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2010

**THE ROLE OF VOLUNTARY
ORGANISATIONS IN
DEVELOPING THE
CAPABILITIES OF
VULNERABLE YOUNG
PEOPLE**

**By
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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the Degree of
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLES AND FIGURES -----	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS -----	ix
DECLARATION -----	xi
ABSTRACT -----	xii
Abbreviations -----	xiii
VOLUME I-----	1
PART I: Problematics -----	2
CHAPTER 1.0 - INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH -----	4
1.1 Introduction-----	4
1.2 Disaffected Young People -----	9
1.3 The Nature of Vulnerability -----	12
1.4 Society’s Search for Understanding-----	14
1.5 The Response of Government and Public Policy -----	17
1.6 The Role of Voluntary Organisations -----	22
CHAPTER 2.0 - Vulnerability, Capability and Communities of Learning: A Review of the Literature -----	26
2.1 Introduction-----	26
SECTION I VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE-----	27
2.2. Vulnerability and Social Exclusion -----	27
The meaning of vulnerability-----	28
The layers of vulnerability -----	28
The causes of vulnerability -----	32
The external causes:-----	33
The internal causes:-----	34
SECTION II THE CAPABILITY TO FUNCTION -----	36
2.3 The Capability Theory-----	36
<i>Amartya Sen</i> : capability as opportunity to choose possible functionings -----	37
<i>Martha Nussbaum</i> : capability as potential, realising functioning-----	39
Towards a critique of Nussbaum and Sen:-----	42
2.4 Young People’s Capabilities for Substantial Functioning-----	46
Necessities:-----	48
SECTION III: BUILDING CAPABILITIES IN EXCLUDED COMMUNITIES-----	49
Two perspectives of social exclusion -----	50
SECTION IV: VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS - Communities of Learning-----	55
2.6 Purpose of Voluntary Organisations-----	56
2.7 The Pedagogies of Voluntary Organisations-----	59
2.8 The People in Voluntary Organisations-----	66
2.9 The Success of Voluntary Organisations: Outcomes for vulnerable young people and communities -----	70
2.10 Conclusion -----	74
CHAPTER 3.0 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS -----	76
3.1 Introduction-----	76
3.2 From Vulnerability to Capability -----	76
3.3 Learning via Enculturalisation -----	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.3 Learning via Enculturalisation -----	81
3.4 What Interventions Make a Difference? -----	85

Pedagogies-----	85
Practices-----	87
Professionals-----	89
Making It Work-----	90
3.5 Conclusion-----	94
VOLUME I-----	95
PART II: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY-----	96
CHAPTER 4.0 – PRINCIPLES, DESIGN AND METHODS-----	97
4.1 Introduction-----	97
SECTION I: METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES-----	98
4.2 A Mixed Methodology-----	98
4.3 Epistemological Assumptions-----	102
SECTION II RESEARCH DESIGN-----	105
4.4 Research aims and objectives-----	106
4.5 Research Questions-----	107
4.6 Research Hypotheses-----	108
4.7 Research Strategy-----	109
4.8 Research Design and Methods-----	110
i. Develop understanding of the main research objects via progressive focussing.-----	112
ii. Constructing populations of voluntary organisations in the Riverton area-----	114
Unsuitability of Groups B and C-----	116
iii. Sampling-----	117
iv. Studying practices in the participating institutions-----	122
v. Investigating processes involved in capability development in voluntary organisations.-----	127
4.9 Ethical Considerations-----	129
4.10 Analysing the Data-----	131
4.11 Validity and Reliability-----	132
SECTION III EXPERIENCE OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS-----	135
4.12 Dilemmas of the research experience-----	139
4.13 Ethical Issues-----	140
4.14 Risk assessment-----	141
4.15 Expectations-----	142
4.16 Conclusion-----	142
VOLUME I-----	144
PART III: RESEARCH FINDINGS-----	145
CHAPTER 5.0 - VULNERABLE LIFE WORLDS-----	147
5.1 Introduction-----	147
SECTION I THE CITY OF RIVERTON-----	148
5.2 Contexts of diversity and poverty-----	148
5.3. The Communities of the Vulnerable Young People-----	149
5.3.1 Ilkridge-----	150
5.3.2 Funaley-----	151
5.3.3 Heathtop-----	152
5.4 Communities: Living in conditions of disadvantage-----	153
SECTION II FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL-----	154
5.5 Vulnerabilities: Excluded young people-----	154
5.5.1 Ilkridge: excluded young people-----	155
5.5.2 Funaley: Excluded young people-----	161
5.5.3 Heathtop: Excluded young people-----	167
Summary Excluded young people-----	169
5.6 Vulnerabilities: Looked After Children-----	169

