboration with each other when sharing knowledge, skills and expertise. Social capital is necessary for 'learning together

processes' (Dufur, 2013: 2). In Coleman's view (1998 cited in Dufur et al. 2013: 1), these relationships are very influential for individuals' attainments of higher education goals. Correspondingly, the strong bonds between individuals are critical to strengthen the family's social support network (Ssewamala et al. 2010: 1704). This argument suggests that the relationships between family members, friends, neighbors and community organizations are pivotal to increasing the assets that allow young people to access resources and this influences them to build aspirations for higher education.

Furthermore, it is noted that social capital is based on social networks and these networks play a central role for individuals to mobilize and access resources (Wohn et al. 2013: 426). Wohn et al added that social networks may provide young people with a useful perspective on academic success and how to encourage it. Therefore, relationships with parents and peers are influential for high school students to build higher educational aspirations (Wohn et al. 2013: 426). Relationships matter the most for societal development. Interaction enables people to build their communities, to commit themselves to each other, to address common problems and to achieve common goals (Yu et al. 2013: 508). Therefore, for the purpose of understanding youth aspirations for higher education, one might be interested in investigating the manner in which social capital becomes necessary for social support that goes beyond financial support. Hence, it is necessary to understand the role of social capital in human capital investment and development, and how social capital shapes youth aspirations for higher education. Without strong social capital, human capital cannot exist.

3.5. Capability Approach

Having discussed the relevance of the sustainable livelihood framework, human capital theory, and social capital theory as analytical tools for the findings from the study of youth aspirations for higher education; it can be argued that these theories cannot serve as the best framework for the study concerned if it is not substantiated by the capability approach. The capability approach is an economic theory concerned about the capabilities of individuals, that is, what individuals are able to do or capable of (Sen, 1993: 273). This approach has two core concepts, one is functionings and the other is capabilities (Sen, 1993: 273). In this regard, a functioning is an achievement whereas a capability is the ability to achieve (Sen, 1993: 273). Based on this theory, the capability of an individual is influenced by various factors including personal characteristics

and social arrangements (Sen, 1993: 273). According to Sen (1993: 273), “human capabilities constitute an important part of individual freedom”. In his writing, Sen considers capability as critical for individuals’ well-being. He believes that increasing capability is a means to increased income and well-being (Sen, 1993: 278). It has been argued that the achievement of well-being is dependent on the capability set. However, freedom plays a critical role for the achievement of a person’s well-being (Sen, 1993:278). This argument is based on the idea that when people act freely and are able to choose, these actions could be conducive to the achievement of well-being. Thus this theory is critical to analyzing whether youth capability has any influence to bear for their access to higher education. Drawing on this theory, one may understand the link between youths’ freedom, their capabilities, their aspirations, their access to higher education and also their achievements.

Furthermore, according to Amartya Sen the capability approach is useful for the study of human well-being and development (Clark, 2005: 1341). He claimed that the freedom to achieve well-being is morally significant and that the freedom to achieve well-being should be understood in terms of people's capabilities, that is, their real opportunities to do and be what they have reason to value (Clark, 2005: 1341). In Sen’s capability approach, the notion is that people have entitlements including assets, resources and their capabilities. If these components are recognised at a personal level, people can be able to escape poverty and starvation to maintain well-being (Robeyns, 2003: 63). As a result, the capability approach is a great analytical tool for the findings generated in the study of youth aspirations for higher education because this approach provides a platform to analyze young people’s subjective views, to draw conclusions as to the extent their capabilities shape their aspirations for and access to higher education. Sen also highlights the capability to aspire. He suggests that “we must bear in mind the fact that aspirations do not result from strictly individual inclinations, but are also shaped by a social and environmental context and the possibilities to which the latter gives access. Capability to aspire can therefore be seen as intrinsically individual and a collective matter” (Sen, 1993 cited in Lambert & Vero, 2013: 309). In the study of youth aspirations for higher education, the notion of capability to aspire is critical to understanding why youth may or may not desire to pursue higher education. Similarly, in studying young people, it has come to the fore that most young people may have equal access to similar resources but have different capabilities. Such is an indication

of the differences in aspirations for and attainments in higher education, and this is also a central concern of this study.

3.6. Conclusion

In summary, this study is geared towards exploring youth aspirations for higher education. The central objective of this chapter was to present appropriate theoretical frameworks that could be useful for analyzing the findings of the study. Given the topic under investigation with the aim and objectives, four theories were chosen based on suitability and relevance. These theories include the sustainable livelihood framework, the human capital theory, the social capital theory and the capability approach. This chapter also revealed how these theories relate to each other and how they can be used in conjunction as the frameworks for analyzing research findings. What has been discovered from this chapter is that social capital is very critical for the development of youth aspirations for higher education. It has also been highlighted that social capital facilitates investment in human capital. The major lesson from the social/human capital relation is that the youth's interest to participate in higher education is embedded within strong social relationships that in turn increase the opportunities for investment in human capital. Another interesting point noted from this chapter is the need to improve capabilities in order to achieve well-being. From this standpoint, it will make sense for youth to have aspirations to participate in higher education for the purpose of improving their well-being. This rationale is central to capability approach. While assets matters for people to create livelihoods, improving capabilities matters the most for people to sustain their livelihoods. This is one reason why youth may be interested in participating in higher education. As presented in this chapter, the social capital, the human capital, the capability approach and the sustainable livelihood framework are closely related and all create meaning for the findings about youth aspirations for higher education.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the comprehensive approach adopted by this study in its investigation of youth aspirations for higher education. Therefore, this chapter discusses in detail the research methods, sampling method, interview processes, and also the various measures taken to ensure trustworthiness of the research findings.

4.2. Qualitative research methodology

In an attempt to achieve the objectives of this study, qualitative research methodologies have been used. To understand aspirations for higher education from the youth living in Kenneth Gardens, I conducted 18 in-depth semi-structured interviews. In the South African context, the definition used by the National Youth Commission Act (1996:1) includes persons between the ages of 14 to 35 years (youth in this age group are likely to have aspirations for higher education, however they face various problems to access it and remain vulnerable to socio-economic issues). To supplement the information generated through interviews, participant observation was also used. Bless et al. (1995:333) argue that qualitative research has the ability to describe in depth the experiences of people's lives. This method also provides the social contexts that strengthen, support and diminish the participants' living and working environment. This study allowed youth living in Kenneth Gardens to voice their concerns and aspirations for higher education.

4.2.1. Participant observation

Participant observation is one of the effective qualitative research methodologies that can be used to generate in-depth qualitative data. Participant observation occurs when the researcher goes into the community or field, studies people's cultures, religion, social life, politics and economy and at the same time collects data (Bless et al. 1995). Participant observation was used to record daily observations of the young people at Kenneth Gardens on 20 different days (see the participant observation tool in Appendix 3). During the 20 days, I completed my observations in the Kenneth Gardens community. I spent approximately 5 hours in each day informally chatting with the youth in the community. I participated in 5 youth development project workshops in addition observation done in the community. All workshops took place at Durban University of Technology (DUT) local area network (LAN), and transport was arranged for

participants from Kenneth Gardens to DUT. These workshops were part of a project called “Kenneth Gardens online archive”. It was initially meant to engage the Kenneth Gardens youth in sharing development-related stories on the Kenneth Gardens website. However, the scope of the project was expanded to equip all the interested youth living in Kenneth Gardens with information technology (IT) skills and other computer related knowledge. I assisted in the facilitation of the project, from mobilizing interested Kenneth Gardens youth to the participation phase to implementation phase. This experience enabled me to enhance my knowledge regarding youth interests to participate in educational projects. This research methodology also enabled me to engage with the youth through informal chatting around the barriers of youth access to higher education. Applying a participant observation on this study was possible because I built a rapport with the Kenneth Gardens youth as presented in the next paragraph. Rapport refers to the quality of a relationship between the researcher and the research participants. It is characterized by satisfactory communication and mutual understanding between the researcher and the research participant (Gremler & Gwinner, 2008: 83).

4.2.1.1. Rapport

It has been recognised from my interviews that building strong trust relations (rapport) between the researcher and the researched is very important before conducting an interview in order to ensure that the interviewee feels comfortable to provide information. Drawing from the interviews I conducted, strong trust between me and the research participants played a crucial role for the success of the interviews. For instance, majority of my informants mentioned before the interview that they would not have agreed to participate in my study if they did not know me in advance. Before the interviews, I spent a substantial amount of time with the youth living in Kenneth Gardens. I also participated in various Kenneth Gardens development projects that involved the youth in order to build trust. This demonstrates why it is necessary to build trust relations between the interviewer and the interviewee in order to attain research objectives. Field (2006: 36) argues that “deeper level of trust is necessary for all projects, but it is more crucial when interviewing people who have endured considerable suffering”. Parr (2009: 6) drew in his research experience with veterans to conclude that the relationship between him and veterans was often close. Parr also argues that it is possible that a stranger may have got answers different to those given to him by a veteran who then saw him as a friend (Parr, 2009: 6). This experience demonstrates the necessity of building trust or rapport with the interviewees in order to generate

wealthy first-hand information. Although I built a rapport with Kenneth Gardens youth before the interview process, I acknowledge that there are factors which might have led to biased interview process of this study. These factors included education, age, gender, and ethnicity to name a few. All these factors might have influenced my relationship with respondents and thus made the interview process biased.

4.2.2. Semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interview provided answers to the questions I had regarding youth's concerns and aspirations for higher education. Semi-structured interviews gave my informants an opportunity to express their experiences and perceptions in an open-ended manner, and thus provided wealth information to understand the views of my research participants. In addition, semi-structured interviews served to give informants more control over the research process (see Appendix 1 and 2 for the interview guides in both the English and Zulu version). This was possible because the open-ended questions are flexible, and allowed my respondents to express their views in detail (Hoffman, 2007). This in turn produced substantial data under certain themes.

4.3. Sample

One of the critical initial stages of a research process is to select the unit of analysis to be studied. According to Bless et al. (1995:133) "the unit of analysis is the person or object from whom the social researcher collects data". Hence, sampling is the process of examining only a portion of the total group with the purpose of meeting your research objectives. It is a method of studying from a few selected items instead of the entire number of units (Bless et al. 1995:162). For the purpose of my research, a non-probability sampling method which is purposive or judgmental sampling was applied. The study was conducted at Kenneth Gardens municipal housing estate (Durban) with youth between the ages of 18 and 30. The definition of youth differs from country to country. The sample of my study included youth who are still at high school (grade 11 and 12 who are 18 years and above), unemployed youth who are not studying (who may or may not have finished matric), and youth who are already pursuing their higher education. Therefore, a sample consisting of 18 young people from the three categories was selected using a purposive judgmental sampling (Bless et al. 1995:133).

4.3.1. Purposive or judgmental sampling

Purposive or judgmental sampling is based on the judgment of the researcher. The researcher only selects the information-rich cases for the study and he or she chooses those who can effectively answer the research questions (Patton, 1990: 169). Likewise, for the purpose of my study on youth living in Kenneth Gardens, I used a purposive or judgmental sample through several observations of the community, as I knew who to sample for the purpose of the study. I selected some individuals from the youth living in Kenneth Gardens based on the purpose of my research. This simply means that rather than including the entire youth for my study, I only selected a few who met some characteristics; these characteristics include those individuals who are residents of Kenneth Gardens. Those who are in either of three categories: 1) at high school (grade 11 and 12 who are 18 years and above), 2) those unemployed and not studying and 3) those pursuing higher education. Only single black (African) youth were selected to participate in the study. This is due to the fact that only these groups participated in Kenneth Gardens project; as a result youth from these groups were easily accessible and willing to participate in the study. I therefore purposely chose the sample based on who met my criteria. This allowed me to illuminate the questions under study and to explore in-depth the Kenneth Gardens youth concerns and aspirations for higher education. This was possible because I participated in the Kenneth Gardens projects that involved youth and as a result it was easy to choose a sample based on pre-determined youth features.

4.3.2. Availability of respondents

I found it very easy to identify respondents for my study, and most respondents were willing to participate in my study. This was made possible given that I built trust with them before the interview. However, there were few cases where some participants agreed to participate in my study but did not avail themselves for the interview as per appointment. Hence, some could not finish the interview due to personal reasons. Notably, most youth who were difficult to pursue as participants in my study fell under the second category (youth who were unemployed, and could not access higher education, those that may have or may not have finished matric). However, I managed to interview the desired sample in spite of the said challenges. Based on my interview experience, it can be argued that conducting one-on-one open-ended interviews is not an easy task. For instance a researcher may experience problems before, during or after the interview. An interviewee may not arrive on time scheduled, and this problem can force the interviewer to

reschedule the time for the interview. Drawing from my experience for the first interview, the aim was to conduct an interview at 12PM but the interview time was rescheduled to be at 01PM because the interviewee was not ready at 12PM. Hence, 40% of my respondents did not come for interviews and they did not notify me; as a result I had to reschedule the interviews. Such problems requires perseverance and commitment from the side of the interviewer as Morrissey (1970: 108) puts it “a lot depends on how much control you have over your situation”. This means overcoming problems that may jeopardize the objectives of your research study lies in your capabilities as a researcher. The Table 4.3.2 below presents the basic information for the respondents who participated in my study; however the respondent’s real names are replaced by case numbers.

4.3.3. Basic respondent’s information

Respondent No	Gender	Age	Current activity
1	Male	15-20	Doing grade 12
2	Male	15-20	Doing grade 12
3	Male	15-20	Doing grade 12
4	Female	21-25	Doing grade 12
5	Female	15-25	Doing grade 12
6	Male	15-25	Doing grade 12
7	Female	26-30	Have only matric, No higher education
8	Male	21-25	Have only matric, No higher education
9	Female	21-25	Have only matric, No higher education
10	Male	21-25	Have only matric, No higher education
11	Male	26-30	Have only matric, No higher education
12	Female	21-25	Have only matric, No higher education
13	Male	15-20	At tertiary education institution
14	Female	15-20	At tertiary education institution
15	Female	15-20	At tertiary education institution
16	Female	15-20	At tertiary education institution
17	Male	21-25	At tertiary education institution

18	Male	21-25	At tertiary education institution
----	------	-------	-----------------------------------

Note: The sampling frame included youth without matric, however only youth with matric were selected for the final sample.

4.4. Interview process

In this section, I reflect on the interview process to discuss the various factors that influenced the interview and possible responses from research participants. These factors include interview setting, time and language.

4.4.1. Interview setting

I conducted all interviews at Kenneth Gardens however I had no proper venue to use for all interviews. The interview setting may also have a major influence on the research process. The interviews took place outside the small first aid clinic at Kenneth Gardens. The result of such is that it did not feel private since various people were passing by. This resulted in some discomfort for both me and some of the respondents. This was a disadvantage as both the interviewee and I felt uncomfortable about the environment which was not conducive, and we felt it lacked confidentiality. I also recognised that the research participants felt uncomfortable about being interviewed in an open space. Therefore, I learned that it is very important that a researcher organize a venue where both the researcher and the researched will feel comfortable to have an interview.

4.6.3. The effect of language

Language is another factor that may influence the condition of the interview and may affect the quality of the interview and data generated. For instance, drawings from my research experience, language prove to be a major constraint and it limited the data generated. Since English was initially used as a language of communication, and this language is not a mother tongue for either the researcher or interviewee, this resulted in poor communication and this affected the interview process and consequently limited the findings. I recognised this issue in the first three interviews that I used to pilot my interview guide. This resulted in the development of another interview guide in Zulu (refer to Appendix 1 and 2 for both the interview guides in English and Zulu versions). When language used in the interview is strange to the interviewer or the interviewee or to both of them, this may cause difficulties in the interview process because it may be hard for a researcher to clarify some questions using a language that they are not

proficient in. Similarly, it may be difficult for the interviewee to understand and respond. Asking questions inappropriately may confuse the respondent and affect the quality of data. Therefore, it is recommended to choose a language that the interviewer and the interviewee understand well in order to achieve the objectives of a qualitative research. As Minkley & Rassool (n.d.:96) put it, “language choice in a multicultural setting can influence the researcher’s effectiveness, and that when material is ‘generated’ in a second or third language, the resulting product will in itself partly determine the voice and style in which the final presentation is made”. This demonstrates how language may pose a problem in the research process. Therefore, a research should pay attention to the issue of language among other restricting factors of the research process. Furthermore, on the influence of language on the oral history interview process, Du Toit (2000:120) argues that “historians should explore the possibilities of writing hybrid by just exposing English and African languages in ways that subvert the former’s dominant status as the language of analysis or the language into which one translates and by consciously forging a more hybrid academic language which incorporates concepts from indigenous linguistic spaces”. This simply means that all languages should be prioritized in research and language preferences should suit both the researcher and the researched. Therefore, to eliminate the possible language related problems in my study, I developed two interview guides, a Zulu and English version to accommodate both Zulu speaking and English speaking research participants. The Zulu interview guide produced positive results because it allowed Zulu speaking research participants to express themselves freely.

4.7. Data analysis

It is crucial that when researchers analyse qualitative data, they should fully describe and understand respondents’ lived experience, they examine the manner in which research participants construct the meaning of their lives and they also study respondents in their natural context (Bless et al. 1995: 340). Since my study relied on unstructured data, it was likely that some data analysis would be done during the process of data collection. A number of steps were followed to analyse data including through ‘thematic analysis’, which is a useful and flexible method for qualitative research. According to Braun & Clarke (2006: 8) “thematic analysis means researchers need not subscribe to the implicit theoretical commitments of grounded theory if they do not wish to produce a fully worked-up grounded-theory analysis”. This is a very flexible method of analysing qualitative data which reports experiences, meanings and the reality

of participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 9). A step by step thematic analysis that was used to analyse my research data is presented in the following paragraph.

After conducting and recording the interviews, I transcribed all interviews from the voice records to words in order to conduct a thematic analysis. I then read the transcribed data thoroughly in order to get a broader idea of what is contained within the collected data. After reading data, I conducted preliminary coding. All the codes or themes were developed based on the patterns of data collected in relation to problem statement, research questions, conceptual framework and also the research objectives. At this stage, I created categories for research participants' responses, and categorised these responses into new codes. I then undertook coding definitions where I named and described new codes. I thereafter did coding where I categorised research participants' responses into specific codes. The coding themes included well-being, availability of support, challenges, knowledge, aspirations and youth capabilities. After all these stages, I then interpreted the coded information to compile a report (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 19).

4.8. Research Trustworthiness

The fundamental question to take into consideration in qualitative research is how to ensure a high quality of research and results. Bless et al. (1995: 221) state that the quality of qualitative research is assessed based on its trustworthiness by considering credibility, transferability, dependability, triangulation and conformability. Therefore, different tools were used to ensure the trustworthiness of my research results (Lietz et al. 2006: 456). One of the tools that I used to ensure trustworthiness of my research findings is triangulation focusing on methodological triangulation. This was possible because I used more than one method to collect data which included semi-structured interviews and participant or direct observation as indicated in the research methods section. The second tool that was used to ensure trustworthiness of my research findings is respondent validation which is sometimes termed member checking or informed feedback. In this process I presented the results of my study to my research participants and ask for their feedback. This process allowed me to understand if my research participants were happy about the research results and conclusions which should reflect and align with their experiences as research participants. If the feedback showed that I did not understand the research participants' experiences, I would closely examine the differences presented. This would in turn show the need to collect more data or introduce a different research method in the

study. Thirdly, the use of sufficient verbatim quotations was also taken into consideration to increase the trustworthiness of the research results. In that regard, I used direct quotations from the original data collected in my report as an attempt to clarify to the reader the data collected and the manner in which it is interpreted.

Likewise, freedom of participation was a priority in my study and this added great value to the trustworthiness of the research results. The informed consent form is described as a precondition for autonomous decision-making. In my research, the consent form gave each research participant the opportunity to refuse to participate in the research. As a result all participants were free to refuse or withdraw their participation. Therefore, the data collection sessions involved only those who were genuinely willing to take part and prepared to offer true data freely. Lastly, prolonged engagement was very important to ensure the trustworthiness of the research results. A long period in the data collection enhanced the quality of data collected through the various data collection methods. Engaging in this process was easy for me as I participated in Kenneth Gardens projects that involves youth (Bless et al. 1995: 238).

4.9. Conclusion

In order to address the research questions and to attain the objectives of the research, a suitable research approach should be followed. More specifically, appropriate research methodologies should be utilised to collect data and appropriate measures should be adopted to ensure the trustworthiness of the research results. As discussed in this chapter, in an attempt to attain the research objectives outlined in chapter one, I used two methodologies including semi-structured interviews and participant observation. I also adopted appropriate measures to ensure the trustworthiness of the research findings. In this chapter I discussed the sampling method which is purposive or judgmental sampling. I also discussed the interview processes where I conducted 18 open-ended interviews with Kenneth Gardens youth from three categories. I also explained the process of data collection, interview transcription upto report findings. The table showing the basic information of the respondents who participated in my study was also included in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Findings

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents empirical evidence for the study on youth aspirations for higher education. I have recognised that youth aspire for higher education differently; grade 12 and university students have higher aspirations compared to unemployed youth. There are various factors that lead to these differences; these are presented in this chapter. To explore the phenomenon of aspiration, this chapter is therefore organized into five main sections. The first section is about the extent of youth aspirations for higher education. Reflecting on observation and interviews, in this section I discuss the differences in youth aspirations by comparing findings from the three categories of youth. The second section is about the basis of youth aspirations for higher education. In this section I present the various factors that influence youth aspirations for higher education. This section demonstrates that family members particularly parents, teachers, peers and career guidance programs play a critical role in influencing youth aspirations for higher education. The third section presents youth capabilities and access to higher education. This section demonstrates how capabilities are critical for individuals to access higher education. However, it is highlighted that the notion of capability on its own is multidimensional. The fourth section covers the challenges in accessing higher education. These challenges include financial barriers, youth inability to meet tertiary education institution entry requirements and a lack of aspiration. The findings on availability of support for youth to access higher education are also included. Overall, the various sections of this empirical report demonstrate that youth aspirations for higher education are multidimensional.