5.6.1 Ilkridge: Looked After Children -----	170
5.6.2 Funaley: Looked After Children -----	177
5.6.3 Heathtop: Looked After Children -----	182
Summary: Looked After Children -----	182
5.7 Vulnerabilities: Young people with Learning Disabilities -----	184
5.7.1 Ilkridge: Young people with Learning Difficulties -----	187
5.7.2 Funaley: Young people with Learning Difficulties -----	192
5.7.3 Heathtop: Young People with Learning Difficulties -----	192
Summary: young people with learning difficulties -----	195
SECTION III LAYERS OF VULNERABILITY -----	196
5.9 Conclusion -----	197
CHAPTER 6.0 – THE VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS -----	198
6.1 Introduction -----	198
6.2 Voluntary organisations in Riverton -----	199
6.3 Voluntary Organisation: Ilkridge -----	200
6.3.1 Ilkridge staff -----	201
6.3.2 Ilkridge facilities -----	204
6.3.3 Ilkridge activities -----	205
6.4 Voluntary Organisation: Funaley -----	207
6.4.1 Funaley staff -----	208
6.4.2 Funaley facilities -----	212
6.4.3 Funaley activities -----	213
6.5 Voluntary Organisation: Heathtop -----	215
6.5.1 Heathtop Staff -----	216
6.5.2 Heathtop facilities -----	220
6.5.3 Heathtop activities -----	221
6.6 Conclusion -----	222
VOLUME 2 -----	224
CHAPTER 7.0 – THE PRACTICES OF INTERVENTION AND HOW YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGE -----	225
7.1 Introduction -----	225
7.2 Material intervention -----	226
7.3 Relational intervention -----	228
7.4 Developmental intervention -----	236
a. Extra Support for Disadvantaged Groups -----	237
b. Alternative education: Using Informal Learning Techniques -----	238
c. Discipline and learning how rules and structure instil organisation, fairness and peace -----	242
d. Awards and qualifications -----	243
e. Practical training: writing CVs, practicing interviews and budgeting -----	244
f. Residential: These support relationships and trust between young people and staff --	245
g. Using opportunities for spontaneous learning -----	247
7.5 Conclusion -----	250
CHAPTER 8.0 FROM VULNERABLE WORLD TO PUBLIC WORLD: DIEGO’S JOURNEY -----	251
8.1 Introduction -----	251
8.2 Diego’s Story -----	252
8.3 Conclusion -----	262
VOLUME 2 -----	264
PART IV: ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION -----	265
CHAPTER 9.0 VULNERABLE LIFE-WORLDS: BARRIERS TO CAPABILITY -----	267
9.1 Introduction -----	267
9.2 The lifeworld of vulnerable young people -----	267

Sliding into the crew world -----	272
9.3 Vulnerability, dependency and recognition -----	279
Rootlessness -----	280
Normlessness -----	281
Despondency -----	282
9.4 Lives of vulnerability and risk -----	283
9.5 Conclusion -----	286
CHAPTER 10.0 DEVELOPING CAPABILITIES THROUGH LEARNING COMMUNITIES -----	287
10.1 Introduction -----	287
10.2 Developing learning communities for capability -----	288
10.3 The practices of engagement, relationship building and experiential learning -----	292
I Participation and engagement: becoming a member -----	292
Participation designed to tackle rootlessness -----	293
II Building transformational relationships -----	294
Recognition: valuing the young people -----	294
Relational skills: connecting to transform -----	296
Trust -----	297
Mentoring, counselling and guidance -----	298
Normlessness eroded by reflexive engagement -----	301
III A Pedagogy of experiential and reflexive learning -----	302
Learning agreement for engagement -----	305
Activity and experience -----	305
Dialogue and reflection -----	306
Taking responsibility -----	307
Modelling good behaviour and attitudes -----	307
Opportunities to take responsibility: challenging feelings of despondency -----	309
10.4 The bridge to capability offered by learning communities -----	310
(a) Social interconnectedness -----	312
(b) Human Values -----	313
(c) Security, Freedom and Development -----	314
(d) Well-being -----	314
(e) Knowledge, Interest and Learning Capacity -----	316
10.5 Conclusion -----	317
Chapter 11.0 Capabilities Achieved -----	318
11.1 Introduction -----	318
11.2 Liminality: the journey between lifeworlds -----	318
11.3 Capability sets for the public world -----	326
11.4 Conversion: from capability to functioning -----	333
11.5 Conclusion -----	337
CHAPTER 12.0 THE CAPABILITY APPROACH EXPANDED -----	338
12.1 Introduction -----	338
12.2 Capability development in non-formal educational settings -----	338
Promoting freedom and autonomy – genuine choice -----	340
12.3 Capability Approach a Purposeful Evaluative Framework -----	346
12.4 Operationality of education based capability approach values -----	349
Education for capability development -----	353
12.5 Threefold capabilities: tools, mechanisms and expertise -----	355
Social capital generatively renewed via sharing and learning -----	359
12.6 Conclusion -----	361
CHAPTER 13.0 - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS -----	363
13.1 Introduction -----	363
13.2 Overview -----	363

13.3 Recommendations	367
Learning communities and Cultural Historic principles can be used in other settings	367
Assessments that constructively inform and motivate learners	368
Boundaries and responsibilities that support development in the public lifeworld	369
13.4 Limitations of the study	370
13.5 Further research possibilities	371
13.6 Conclusion	373
BIBLIOGRAPHY	376
Legislation	440
APPENDICES	I
Appendix 4.1 Sampling Procedure	I
Appendix 4.2 Data Collection via Interview and Questionnaire	II
Appendix 4.3 Information Pack for Participants	VI
Appendix 4.3.1a Package for young people (Interviews)	VI
Letter of Introduction	VII
Consent Form	VIII
Interview Questions (A): Young People	IX
Appendix 4.3.1b Package for youth workers (Interviews)	X
Letter of introduction	XI
Interview Questions: Parents (B)	XII
Appendix 4.3.1c Package for Parents (Interviews)	XIII
Letter of Introduction	XIV
Interview Questions: Youth workers (C)	XV
Appendix 4.3.2: Letter to Management	XVI
Appendix 4.3.3 Letter to parents who could not attend interviews	XVII
Questionnaire: Parents who cannot be interviewed	XVIII
Appendix 4.4a Transcripts of interview with mentors/youth worker at Heathtop	XXII
Appendix 4.4b Transcripts of Interview with Vulnerable Young Person	XXXI
Appendix 4.5a Observation Protocol	XXXIX
Appendix 4.5b Example of a completed observation log	XL
Appendix 4.6 Observations Schedule	XLII

TABLES AND FIGURES

Figure 2.1 Maslow’s hierarchy of human needs 29

Figure 2.2 Roger’s analysis of the characteristics of a fully functional individual 30

Martha Nussbaum’s List of Basic Human capabilities 40

Table 2.1 Enabling Social Cohesion: Measures and Instruments..... 53

Figure 2.3 Developing capabilities in the ZPD - 62

Table 2.2 Youth Worker Qualities 68

Figure 3.1 Vulnerability created by numerous drivers and destroyed by personal, external and social interventions..... 80

Fig 3.2 Voluntary Organisations intervention: The journey of VYP from vulnerability to capability – active participating citizens, confident, secure, contributing, achieving 84

Figure 3.3 Gordon Wells Centrality of Interpersonal Action (*Wells, 2007*) 91

Figure 3.4 What interventions make a difference..... 93

Figure 4.1 Hour glass method of filtering data 111

Table 4.1 Overview of voluntary organisations in Riverton 115

Figure 4.2 Sampling Process 118

Table 4.2 Contacts in with potent participants in sampling process 118

Figure 4.3 Criteria for Sample 121

Table 4.3 Interviews conducted during research 124

Table 4.4 Outline of Research Process 137

Table 4.5 Assessment of risks 141

Narrative 5.1 Heather: Excluded in year eight 158

Narrative 5.2 Dama: Excluded in year nine..... 164

Narrative 5.3 Tisha: Lives in Children’s home 173

Narrative 5.4 Ayesha: Lives in hostel with support from social services 179

Narrative 5.6 Hero: Complex learning needs 188

Narrative 5.6 Jackson: Severe learning difficulties..... 194

Table 6.1 Ilkridge Staff 201

Narrative 6.1 – Jenny: Teacher turned youth worker 202

Table 6.2 Funaley Staff 209

Narrative 6.2: Sara: Trained as a youth and community worker..... 209

Table 6.3 Heathtop staff..... 217

Narrative 6.3: James: Volunteer trained to become a youth worker 217

Incident ILQ 2	226
Funaley Beyond 16 Museum Trip 2nd Term: Observation notes FFTU 16	232
Programme 4 FU Alternative Ed	239
Project: Youth Workers Ask Young People to Take Responsibility	246
Incident FE W22: Disciplinary action and moral education	248
Incident HE TH 7: Spontaneous learning using everyday tools	249
<i>Narrative 8.1 Diego – From Exclusion to Teaching Assistant Position</i>	252
Figure 10.1 How Interventions tackle the barriers of the crew world	291
Figure 10.3 Contrast between the vulnerable life world and the public world	311
Figure 11.1 Pyramid of transformation: The journey	320
Table 11.2 Young people’s social groups	325
Figure 11.3 How capability sets are formed	327
Figure 11.4 Summary of Bedrock Capabilities.....	329
Figure 12.1 Capabilities developed for functioning in the public sphere.....	359