5.2. The extent of youth aspirations for higher education

The level of aspiration for higher education differs from person to person. This is due to different factors that will be highlighted in this section. The study shows that amongst youth living in Kenneth Gardens, one is able to track the differences on the extent to which youth aspire for higher education. In this section, I present empirical evidence which shows that youth who are still attending high school (grade 12) aspire for higher education differently when compared with those who are unemployed and who are not studying (who may or may not have finished matric), and those already attending higher education. The findings from participant observation that are presented in this section also support the findings generated through interviews.

Although there are various obstacles to access higher education, youth who are still in high school (grade 12) exhibit high aspirations to proceed to higher education once matriculated. All six respondents attending grade 12 indicated their enthusiasm to participate in higher education once they finish matric. The findings show that youth from this category have dreams to attend universities the year after they complete high school in order to empower themselves and to attain their long term goals (Respondent no 4, grade 12 student, April 2015). Youth from this category also indicated that they are working hard to realise their dreams to participate in higher education. One student from this category expressed how she wishes to be a university student next year, she stated:

Why are you even asking if I would like to go to higher education? Of course yes, I am going to university next year. I am working very hard to get my marks right and I am very positive that I will do well in my studies as I did in the previous years. I am preparing for June examination. I do not even sleep, I am busy studying so that I will score high marks. Once June results are out, I will then do my application. Next year, sure case I will be at university and I would like to go to UKZN (Respondent no 2, grade 12 student, April, 2015).

All young people interviewed from this category have similar motivation to attend higher education institution as from next year. Another young person from this category expressed that he would like to go to study overseas once he finishes his matric:

Well, I want to apply to go study overseas because, what I see with education in South Africa is that they normally do not test your knowledge capacity but test whether or not do you know what is written in a text book. So, referring to South African education for example, the teacher would mark you wrong if you provide a response not similar to the one on the text book which is different from overseas education that will mark the content and understanding of that particular thing being studied which in a way that expands your knowledge capacity in knowing something than pretending to know it. That is just how I see it (Respondent no 1, grade 12 student, April 2015).

The findings show that youth who are still attending high school have stronger aspirations to participate in higher education the following year despite the practical barriers they might face. The youth from this category demonstrated that they value higher education in their lifetime and are aware of the possible benefits of participating in higher education. Besides motivation, the young people from this category indicated that they are very confident that they will have their dreams of participating in higher education realised.

Unlike grade 12 students, who are motivated to participate in higher education once matriculated, most youth from the second category (unemployed youth who may have or have not finished matric) showed lower or no aspirations to participate in higher education. They expressed diverse reasons as to why they do not wish to participate in higher education. For instance, one unemployed female expressed the following:

There are too many reasons that I cannot mention all, but basic one will include lack of finances and the fact that I now have kids to take responsibility for. So I cannot really go to spend years in an educational institution without getting anything month end. Otherwise, who is going to pay for my kids school fees? What about clothes and food? I really cannot go to study, instead I should search for a job to take care of my kids [with a serious face] (Respondent no 11, unemployed, May 2015).

This shows that some of the unemployed Kenneth Gardens youth lack aspiration to participate in higher education and this is linked to other issues including financial constraints and taking responsibility for offspring. Hence, youth from this category expressed a concern for immediate means of income instead of accessing higher education (Respondent no 9, unemployed, May 2015). Some respondents indicated it is useless to wish to attend higher education institution without means to realise such aspiration. When asked if she wishes to participate in higher education, she stated:

First and most importantly is that, I do not have financial means to further educate myself and I currently have no one to support me as well since both my parents passed away when I was doing my last year in high school in 2009 [bowing down with a sad face]. Besides that, I have a 5 year old daughter whose father is not working as well for now so, it is almost clear that I cannot afford studying further rather I will have to work hard to make sure that the life of my daughter is better unlike mine and to make sure that she gets the opportunity that has passed me of going to higher education institution and get educated unlike me (Respondent no 7, unemployed, May 2015).

Unlike high school youth, unemployed Kenneth Gardens youth expressed factors that further discourage them from seeking higher education. This thus demonstrates why matric youth and unemployed youth aspire for higher education differently. While the differences in higher education aspirations between grade 12 and that of unemployed youth remain the case, the study shows that most youth who are already in higher education institutions have aspirations to study for postgraduate studies. One second year UKZN student indicated that he would like to do his honours degree once completing his first degree.

I really like studying and would like to do my honours degree after completing my undergraduate degree. Although I intend to study further, but I am afraid that I may experience financial problems, but I am really hoping for the best. I know that getting an honours degree will increase my chances of getting a good paying job. A masters degree will be a bonus and I will dedicate it to my mom (Respondent no 13, UKZN student, May 2015).

However, some youth from this category said that they will start searching for a job and continue with their postgraduate studies on a part time basis. This motivation is often linked with the drive to get income, however the concern that a degree does not translate in to a job also came up. When asked if she would like to pursue postgraduate studies, a first year UKZN student responded that:

As much as I would like to study for a masters degree, I feel that I really need a job. Given the situation back home, I think it is my responsibility to help in overcoming the cycle of poverty in my family. So, the situation pushes me to immediately get a job once finishing my degree. The worst part is that I have young brother to support in his studies and I am the only hope for him. Then, I think it will be a wise decision to consider a job if the opportunity present itself, other than that, I would really like to study further (Respondent no 14, UKZN student, May 2015).

The same respondent also expressed the concern that a job is not guaranteed after graduating, stating:

When I think of what is happening outside the university environment I feel like crying and I do not want to sit at home with my degree like it happens to many others. This is really discouraging me but I will never lose hope for that God has a plan for my life. To be honest with you my brother, I wish to become one of the most educated women in this community and change a title; I can imagine someone calling me a doctor. Well the race has started, I will keep on pushing and I cannot wait to see myself in a postgraduate Local Area Network (LAN) like you [laughing] (Respondent no 14, UKZN student, May 2015).

These results show how much those who are already in higher education institution wish to pursue postgraduate studies. However, the results also reveal that youth from this category have challenges to overcome such as financial constraints to further their studies, and the need to support their families. These challenges discourage and undermine youth aspirations for higher education. Based on these results it is clear that youth from the three categories aspire for higher education differently. Notably youth who are still at high school have substantially higher aspirations compared to unemployed youth. Hence, youth who are already in higher education institutions are eager to study further, but they have challenges to overcome.

The participant observation also shows the differences in interest to participate in youth development projects among the three categories of youth studied at Kenneth Gardens. Through observation, youth aspirations were determined based on youth enthusiasm to participate in Kenneth Gardens development projects particularly the youth skills development project which was explained in detail in the chapter on methodology of this dissertation. Besides sharing development related stories, this project was geared towards providing computer basic knowledge and practical skills to interested Kenneth Gardens youth for free. This project was partially intended to prepare youth for higher education. That is, the project would provide them with necessary basic computer skills that could help them in applying for admission in higher learning institution, and also in searching for relevant information about higher education. As discussed in chapter 4, the project was based at DUT given the availability of resources particularly computers. To encourage participation of Kenneth Gardens youth in the project, free transport, stationery and meals were provided for the participants.

Notably youth from the first category were very motivated to participate in the project compared to the youth from the second category, while youth from the third category showed consistent participation in the project. Kenneth Gardens youth who are still at high school showed continuous interest to participate in the project. Majority of them were consistent in attending training workshops. Hence, it was observed that they were always willing to learn new computer skills including but not limited to research skills. Further, they acknowledged that the skills they gained from the project would be useful for them to apply for university and college admission.

While the first youth category showed a consistent interest with regard to participating in the project which indicated their aspirations for higher education, the second category showed no interest in participating in the project. Even though youth from this group would benefit from this project in terms of information communication technology (ICT) skills and knowledge acquisition, they were not interested in participating in the project. A few young people from this category who happened to attend two if not one training workshops were not active in the project except to disturb others. Most young people from this category had nothing to do during the day. When visiting Kenneth Gardens I found most youth from this category smoking and in some instances drinking alcohol. Notably, majority of the young people seemed hopeless. When

chatting with them they often raised the concern for employment and in the conversation they were no indicators of interest to pursue higher education.

The youth from the third category showed consistent interest in participating in Kenneth Gardens project. The project evaluation showed that majority of the youth from this group gained new ICT skills and knowledge though they were exposed to most computer programs at tertiary level. The youth from this category showed interest even to participate in other development projects as a way of applying the knowledge acquired at university into action.

From these results I can draw the conclusion that the extent to which youth aspire for higher education is also reflected in their interest to participate in education related projects offered in the community. This section clearly show how one can be able to track the differences in the extent to which youth aspire for higher education. Notably, the results from interviews align with the results from observation.

5.3. The basis of youth aspirations for higher education

The research findings show that there are various factors that inform youth aspirations for higher education. While all factors remain significant in shaping youth aspirations for higher education, some factors are more influential than others. The factors presented in this section include the drive to improve well-being, the drive for social change, the role of family members, the role of community members, the role of teachers, the role of peers and the role of awareness raising.

5.3.1. The drive to improve well-being

The study shows that the drive to improve well-being is a significant factor that boosts youth aspirations for higher education. Majority of the young people interviewed at Kenneth Gardens reported their eagerness to improve their well-being and to change the conditions of their families through acquiring higher education qualifications. This internal drive makes well-being a significant factor that stimulates aspirations amongst youth. For instance, one respondent indicated that his biggest dream is to study to be a Chartered Accountant (CA) in order to get into the business sector and in order to improve and sustain his well-being (Respondent no 1, grade 12 student, April 2015). Another respondent said that the reason why she would like to participate in higher education is because she would like to play a significant role in improving her family's standard of living:

I would like to do teaching obviously because with a teaching certificate you can never stay at home but you would suddenly go to work from the education institution. Besides, I have stayed too long without studying or working so, I really want something that will not cost me time and money but will quickly get me a job to start sort my life. My mom and dad are not working, and the situation at home is very bad. It is in my hands that I take the opportunity to study teaching so that I make things better at home. Actually, I will be the first from my parents to study at university and my parents are hoping that if I could get a degree in teaching that would change their lives. This is what makes me push so hard, because I need teaching certificate to achieve mine and my parents' goal (Respondent no 10, unemployed, May 2015).

It has been recognised that more than 80% students from this study chose to study engineering because of their expectation to earn high salaries in future. Another expression which indicates youth's desire to improve well-being comes from an engineering student. She stated the following:

It is for the love of money! [Laughter]. Really though, the motive behind me doing engineering is that I know that I am going to get well paid after I have accomplished my studies. Thereafter I can be able to provide and cover my expenses and that of my family. To be honest, I never wanted to study engineering myself but then my family was pressurizing me to do engineering because they kept on saying I am going to get a lot of money after I have completed my studies and also to take care of them. Therefore, I changed my dream from wanting to do Chemistry to Electrical Engineering that was imposed on me by my parents (Respondent no 13, university student, May 2015).

The study shows that while youth may have chosen to attend higher education on their own, the reality of choosing careers is often associated with the desire to access employment and to sustain their families' well-being. This is evidence from the findings that the drive to improve or sustain well-being is significant to increase youth aspirations for higher education.

5.3.2. The drive for social change

The research study also demonstrates that some young people wish to participate in higher education to strengthen their capacity to contribute to social change. The contention in this case is that once a young person is equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills they would be able to make a meaningful contribution towards social progress. A number of young people in the study said that they would like to use the knowledge and skills obtained through higher education to contribute to socio-economic development. When asked what she is studying and why, one respondent asserted:

I just liked social work ever since I was in high school. Either way, what also inspired me to do social work was my background. Growing up was never easy for me and my four younger siblings raised by a 'stepmother' of which some things would happen to us but with no one to report to or even if we did, no one would do a thing about it. So, from there I felt more like I could take this course in order to be able to stand in for situations like my case when I was growing up which is something people are not too much aware of that happens to families if they happen to be a step-parent especially a step-mom [Extremely emotional with a sad face] (Respondent no 16, university student, May 2015).

This motivation indicates that some students do not only aspire for higher education to access employment and improve their well-being, but some students seek higher education as a platform to influence a positive change in their communities. Though an impoverished background may discourage some young people from participating in higher education, this study has proven that being a product of a disadvantaged background can stimulate higher education aspirations amongst young people. When another grade 12 student explained her motivation to study social work when she completes matric, she said:

I really like social work, so I will be more than happy if I get the opportunity to study it further as my degree, the thought of being a social worker, wow, that could be a dream comes true for me. I am attracted to this profession simply because I personally have been looking at how 'unjust' our communities have become and especially towards women and youth the most therefore, I feel more like I have to study social work to get to understand better its emphasis and how it can help our communities as well to reunite again, it is my role to assist our government in overcoming such issues [emphasizing with confidence] (Respondent no 4, grade 12 student, April 2015).

Another research participant expressed that the reason why he decided to study criminology at UKZN is that he would like to play a role in addressing social issues particularly crime in South Africa:

I am currently studying Criminology so; I would definitely end up in Correctional Services I think. There is nothing much that has attracted me to criminology I just like it and I am actually fascinated about addressing crime since South Africa is already one of the countries identified with high crime rates. I just like criminology and as I have said that I want to be anywhere in the police force and maybe end up in the 'Forensics' or anything that has to do with rectifying crime especially in our communities (Respondent no 18, university student, May 2015).

The findings show the differences amongst respondents in terms of career choices with humanities students driven by social change while most engineering students driven by higher income. For instance, one engineering student indicated that:

Well, I am currently studying Engineering and I hope that it will become my lifetime career so that is all I can think of pursuing right now. What attracted me to this field is that I am going to get well paid nothing else and as you know that people with engineering degree do not struggle to get jobs, not just jobs, but good paying jobs. So, me too, I want to be rich and I cannot wait to finish my degree (Respondent no 15, university student, May 2015).

While some students studying in the faculty of humanities indicated that they are driven by social change, it has been noted that all young people interviewed who studied or intend to study engineering have mentioned that they chose the career in order to earn higher income. The study clearly shows that humanities and engineering students have different interests behind their pursuit for higher education. The important consideration from the study is that the drive for social change is very influential to inform youth aspirations for higher education, however, not all students are concerned about social change. Although it has been discovered that young people get into careers for the sake of sustaining and improving their well-being, the study also demonstrated that some young people are also interested in contributing towards social change through education.

5.3.3. The role of family members

Inferring from gathered evidence, the study shows that family members play a critical role for young people to aspire for higher education. This study has discovered that parents are very influential towards their children's choices for higher education and careers. For instance, one university student when asked if he got any support from family, friends or teachers, he said:

To be honest my brother, I never thought family influence has so much impact in a person's life. So, taking it from my experience, my parents have supported me from when I was born up until today. My parents never gave up on me; they always encourage me to keep going despite challenges. My parents are very motivational, they always encourage me, even when applying to the university, they advised me on the possible careers. So I will dedicate my degree to my family for their support. My family believes in me, and that is why they encouraged me to come here. Very funny, when I came here in the first semester, I felt like I would not cope, and I suddenly called my mom that life is tough at varsity. You know what she said, she said, "never lose hope, God is with you". So if it was not for my family, especially my parents, I would not be here (Respondent no 18, university student, May 2015).

This demonstrates that parents and family members play a significant role not merely in providing financial support to their children, but particularly in building their aspirations for higher education. Most respondents highlighted that family is integral towards their access to

higher education institutions. Within families, parents are dominant in shaping their children's aspirations for higher education. Another student said that "for every step of my way to success, family is with me. They really supported me to the end and I am grateful. One day I would like to show them that their support is very important to me" (Respondent no 14, university student, May 2015). However, one respondent indicated that some of his family members are not supportive of his educational dream, but his teachers who better understand his academic performance encourage him (Respondent no 1, grade 12 student, April 2015). This personal account is evidence that family members play a critical role in building youth aspirations for higher education, yet some family members use this role to discourage younger family members from pursuing higher education.

5.3.4. The role of teachers

The study also demonstrates that teachers are very influential for young people to aspire for higher education. Most research participants have indicated that their high school teachers were or are very encouraging to those who wish to participate in higher education. Based on the study, it has been recognised that teachers remain important role players in helping young people make choices about their careers through higher education aspiration building. Respondent no. 1 indicated that although some of his family members discouraged him in his studies, teachers filled that gap and were very encouraging when discussing his academic interests (Respondent no 1, grade 12 student, April 2015). Another explanation of the role of teachers on young people's aspirations and access to higher education comes from respondent no 16, who stated that:

It was hard back in those days, but I had my teachers. They were actually encouraging me to study hard and focus on my studies so that I could make the lives of my younger siblings better. They are so supportive even now because as for Miss Zuke, she calls me most often asking if I need anything and that I should alert her should they be anything I need even now. So my teachers became family, to me 'God will bless them', [emotional] (Respondent no 16, university student, May 2015).

Similarly, the study also reveals that school background is very influential for young people to aspire for and access higher education. It has been noted that school background can either encourage or discourage young people to participate in higher education. For instance, most research participants described their high schools as 'good' given the mentorship they received in terms of education (Respondent no 6, grade 12 student, April 2015). The study also reveals

that high school teachers not only provide young people with advice about higher education, but they also assist them in the application process to get into higher education institutions. For instance, one university student explained how she got access into the university, indicated the following:

I used the Central Applications Office form to apply which we normally got from high school with our Life Orientation teachers helping us as to how we should make our choices. So, we used to write letters to Central Applications office and they would respond via a letter again. So, that was the whole process of applying but again, you had to pay for the Central Application Office form at the bank first before you could send your application. Still thanking my teachers who played an important role for me to get into this level in life (Respondent no 14, university student, May 2015).

Therefore, as the study demonstrates, teachers play a significant role for young people to aspire for higher education. In addition, teachers have been found to play a key role in assisting young people on the complex application process for admission to higher education, although this support differs from school to school. Notably, school background can be a determining factor which encourages or discourages young people to participate in higher education.

5.3.5. The role of community members

Although research participants described Kenneth Gardens as a good municipal housing estate with a sense of community, the study shows that community members have a very limited role in building youth aspirations. One respondent described Kenneth Gardens as follows:

Kenneth Gardens is actually a normal community just like any other community and I think it is even better. However, I think what get people curious about Kenneth Gardens is that it is a multi-race diverse community and then people turn to think that people of this community will behave differently than other communities which is ironical. I am saying it is ironical because, within Kenneth Gardens you find NPOs that assist the community in a cost effective ways through the provision of Food Parcels and via that Community Clinic that we have in Kenneth Gardens which is unusual in other communities. This place is just full of love and peace that is Kenneth Gardens for me [smiling] (Respondent no 14, university student, May 2015).

Although this community is characterised by solidarity and strong ties among community members, there is little or no evidence that such bonds contributes to students' aspirations. Even the existing organizations have been described as having no influence on youth aspirations. Notably, these organizations do not offer education related programmes that may boost youth

aspirations for higher education such as career guidance programmes. When asked about the support he gets from the community, the unemployed respondent stated:

My brother, do not even ask such question, you know what, I do not think it is wise to rely on community members. What I have seen in this community is that if you do not have anything they do not care about you, and you are useless. So if you do not get support from your family you are out. Even people who are rich cannot help us with anything. I think community members are mostly discouraging then encouraging (Respondent no 7, unemployed, May 2015).

The study clearly demonstrates that Kenneth Gardens community members have limited or no role in supporting young people and in improving their aspirations for higher education. However, what has been discovered is that Kenneth Gardens community members have also discouraged young people from pursuing higher education. Discouraging words such as the question of where youth would get support for their education is one of the reasons for youth to give up exploring opportunities to get into higher education. As respondent no 7 added “with community members, I think they are really negative about us. This is what really discourage me, especially when they asking who will pay for my studies, this really destroy my motivation” (Respondent no 7, unemployed, May 2015). This further demonstrates how youth are being discouraged to participate in higher education within their communities. Hence, a negative picture of unemployed youth has been created by community members, and this further discourages youth from pursuing higher education goals. However, drawing from this finding, it can also be argued that it is not community members that discourage youth but it is the financial barriers noticed by community members that discourage youth from pursuing higher education.

5.3.6. The role of peers

The study also demonstrates that peers have limited effect on youth aspirations for higher education. Most youth interviewed in this regard have indicated that their peers have limited or no effect towards their higher education aspirations. The study also shows that some youth felt even discouraged by their peers. Most youth have described their peers as seeing no value in higher education. When asked if she received any support from peers, one respondent asserted the following:

Well, I can say my friends have been giving me little hope but, my best friends especially with the absence of both my parents, whenever I talk about going into a university; it always ends up as a joke. They asking me where am I going to get the money from? It is even worse when I talk to my relatives about this. One day, my aunt even said to me “You

have to grow up and face the reality my girl, we do not have that kind of money to send you to varsity and neither can you provide yourself with it because it is expensive so just deal with it". This is very discouraging by the way. I just feel more like no one is seeing what I see in me or the potential that I have because I am still young [with a sad face] (Respondent no 7, unemployed, May 2015).

These statements from respondents indicate how their aspirations for higher education are undermined by people around them, although one may believe that these groups state the fact. From the respondents' viewpoint, young people even found it more difficult to face words of discouragement from their relatives than from their peers. Youth in this situation end up losing hope in going to higher education institutions.

5.3.7. Higher education awareness

Higher education awareness is very critical not just to inform youth about the importance of higher education, but also to build their aspirations for higher education. In this study, there is one critical factor explored in relation to higher education awareness. This factor is career guidance and empirical evidence in this aspect is presented in this section.

5.3.7.1. The role of career guidance

Career guidance has been identified as a critical aspect to advise youth about various careers and opportunities. While most grade 12 students indicated that they received meaningful support in terms of career guidance, most unemployed youth have raised their concern that less attention is given to them. This means that they are denied important information that could be useful for them to access higher education. For instance, when asked if he gets career guidance, one unemployed male participant stated:

I would slightly say yes to that question, the reason being is, for as far as I can remember. I only received such exposure of studying further while I was back in high school. After that, I feel more like there is little attention given to people who are not studying than those still at school possibly because of looking at the possibilities that the person can actually get into a higher education institution. So, there is no group of people I have seen visiting us here in the community to talk about that information rather they go to high schools (Respondent no 7, unemployed, May 2015).

This is one reason that has been discovered as to why most unemployed Kenneth Gardens youth lack information about higher education and thus lack aspirations to participate in higher education. Most unemployed Kenneth Gardens youth indicated that they are not exposed to career guidance programmes and they feel denied guidance. However, grade 12 students mostly

highlighted that career guidance is available them, and it is useful to prepare them for higher education institutions. Below is the view from one of the grade 12 students regarding the availability of career guidance, stating the following:

Yes I have experienced the exposure. For instance, almost each and every month end we get visited by different institutions telling us about their career choices they offer in their institutions such as DUT, UJ, UCT even though we have never been visited by UKZN so far. Therefore, from those visits it is when we get to explore the advantages of studying (Respondent no 1, grade 12 student, April 2015).

The study shows that career guidance is mostly provided to young people when they are still in high school. This is necessary to boost their aspirations to proceed to higher learning institutions. However, youth who are unemployed expressed their need to receive the same guidance as matric or high school students. Some unemployed youth even suggested the need for community based career guidance to assist them to restore hope about their careers.

5.4. Youth capabilities and access to higher education

The study shows that youth capabilities are essential for them to access higher education. Hence, youth with confidence have been found able to access higher education. Furthermore, capabilities are linked with aspirations. For instance, youth with confidence have been found having higher capabilities and having higher aspirations to participate in higher education than those demonstrating little confidence. Despite practical barriers to accessing higher education, most confident young people have highlighted the importance of their abilities to participate in higher education. For instance, when asked if she has ability to get into higher learning institution, respondent no 4 said:

Oh yes I am confident enough. However, I am aware that I really have to do well for my final results to be reserved a place to study because these days I hear that institution programmes get full easily so, to be on the safe side one has to excel in the final results. I have been passing ever since, so I still believe in myself. I think I will get in besides, the only difficulty I can ever think of is 'financial problems' nothing else because I do believe that I will attain adequate points to qualify me and to save me a place to study but the financial part is what worries me most about studying (Respondent no 4, grade 12 student, April 2015).

While most respondents who are doing matric stated that they are confident in their abilities, university students also indicated that they believe positively in their abilities to cope with

university challenges and to succeed in their studies. For instance one university student expressed the following:

Yes I believe I have the potential to make it. I have not seen anything surprising yet even though the work load sometimes gets tough to deal with but, I have been coping academically with my subjects. What I am doing right now is not only just useful to be but, social work and other modules such a Psychology has helped me a lot to understand things that I never thought I would find answers for in life. So I think it is not only just a degree to me but, it is one pillar in my life right now that is helping me to heal even myself before I can even attempt to deal with other peoples' cases. This has also taught me that; in life we all have problems. The difference is that they come in different dimensions and at different times when least expected but what is common is that, in all cases the pain goes straight to the heart [emotional] (Respondent no 16, university student, May 2015).

This expression shows that it is capabilities that are crucial for youth not only to get into higher education institution, but also to cope with higher education challenges. However, most unemployed youth reported a lack of confidence in their abilities to get admitted into higher education institutions and to cope after admission. Some youth have indicated that they are confident in their abilities, but they are afraid of the financial problems that they might face. Here is one relevant concern from respondent no 2 who stated that “I am confident even though mathematics and physics can be tricky sometimes but I am confident that I will make it, but I am also worried that what will happen if I do not get financial support to go to the university” (Respondent no 2, grade 12 student, April 2015). Some unemployed youth indicated that they are capable but they have lost hope to access higher education (Respondent no 8, unemployed, May 2015). The study demonstrates that there are differences in youth capabilities between those who are doing grade 12, those who are unemployed and those who are in higher education institutions. This further indicates that youth capabilities are multidimensional. As discovered in this study, some youth are born academically capable, but their capabilities may be undermined by financial challenges for instance. Some youth are academically capable by nature, yet their capabilities are undermined by the poor quality of education they previously received. Therefore, it is not always a case that the youth from poor backgrounds would not access higher education due to financial problems because such youth may have strong academic abilities and thus qualify for funding support.

5.5. Challenges to access higher education

The study also shows that although some Kenneth Gardens youth have aspirations to pursue higher education, they face obstacles to actualise their aspirations. There are three dominant obstacles that have been found in this study. These obstacles include financial barriers, application and admission to a higher education institution, and the lack of aspiration. An empirical report on each obstacle is presented in this section.

5.5.1. Financial barriers

Financial barriers have been found to be one of the key barriers for youth to access higher education. Most young people interviewed in this study have indicated financial constraints as one of the main obstacles as to why they could not reach higher education or proceed from high school to higher education institution. This seems to be a dominant obstacle for youth to be able to participate in higher education because it was commonly mentioned by almost all research participants. For instance, one participant expressed the following as a reason why she could not participate in higher education:

It is pretty hard financially for me to get ‘tertiary education’ [with a sad face]. My only option right now is to become a ‘police-woman’ for the love of protecting the community of course especially women since Kenneth Gardens is one place perceived as not safe. However, the idea of being policewomen is more encouraged by my family and I ended up loving it too (Respondent no 7, unemployed, May 2015).

The participant further emphasized that financial barriers seem to block her way to her destination, and her situation is even worse because both of her parents had passed away:

First and most importantly is that, I do not have financial means to further educate myself and I currently have no one to support me as well since both my parents past away when I was doing my last year in high school in 2009 [bowing down with a sad face]. Besides that, I have a 5 year old daughter whose father is not working as well for now so, it is almost clear that I cannot afford studying further rather will have to work hard to make sure that the life of my daughter is better unlike mine and to make sure that she gets the opportunity that has passed me of going to a higher education institution and get educated unlike me (Respondent no 7, unemployed, May 2015).

This is one expression which demonstrates that finance really matters for young people to access higher education. Notably, if it was not for financial problems, most young people would have attempted to access higher education. Below is another remark which demonstrates that although young people have aspirations to access higher education, the lack of finances remain one of the major barriers for them to realize their goals :

Well, I always wanted to become a doctor but then things became so unfortunate for me that my family could not manage paying me my study fees. However, I would still want to pursue though, for a moment I have to accept that they were no finances to assist me to study. Either way, life goes on [with a sad face]. Finance is a serious issue my brother so, I really have accepted that I cannot go to study. When I think of my problem it just bring tears to my eyes because I want to study just like other kids but I am just so unfortunate [being emotional] (Respondent no 8, unemployed, May 2015).

Most respondents have expressed their concern regarding the lack of finances to pay for university studies or even to study further. More particularly, unemployed youth are concerned about financial constraints and believe that there should be more financial support for potential youth to pay for their studies. It has been similarly discovered that grade 12 youth are also afraid of the possible financial problems which may hinder them to participate in higher education.

5.5.1.1. The availability of support

The study also shows that support to young people whether those in grade 12, unemployed, and those in higher education is critical for them to realise their academic dreams. Most Kenneth Gardens youth indicated that they would like to receive support to access higher education or to proceed with their studies. Most of the youth have indicated that since financial barriers proves to be one of the major obstacles; they would like to receive financial support. For instance, one university student stated that:

Yes there should be support especially for people who truly have no one to assist them with their study preparations maybe because of finances. I think support should be of any kind that is needed including family and financial support but, what has helped me is to have ‘self-support’ first or should I say be ‘self-driven’ first before other people intervene to avoid losing yourself while listening at other people describing your life path for you (Respondent no 16, university student, May 2015).

Below is supporting evidence that comes from a UKZN student who believes that family support of any kind is most critical alongside other enabling factors such as financial support. This student stated that:

Yes there should be more support. To be honest my brother, I never though family influence has so much impact in a person’s life. So, taking it from my experience, family support comes first than any other thing and then may be followed by financial support along with career guidance support to avoid what happened to me ‘getting people to change your mind to what they want instead of giving you exposure of other career choices and let you have the final decision’ (Respondent no13, university student, May 2015).

Most participants indicated that different stakeholders should commit to providing support for potential students. Participants especially highlighted that financial support should be provided to students from disadvantaged family backgrounds. Such deserving students include orphans, and students from low income families. It was also evidenced that family members should play a supportive role to young people financially, emotionally and academically.

5.5.2. Application and admission to higher education institution

The study also reveals that the complexity of the application process for admission into a higher education institution is one of the challenges for Kenneth Gardens youth to access higher education. While this challenge is linked to school and family background, the study indicates that some young people, particularly those from disadvantaged families and high school backgrounds found the application process to be an obstacle for their admission to higher education institution. For instance, one grade 12 student indicated that as he would like to study overseas after matric, he admitted that the application process will be difficult (Respondent no 1, grade 12 student, April 2015). The student added that he will also apply to KZN higher education institutions because his application to overseas institutions is not guaranteed to succeed. He also seeks support for his Central Applications Office application (Respondent no 1, grade 12 student, April 2015). Another high school student who would like to study at UKZN after matric indicated that she is afraid that her parents might not provide financial support for the Central Applications Office application. However, she stated that she will ask her teachers for help (Respondent no 3, grade 12 student, April 2015). These are some of the expressions which indicate the complexity of the application process especially for grade 12 students whose parents never went through the same processes. While this remains the case, most grade 12 students indicated that they are confident that they will meet the minimum requirements. Nevertheless, most of the unemployed youth living in Kenneth Gardens indicated that besides the financial barriers, they feel discouraged even to apply because they do not meet the minimum university admission requirements. For instance, respondent no 12 stated that:

I would really like to go to the university to study social work but I do not know if they would take me. Apart from that, I cannot afford to pay their fees. I also think they might not accept my application because of my matric results. Well, my results are not that bad, but I heard that universities demand more than we have. People are telling me that I need to upgrade, but I think I do not have time now to do that, I am getting old bra. The only

option I would go for is to try colleges, yet the problem is money (Respondent no 12, unemployed, May 2015).

This expression demonstrates that young people are faced with more than just one obstacle to access higher education. They may face both admission challenges and financial constraints. However, most university students found it easy to apply to higher education institutions with the help of their teachers and parents. Notably, some raised the concern that universities did not consider their applications for National Students Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) and for residences. When asked about the application process, one UKZN student stated:

I used a Central Applications Office form to apply in which I wrote down my career choices accordingly as I wanted to rate them. The Central Applications Office form we got it from school with our teachers helping us on how to fill the form because some institutions like UKZN do not pretty much consider your application if you put their study Programme at second or third place, it felt more like they look first at those who made them first choice. I therefore applied knowing this very much, ‘thanks to our Life Orientation teacher’ [Smiling], but again I did not get funding and a residence which was quite stressful (Respondent no 16, university student, May 2015).

This expression shows that although there are obstacles for Kenneth Gardens youth to access higher education, with the assistance they got from teachers and parents, some youth do cope with such challenges. However, the study demonstrates that youth do face challenges associated with admission to higher education institutions.

5.5.3. Lack of aspiration and access to higher education

The study has also identified the lack of aspiration as one of the key obstacles for Kenneth Gardens youth to access higher education. It has been recognised that aspiration is important for young people to participate in higher education, and if aspiration is lacking it becomes an obstacle. There are many identified factors that shape youth aspirations for higher education; these are partially presented in section 5.3. Some respondents indicated that they could not access higher education because they are no longer motivated to take action. Here is one respondent who expressed being discouraged to participate in higher education:

I feel like it is useless even to worry myself thinking that I will make it to university or college. This is very discouraging, and when people talk about education, I feel like crying. Only if someone can kill me, then I will have a break. First of all, I do not have financial means to go to study, so wishing to or not is just the same. The worst part is that no one is willing to help me. It has been 5 years now since I finished matric, I just gave up but hoping to get job. Apart from that, I also have a responsibility to take care of my son and

there is no reason why I should go to higher education institution [with a sad face] (Respondent no 8, unemployed, May 2015).

Most unemployed Kenneth Gardens youth expressed the opinion that they lack motivation to access higher education because they have lost hope. Another participant from this category indicated how useless he thinks gaining a higher education is. He stated that:

You know my brother the world has changed. It is unlike before (in the past decades) where we knew that if you have a diploma or degree you will get a job. Today it is something different, you find people with certificates like you who are jobless. So I can just think if I can go to varsity now for 3 or 4 years and when I finish only finding that I do not even get that job what will happen. So rather than wasting my time in higher education, I think it is better to search for a job or start my small business (Respondent no 10, unemployed, May 2015).

This study shows that majority of the unemployed youth living in Kenneth Gardens demonstrated a lack of aspiration for higher education. Hence, they demonstrated that the lack of aspiration is linked to some practical barriers that further discourage them to attempt applying to higher education institutions. Notably, most youth from this category have children to take care of. This responsibility further discourages them in pursuing higher education.

5.6. Conclusion

In summary, empirical report demonstrates that youth aspirations for higher education are multidimensional. The major finding from this study is that lack of aspiration is one of the key challenges for youth to access higher education. Hence, grade 12 and university students are found to have higher aspirations compared to the unemployed youth who may or may not have finished matric. There are various factors that shape youth aspirations for higher education. These factors include the drive to improve well-being, the drive for social change, the role of family, community, teachers, peers, career guidance a. Nevertheless there are various obstacles that hinder youth to access higher education. These involve lack of finances and the inability to meet higher education institution minimum admission requirements. This study therefore indicated that there is a need to raise awareness about higher education opportunities and support.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter discusses the major findings from the study of youth aspirations for higher education. The major finding from the study is that a lack of aspiration is one of the major obstacles for youth to access higher education. There are various factors that contribute and undermine youth aspirations for higher education. Capabilities are also critical for youth to access higher education. However, there are many other challenges for youth to access higher education.

Aspiration is critical for youth to access higher education. Majority of young people fail to participate in higher education because they lack aspiration to do so. As evidenced in the findings in section 5.2 and 5.5.3; it becomes clear that a lack of aspiration is one of the major obstacles for young people to access higher education particularly the unemployed youth who may or may not have finished matric. Likewise, the examined literature shows that a lack of aspirations for higher education is a significant factor that hinders youth to access higher education and this in effect undermines upward mobility (Conradie & Robeyns, 2013: 561, Jones & Thomas, 2005: 617). While youth at matric and university level have higher aspirations, unemployed youth lack the capability to aspire. Hence, a lack of aspiration remains one of the major obstacles for unemployed youth to access higher education. Sen also in his analysis highlights the role capabilities play to aid the youth to aspire. He indicates that aspirations do not result from strictly individual inclinations, but are also shaped by social and environmental contexts and the possibilities to which the latter gives access (Sen, 1993 cited in Lambert & Vero, 2013: 309). Therefore, there are various external factors that influence unemployed youth capability to aspire which in turn becomes a barrier for them to access higher education.

There are various factors that contribute to youth aspirations for higher education. As demonstrated in the findings recorded in section 5.3, these factors are twofold. While youth aspirations are influenced by external factors such as family members, teachers, peers etc. internal factors such as the drive to improve livelihood and a desire for social change are significant motivating factors for youth to participate in higher education. Family members and teachers play a pivotal role in building youth aspirations for higher education whereas community members and peers have a limited role in this regard. Similarly, Ward (2006: 55) believes that youth aspirations for higher education are linked to societal forces, family, school

and community background. Hence, social capital is critical in boosting youth aspirations for higher education. Dufur (2013: 2) states that social capital is about alliances, cooperation and networking between individuals, and these linkages are very important to facilitate the development of human beings. Therefore, social capital is based on external factors that are crucial in building youth aspirations for higher education as evidenced in the findings.

Furthermore, youth aspirations for higher education are linked to the drive to create and sustain a livelihood. Most young people aspire to participate in higher education because they have a drive to secure their livelihoods with their families (Brocklesby & Fisher, 2003:188). This involves a wish to earn high income in order to meet daily human needs. Thus, it is meaningful that youth participate in higher education as a form of investment in human capital with the purpose of improving livelihoods (Brocklesby & Fisher, 2003: 188). In addition, youth aspirations for higher education are linked to their drive to contribute to social change economically, socially, politically, environmentally and culturally. This idea is supported by human capital theorists who believe that individual' labour, skills, and knowledge (human capital) is not only necessary for human development, but it is very critical to allow human beings to participate in economic activities necessary for a country's development (Knutsson, 2006: 91). As also demonstrated in the findings section, youth aspire for higher education to develop their capacity to improve and sustain their livelihoods and also to contribute to social development.

Capabilities play a critical role for youth to access higher education. Youth with strong academic capabilities are likely to qualify for admission to higher education institutions, and they can cope with tertiary education challenges. This study indicated that unemployed youth do not have confidence in their academic abilities, and this further limits their chances to access higher education. However, matric and university students have confidence in their academic abilities. Likewise, analysis of literature shows that capabilities are critical for people to realize their goals of improving their well-being. Accessing higher education and thereafter having a 'good life' is one example that is linked to strong academic and financial capabilities (Sen, 1993: 273). Therefore, youth access to higher education reflects mostly through their academic capabilities. Since academic capabilities differ from person to person, this is one reason why some Kenneth Gardens youth access higher education while others fail. However, it is also crucial to note that

capabilities are multidimensional. This means that individual capabilities do not result from a single factor as demonstrated in the findings section. Thus this also indicates that capabilities, whether academic or financial do not guarantee ones access to higher education (Clark, 2005). There are differences in youth capabilities especially between those who are doing grade 12, those who are unemployed and those who are in higher education institutions. This further indicates that youth capabilities are systematic in nature. For instance, some youth are naturally academically capable, but maybe financially incapable. Some youth are academically capable by nature, yet their capabilities are undermined by the poor quality of education they receive. Therefore, it is not always a case that youth from poor background would not access higher education due to financial problems because such youth may have strong academic abilities and thus qualify for funding support. This demonstrates that that academic capability alone is not enough to guarantee youth access to higher education, rather other forms of capabilities such as financial capability should be considered.

There are many challenges that hinder youth to access higher education. However, this study indicates that Kenneth Gardens youth are faced with two dominant challenges adding to the lack of aspiration. One is a lack of finances and the other is the failure to meet higher education institution minimum admission requirements as highlighted in the findings section 5.5.1. Financial barriers are a common challenge for most young people to access higher education. As Kirk & Day (2011: 1178), state that youth from low-income families are financially constrained to access higher education. In addition, youth from low-income families lack information about financial support opportunities, procedures, and eligibility criteria to apply for funding even if they are talented and do qualify to pursue their studies with tertiary education institutions (Kirk & Day, 2011: 1178). This clearly demonstrates that although youth may have aspirations for higher education, they may fail to realise their aspirations due to financial barriers. Some Kenneth Gardens youth wish to participate in higher education, but they fail to meet the minimum tertiary education institution entry requirements. This is a normal problem for youth who come from disadvantaged school background. Likewise, Statistics South Africa (2011: 2) shows that more than 50% of the matriculants who applied for admission to tertiary education institutions are disqualified mostly due to the fact that they do not meet the minimum entry requirements. This is one of the major obstacles for Kenneth Gardens youth to access higher education.

6.1. Conclusion

This research has argued that aspiration plays a critical role for Kenneth Gardens youth to access higher education. Attempts have therefore been made to demonstrate that a lack of aspiration is one of the major obstacles for Kenneth Gardens youth to access higher education. This research has further validated that there are various factors that contribute to youth aspirations for higher education. These factors include, but are not limited to, the role of family members, the role of teachers, the role of community members, and the role of peers and so on. The role of capabilities for youth to access higher education has also been discussed. The study showed that youth access to higher education also reflects individuals' capabilities though the notion of capability is multidimensional. Hence, it has been argued that lack of finances and failure to meet tertiary education minimum admission entry requirements remains some of the major obstacles for Kenneth Gardens youth to access higher education. The research has revealed that support should be channeled to potential Kenneth Gardens youth in order for them to realise their aspirations.

6.2. Recommendation

This research has two major recommendations. The first recommendation is geared towards improving Kenneth Gardens youth aspirations for higher education. Since it has been discovered that some young people could not participate in higher education due to lack of aspiration, it is therefore recommended that support be given to the promotion of career guidance programmes both at high school and within Kenneth Gardens community to boost youth aspirations for higher education. This initiative should be part of the existing civil society sector at Kenneth Gardens. The university/college, civil society and high school relationship should be strengthened as an attempt to ensure that adequate career information is provided to youth.

The second recommendation is that further research into areas not covered by this study should be further explored. The first area for investigation should be the role of Kenneth Gardens non-profit organizations on youth aspirations and access to higher education. This would also unpack the need for these organizations capacity development and to consider youth development projects including career guidance. Hence, it will be very interesting to explore the role of information communication technology (ICT) on youth aspirations and access to higher education or the youth perception of ICT in relation to higher education.

Bibliography

- Allison, E. H. & Horemans, B. (2006). Putting the principles of the sustainable livelihoods approach into fisheries development policy and practice. *Marine Policy*, 30(6), 757-766.
- Appadurai, A. (2003). *Archive and aspiration, Information is Alive*. Rotterdam: V2 Publishing.
- Archer, L., & Hutchings, M. (2000). Bettering yourself? Discourses of risk, cost and benefit in ethnically diverse, young working-class non-participants constructions of higher education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 21(4), 555-574.
- Ashley, C., & Carney, D. (1999). *Sustainable Livelihoods: Lessons from Early Experience* (Vol. 7, No. 1). London: Department for International Development.
- Ball, S. J., Davies, J., David, M., & Reay, D. (2002). Classification and judgement: social class and the cognitive structures of choice of higher education. *British journal of sociology of education*, 23(1), 51-72.
- Baptiste, I. (2001). Educating lone wolves: pedagogical implications of human capital theory. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 51(3), 184-201.
- Bhattacharyya, E., & Sarip, A. B. M. (2014). Learning style and its impact in higher education and human capital needs. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 123, 485-494.
- Bless, C. Higson-Smith, C. & Sithole, S (1995). *Social Research Methods: An African perspective* (5th edition). Cape Town: Juta
- Bloom, D. E., Canning, D., & Chan, K. (2006). *Higher Education and Economic Development in Africa* (No. 102). Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Bok, J. (2010). The capacity to aspire to higher education: 'it's like making them do a play without a script'. *Critical Studies in Education*, 51(2), 163-178.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology qualitative research. *Psychology*, 3, 77-101. ISI.

- Bridges, D. (2005). Widening participation in higher education-‘the philosopher and the bricklayer’ revisited. *British Education Research Association*.
- Brocklesby, M. A., & Fisher, E. (2003). Community development in sustainable livelihoods approaches: an introduction. *Community Development Journal*, 38(3), 185-198.
- Brunso, A., Jørgensen, L., & Viborg, S. (2012). Commodification of Higher Education (Doctoral dissertation).
- Camarena, P. M., & Sarigiani, P. A. (2009). Postsecondary educational aspirations of high-functioning adolescents with autism spectrum disorders and their parents. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*.
- Chapman, B., & Ryan, C. (2005). The access implications of income-contingent charges for higher education: lessons from Australia. *Economics of Education Review*, 24(5), 491-512.
- Clark, B. R. (1960). The “cooling-out” function in higher education. *American journal of Sociology*, 569-576.
- Clark, D. A. (2005). Sen's Capability Approach and the many spaces of human well-being. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 41(8), 1339-1368.
- Conradie, I. (2013). Can deliberate efforts to realise aspirations increase capabilities? A South African case study. *Oxford Development Studies*, 41(2), 189-219.
- Conradie, I., & Robeyns, I. (2013). Aspirations and human development interventions. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 14(4), 559-580.
- De Meulemeester, J. L., & Rochat, D. (1995). A causality analysis of the link between higher education and economic development. *Economics of Education Review*, 14(4), 351-361.
- Du Toit, M. (2000) telling tales: the politics of language in oral historiography. *South African historical journal*, 42(1), 89-120.

- Dufur, M. J., Parcel, T. L., & Troutman, K. P. (2013). Does capital at home matter more than capital at school? Social capital effects on academic achievement. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 31, 1-21.
- Farrington, J., Carney, D., Ashley, C., & Turton, C. (1999). Sustainable Livelihoods in Practice: early Applications of concepts in rural areas (Vol. 42, pp. 1-2). ODI.
- Field, S. (2006). Beyond healing: Trauma, oral history and regeneration. *Oral History*, 34 (1), 31-42.
- Finnie, R. (2012). Access to post-secondary education: The importance of culture. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34(6), 1161-1170.
- Flowers, L. A., Milner, H. R., & Moore, J. L. (2003). Effects of locus control on African American high school seniors' educational aspirations: Implications for preservice and inservice high school teachers and counselors. *The High School Journal*, 87(1), 39-50.
- Gayle, V., Berridge, D., & Davies, R. (2002). Young people's entry into higher education: quantifying influential factors. *Oxford Review of Education*, 28(1), 5-20.
- George, P., & Patrinos, H. A. (2004). Returns to investment in education: a further update. *Education economics*, 12(2), 111-134.
- Gort, M., Jafarey, S., & Rupert, P. (1999). Defining capital in growth models. *Economic Review-Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland*, 35(2), 19-23.
- Gray, S. S. (2013). Framing "at risk" students: Struggles at the boundaries of access to higher education. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 35(8), 1245-1251.
- Gremler, D. D., & Gwinner, K. P. (2008). Rapport-building behaviors used by retail employees. *Journal of Retailing*, 84(3), 308-324.
- Heifetz, A., & Minelli, E. (2006). Aspiration traps. *The BE Journal of Theoretical Economics*.
- Hoffman, E. A. (2007). Open-ended interviews, power, and emotional labor. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 36(3), 318-346.

- Hubbard, L. (1999). College aspirations among low-income African American high school students: Gendered strategies for success. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 30(3), 363-383.
- Jeffrey, C. (2012). Geographies of children and youth II Global youth agency. *Progress in human geography*, 36(2), 245-253.
- Jeffrey, C., Jeffery, R., & Jeffery, P. (2004). Degrees without freedom: The impact of formal education on Dalit young men in north India. *Development and Change*, 35(5), 963-986.
- Jones, R., & Thomas, L. (2005). The 2003 UK Government Higher Education White Paper: A critical assessment of its implications for the access and widening participation agenda. *Journal of Education Policy*, 20(5), 615-630.
- Kabiru, C. W., Mojola, S. A., Beguy, D., & Okigbo, C. (2013). Growing Up at the “Margins” Concerns, Aspirations, and Expectations of Young People Living in Nairobi's Slums. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 23(1), 81-94.
- Kao, G., & Tienda, M. (1998). Educational aspirations of minority youth. *American journal of education*, 349-384.
- Kenneth Gardens Community Project annual report (2013) <<http://kennethgardens.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Kenneth-Gardens-Annual-Report2013.pdf>> Accessed date: 15 September 2014.
- Kirk, R., & Day, A. (2011). Increasing college access for youth aging out of foster care: Evaluation of a summer camp program for foster youth transitioning from high school to college. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33 (7), 1173-1180.
- Kivinen, O., & Ahola, S. (1999). Higher education as human risk capital. *Higher Education*, 38 (2), 191-208.
- Kiyama, J. M. (2010). College Aspirations and Limitations The Role of Educational Ideologies and Funds of Knowledge in Mexican American Families. *American educational research journal*, 47 (2), 330-356.

- Knutsson, P. (2006). The sustainable livelihoods approach: A framework for knowledge integration assessment. *Human Ecology Review*, 13 (1), 90-99.
- Krantz, L. (2001). The sustainable livelihood approach to poverty reduction. SIDA. Division for Policy and Socio-Economic Analysis.
- Lambert, M., & Vero, J. (2013). The capability to aspire for continuing training in France: The role of the environment shaped by corporate training policy. *International Journal of Manpower*, 34 (4), 305-325.
- Lietz, C. A., Langer, C. L., & Furman, R. (2006). Establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research in social work implications from a study regarding spirituality. *Qualitative Social Work*, 5 (4), 441-458.
- Lin, T. C. (2004). The role of higher education in economic development: an empirical study of Taiwan case. *Journal of Asian Economics*, 15 (2), 355-371.
- Marimuthu, M., Arokiasamy, L., & Ismail, M. (2009). Human capital development and its impact on firm performance: Evidence from developmental economics. *The journal of international social research*, 2 (8), 265-272.
- Mathie, A., & Cunningham, G. (2003). From clients to citizens: Asset-based community development as a strategy for community-driven development. *Development in Practice*, 13(5), 474-486.
- Minkley, G. & Rassool, C. "orality, memory, and social history in South Africa", chapter six in Nuttal, S. & Coetzee, C., (eds), negotiating the past: the making of memory in South Africa, Cape town: Oxford university press, 1998.
- Morley, L., Leach, F., & Lugg, R. (2009). Democratising higher education in Ghana and Tanzania: Opportunity structures and social inequalities. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 29 (1), 56-64.
- Morrissey, C.T. "on oral history interviewing", chapter nine in Dexter, L.A. (ed.), elite and specialised interviewing, Evanston: North-western University Press, 1970, 109-118.

- National youth commission act 19 of 1996, Republic of South Africa.
- Neefjes, K. (2000). Improving livelihoods. In Neefjes, K. *Environments and Livelihoods: Strategies for sustainability*. London: Oxfam Publication.
- Olaniyan, D. A., & Okemakinde, T. (2008). Human capital theory: Implications for educational development. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(5), 479-483.
- Parr, A. (2007), 'Breaking the silence: Traumatized war veterans and oral history', *oral history*, 35(1), 61-70.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. SAGE Publications, inc.
- Purcell, K., Elias, P., Atfield, G., Behle, H., Ellison, R., Hughes, C., ...& Tzanakou, C. (2009). Plans, aspirations and realities: taking stock of higher education and career choices one year on. *HECSU, Manchester*.
- Quiggin, J. (1999). Human capital theory and education policy in Australia. *Australian Economic Review*, 32(2), 130-144.
- Rakodi, C. (1999). A capital assets framework for analysing household livelihood strategies: implications for policy. *Development policy review*, 17(3), 315-342.
- Robeyns, I. (2003). Sen's capability approach and gender inequality: selecting relevant capabilities. *Feminist economics*, 9(2-3), 61-92.
- Seginer, R., & Vermulst, A. D. (2002). Family environment, educational aspirations, and academic achievement in two cultural settings. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 33(6), 540-558.
- Sen, A. (1993). *Capability and well-being*. Cambridge University Press: New York. (pp. 30-53).
- Sewell, W. H., Haller, A. O., & Straus, M. A. (1957). Social status and educational and occupational aspiration. *American Sociological Review*, 67-73.

- Shakya, Y. B., Guruge, S., Hynie, M., Akbari, A., Malik, M., Htoo, S. & Alley, S. (2012). Aspirations for higher education among newcomer refugee youth in Toronto: Expectations, challenges, and strategies. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, 27(2).
- Shaw, J. K., & Allison, J. (1999). The intersection of the learning region and local and regional economic development: Analysing the role of higher education. *Regional Studies*, 33(9), 896-902.
- Solesbury, W. (2003). Sustainable livelihoods: a case study of the evolution of DFID policy. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Ssewamala, F. M., Karimli, L., Han, C. K., & Ismayilova, L. (2010). Social capital, savings, and educational performance of orphaned adolescents in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Children and youth services review*, 32(12), 1704-1710.
- Staeheli, L. A., & Hammett, D. (2013). 'For the future of the nation': Citizenship, nation, and education in South Africa. *Political Geography*, 32, 32-41.
- Statistics South Africa. Recorded Higher Education, 2004 (Annual Report). Pretoria: Statistics South Africa, 2004.
- Statistics South Africa. Recorded Higher Education, 2011 (Annual Report). Pretoria: Statistics South Africa, 2011.
- Tilak, J. B. (2008). Higher education: a public good or a commodity for trade? *Prospects*, 38 (4), 449-466.
- Toner, A. (2003). Exploring sustainable livelihoods approaches in relation to two interventions in Tanzania. *Journal of International Development*, 15(6), 771-781.
- Walberg, H. J., & Greenberg, R. (1996). Youth realities and aspirations. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 12, 178-180.
- Wang, L. (2011). Social exclusion and inequality in higher education in China: A capability perspective. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 31(3), 277-286.

- Ward, N. L. (2006). Improving equity and access for low-income and minority youth into institutions of higher education. *Urban Education*, 41(1), 50-70.
- Watts, M., & Bridges, D. (2006). The value of non-participation in higher education. *Journal of Education Policy*, 21(03), 267-290.
- Winters, J. V. (2011). Human capital, higher education institutions, and quality of life. *Regional Science and Urban Economics*, 41(5), 446-454.
- Winters, J. V. (2014). STEM graduates, human capital externalities, and wages in the US. *Regional Science and Urban Economics*, 48, 190-198.
- Wohn, D. Y., Ellison, N. B., Khan, M. L., Fewins-Bliss, R., & Gray, R. (2013). The role of social media in shaping first-generation high school students' college aspirations: A social capital lens. *Computers & Education*, 63, 424-436.
- Yowell, C. M. (2002). Dreams of the future: The pursuit of education and career possible selves among ninth grade Latino youth. *Applied Developmental Science*, 6 (2), 62-72.
- Yu, C. S. Lu, J., & Yang, J. (2013). Is social capital effective for online learning? *Information & Management*, 50 (7), 507-522.

Appendix 1

Interview guide (English version)

General questions:

Date at which the interview is conducted: _____

Age: 15-20 21-25 26-30

Date of birth: _____

Sex: Male Female

Marital status: Married Living Together Never Married Divorced
Widow

Broader research questions:

Have you finished school or are you still at school? (If finished, what grade did you pass and when did you finish. If still at school, what grade are you on)

If you have finished school, are you currently studying (e.g. at DUT, UKZN or a college?) Yes or no?

Interview for learners at school:

How long you have been staying at Kenneth Gardens?

How do you feel about living in this community?

What school are you at?

Do you think this is a good school?

How do you think you have performed at school? Which have been your best subjects?

What are your plans after you finish school?

What kind of job or career would you like to pursue in the long term? (Why are they attracted to this job?)

Do intend to study further?

[If the person does not intend to study further:]

What are the reasons you have decided not to study further?

Would you want to study further if there were no obstacles?

Do you feel you have the academic ability?

Do you think there would be financial barriers are too big?

Have you been discouraged from talking to family/friends/teachers?

[If the person does intend to study further:]

What study programme are you intending to take? [Institution, degree, subjects]

Why do you want to take this programme?

Are you confident in your academic abilities to do this programme?

Have you applied yet? [If yes, explain how you did this; if not, how you will go about it]

Do you think you will get in? [What difficulties you think you might face?]

What will you do if you do not get in?

Have you discussed your plans for study with your family/friends/teachers and if so what have they said?

[For all, whether or not they intend to study further] Have you been given any support in exploring the possibility of studying further?

Do you think there should be more support and if so what should this be?

Interview for people in a tertiary education institution:

How long you have been staying at Kenneth Gardens?

How do you feel about living in this community?

What high school were you at?

Do you think this was a good school?

How do you think you performed at school? Which were your best subjects?

What kind of job or career would you like to pursue in the long term? (Why are they attracted to this job?)

What study programme are you taking take? [Institution, degree, subjects, year started]

Why did you want to take this programme?

Did you originally want to study something else? Why did you change?

How did you apply to do this programme? (Tell me more about the process)

Were there any difficulties that you experienced in getting into this programme?

Did you get any particular support while you were applying or planning your studies?

What did your family/friends/teachers say when you applied to do this programme?

What has this programme been like for you academically? Do you feel you are coping? Do you feel that what you are doing is useful to you?

Do you think there should be more support for people planning their studies and if so what should this be?

Do you think you will get a job once you have finished studying?

Interview for people who have finished school but are not currently studying further:

How long you have been staying at Kenneth Gardens?

How do you feel about living in this community?

What high school were you at?

Do you think this was a good school?

How do you think you performed at school? Which were your best subjects?

What kind of job or career would you like to pursue in the long term? (Why are you attracted to this job?)

Do you intend to study further?

[If the person does not intend to study further:]

What are the reasons you have decided not to study further?

Would you want to study further if there were no obstacles?

Do you feel you have the academic ability?

Do you think there would be financial barriers that you might experience?

Have you been discouraged from talking to family/friends/teachers?

[If the person does intend to study further:]

What study programme are you intending to take? [Institution, degree, subjects]

Why do you want to take this programme?

Are you confident in your academic abilities to do this programme?

Have you applied yet? [If yes, explain how you did this; if not, how the will go about it]

Do you think you will get in? [What difficulties you think you might face?]

What will you do if you do not get in?

Have you discussed your plans for study with your family/friends/teachers and if so what have they said?

[For all, whether or not they intend to study further] Have you been given any support in exploring the possibility of studying further?

Do you think there should be more support and if so what should this be?

Appendix 2

Interview guide (Zulu version)

Imibuzo Ngesimo Sakho:

Usuku eyenziwengalo: _____

Iminyaka: 15-20 21-25 26-30

Usuku Lokuzalwa: _____

Ubulili: Owesilisa Owesifazane

Ubudlelwano Kwezothando: Ngishadile Angishadile Ngihlukanisile

Ngiwumfelwakazi

Imibuzo Ngezinga Lemfundo Onalo:

Kungabe Unaloyini ibanga leshumi? (Uma ungenalo ugcine kuliphi ibanga ukufunda)

Uma unalo ibanga leshumi, kungabe ukusiphi isikhungo semfundo ephakeme (e.g. DUT, UKZN or a college?) Yebo noma cha?

Imibuzo yabafundi abenza ibanga leshumi:

Uqalenini ukuhlala e Kenneth Gardens?

Uzizwa kanjani ukubayingxenye yalomphakathi?

Yini igama lesikole ofundakuso?

Ucabanga ukuthi kukulungele ukufunda kuso?

Ngokubonakwakho usaqhubakahle ezifundweni?

Kungabe yiziphi izifundo owenzakahle kakhulu kuzona?

Uhlele ukwenzani uma uphumelela lelibanga okulo?

Yimuphi umsebenzi ongathanda ukuyowufundela?

Yini eyakuheha ngaloluhlobo lomsebenzi?

Kungabe uhlele ukufunda uzeufinyelele kuliphi izinga?

Imibuzo yabanezinhlelo zokungayi koqhuba izifundo ezikhungweni zemfundo ephakeme:

Kungabe yini eyenza ungafisi ukuyoqhuba izifundo zakho ezikhungweni zemfundo ephakeme?

Kungabe bewungathanda ukuqhuba izifundo uma bezingekho izingqinamba?

Ngabe uzibona unalo ithuba lokuphumelela ezifundweni zasezikhungweni zemfundo ephakeme?

Kungabe ubonukuthi ungase ubenenkinga ezimalini zokukhokhela izifundo zakho?

Kungabe umdlandla ngokuqhuba izifundo zakho wehliswe ukuxoxa nabangani/abazali/othisha?

Imibuzo yabanezinhlelo zokuyoqhuba izifundo zabo ezikhungweni zemfundo ephakeme:

Yiziphi izifundo ohlele ukuyozenza? [Ikolishi, iziqu]

Yingani ukhetha ukwenza loluhlobo lwezifundo?

Ngabe uyazethemba ukuthi uzoziphumelela lezifundo?

Ngabe sewusifakile isicelo sesikhala sokuyofunda?

Kungabe kukhona okusizile ngokusifaka, umasewusikale?

Uma ungakasifaki, uhlele ukusifaka nini, kanjani?

Ucabanga ukuthi sizophumelela?

Yiziphi izinkinga obona zizobakhona uma siphumelela?

Kukhona ohlele ukukwenza uma singaphumeleli isicelo sakho?

Ngabe sewuke wakhulu manabangani, othisha Kanye nabazali ngezinhlelo zokuyoqhuba izifundo zakho?

Imibuzo yabobonke abafisayo nabangafisi ukuyoqhuba izifundozabo:

Sewuke waluthola uxhaso ngokuthola amathuba okuyoqhuba izifundo zakho?

Ucabanga ukuthi lukhona uxhaso oludingekayo ngokuthola ulwazi lokuyoqhuba izifundo? Uma lukhona ucabanga ukuthi kungaba yiluphi?

Imibuzo yabantu asebesezikhungweni zemfundo ephakeme:

Uqalenini ukuhlala e Kenneth Gardens?

Uzizwa kanjani ukubayingxenyeya lomphakathi?

Isiphi isikole owathola kuso ibanga leshumi?

Ucabanga ukuthi bekuyisikole esikulungele wena?

Ucabanga ukuthi labanjani izinga lakho ezifundweni owawuzenza ebangeni leshumi?

Yimuphi umsebenzi ongajabulela ukuwenza uma ungase unikwe ithuba lokuwenza?

Yini ekwenza ukuthakasele ukwenza lolu hlobo lalomsebenzi?

Yiziphi izifundo ozenzayo njenganje kulesikhungo okusona?

Yini eyakuheha ekutheni wenze loluhlobo lwezifundo?

Kungabe yizonafundo owawuvele uzihlosile noma wazithatha ngephutha?

Awuchaze kabanzi wasifaka kanjani isicelo ukuze uvumeleke ukwenza lezifundo ozenzayo?

Ngabe bukhona ubunzima owahlangabezana nabo ukuqala ukwenza lezifundo?

Ngabe hloboluni loxhaso owaluthola ufaka isicelo umalukhona?

Kungakube abangani, othisha kanyena bazali bakwamukela kanjani ukuthi wenza loluhlobo lwezifundo?

Uzizwa kanjani ngokwenza lezifundo? Kungakube uyazithokozela futhi uzitholaziwusizo olunjani kuwe?

Ucabanga ukuthi kudingeka sizoluni kubantu abasahlela ukwenza lezifundo?

Uwabona emangakanani amathuba okuthola umsebenzi uma sewuqede ukwenza lezifundo ezenzayo?

Imibuzo yabantu abaphothule ibanga leshumi abanothando lokuyoqhuba izifundo:

Uqalenini ukuhlala e Kenneth Gardens?

Uzizwa kanjani ukuba yingxenye yalomphakathi?

Isiphi isikole owathola kuso ibanga leshumi?

Ucabanga ukuthi bekuyisikole esikulungele wena?

Ucabanga ukuthi labanjani izinga lakho ezifundweni owawuzenza ebangeni leshumi?

Yiluphi uhlobo lomsebenzi ongathanda ukuwenza esikhathini esizayo futhi kungabe uwuthandiswa yini?

Kungabe uyafisa yini ukuyoqhuba izifundo?

Yiziphi izinselelo obhekene nazo ezidala kube lukhuni ukuthi uyoqhuba izifundo zakho?

Kungabe obani abakunikeza umfutho wokuthi uyoqhuba izifundo zakho?

Kungabe uwabona emangakanani amathuba akho okuphothula ngempumelelo izifundo zakho?

Imibuzo yabantu abaphothule ibanga leshumi kodwa abangenalo ugqozi lokuyoqhuba izifundo zabo:

Uqalenini ukuhlala e Kenneth Gardens?

Uzizwa kanjani ukuba yingxenye yalomphakathi?

Waliphothula kephi ibanga lakho leshumi?

Kungakube lesikole owawufunda kuso sasikulungele ukuthi ufunde kuso?

Yiziphi izizathu ezikwenza wangathanda ukuyyoqhuba izifundo zakho?

Kungabe ungaya yini ukuyyoqhuba izifundo zakho uma kungathiwa abukho ubunzima obukhona?

Kungabe uzibona unawoyini amathuba okuziphumelela izifundo zakho?

Kungabe ucabanga ukuthi kungabanezinkinga zemali yokukhokhela izifundo zakho?

Kungabe bukhona ubunzima obuqhamuke kubangani, abazali, nothisha, manikhuluma ngendaba yokuyyoqhuba kwakho izifundo?

Appendix 3

Observation tool

NB: This template serves as a research instrument (observation tool/ observation record keeping). This will be used to record and keep daily observations in the field (daily observations will be recorded in this template when among or working with youth in Kenneth Gardens projects).

Date	Observations