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DECLARATION

I, Arinola Anneke Adefila, hereby certify that I wrote this thesis. It is a record of investigations I personally carried out and it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

ABSTRACT

What do people need to live functional and flourishing lives in today's global society? They require sophisticated socio-economic skills and the prowess of political and cultural participation to undertake duties as world citizens. Can schools in the United Kingdom, adequately prepare all young people for these challenges? Data published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF, 2009b) show that two in five children do not acquire key literacy and numeracy skills before leaving primary school. Some young people leave the education system altogether with no qualifications and limited understanding of their rights and responsibilities as global agents. Most of the young people in this category have multiple and sometimes complex disadvantages; they may live in poor and deprived neighbourhoods, experience poor physical and mental health or lack the support of adults who are able to model successful, flourishing and capable citizenry.

Sen (1992) argues that the instruments needed for individuals to flourish are “capabilities”. These are the “potentials to be and do”. This study examines the means by which voluntary organisations improve the capabilities of vulnerable young people. It focuses on three major vulnerable groups: young people who have been excluded from mainstream education, those in care for by the State and young people with learning difficulties.

The research uses a mixed methods approach, skewed in favour of qualitative methods to analyse diverse trajectories of vulnerable young people towards capability. It relies on the capability approach to investigate the methods used in Voluntary Organisations which support the participants' transformation to functional individuals. Organised as communities of learning, Centres of non-formal education provide the space, expertise and pedagogies for transformative learning processes to take place. The study shows vulnerable individuals need to combine and convert specialised capabilities in specific suites to enable them make the transition to capability successfully.

ABBREVIATIONS

ASBO – Anti Social Behaviour Order

ASDAN - Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network

BCS – British Crime Survey

BERA – British Education Research Association

BPS – British Psychology Society

CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

CHAT – Cultural Historical Activity Theory

DCSF – Department for Children Schools and Families

DFES – Department for Education and Skills

DFEE – Department for Education and Employment

DOE – Department of Education

DOH – Department of Health

DSS – Department of Social Security

GCSE – General Certificate of Secondary Education

HMI/ HMIE – Her Majesty’s Inspectorate/Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education

LAC – Looked After Children

LACES – Looked After Children Education Services

LEA – Local Education Authority

LD – Learning Difficulties

NCB – National Children’s Bureau

NFER – National Foundation for Education Research

NYA – National Youth Association

OCN/ NOCN – Open College Network/ National Open College Network

OFSTED – Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills

ONS – Office for National Statistics

PAYP – Positive Activities for Young People

PEP – Personal Education Plans

SEU – Social Exclusion Unit

SOED – Scottish Education Department

UNDP – United Nations development Program

UNICEF –United Nations Children Education Fund

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

VCG – Vulnerable Children Grant

V.I. P – Very important Person

YOT – Youth Offending Team

VOLUME 1

PART I

PART I: PROBLEMATICS

The thesis is divided into four parts. The first part sets the context for the research. It describes the research problem and reviews existing literature. Part two presents the methodology used in the study. The findings are presented in the third part and the final part analyses the conceptual and theoretical contribution of the research.

Part one consists of three chapters. The first introduces the study; it portrays statistics and concerns of government in relation to the increasing number of young people who are not being prepared for functional citizenship. It describes the nature of vulnerability faced by these young people and the frameworks used by government to tackle their problems. The roles of voluntary organisations that support vulnerable young people are also examined. Chapter two is a broad literature review which starts by analysing the term vulnerability. The causes and types of vulnerability faced by young people are investigated and the capability approach is introduced as the framework for assessing the competencies of individuals to live functioning lives. The review also examines the function and value of voluntary organisation. Specifically, the chapter discusses the way organisations influence vulnerable young people's transformation into responsible citizens. Chapter three focuses on the theoretical framework used in the research. It shows how the capability approach is used as an assessment tool and the operationalisation of Gordon Wells' version of the Cultural Historic Activity Theory (CHAT) theory in learning communities such as the voluntary organisation.

The second part is made up of one chapter. This fourth chapter presents the methodology used in the study. It includes justification for the chosen methods and an outline of the procedures used during

fieldwork. It describes the mixed methods used, the attention paid to sample size, reliability and validity, as well as ethical considerations.

Part three is a findings section which has four chapters. Chapters five and six present the findings from the vulnerable young people and voluntary organisations in turn. They both detail the environment and social context the young people live. Personal narratives and the opinions of youth workers are used to describe the state of the young people's vulnerability and the transformation of lifestyles taking place in voluntary organisations. Chapter seven show how the voluntary organisations develop themselves as communities of learning. The chapter details the perceptions of vulnerable young people and youth workers, which depict how the interventions support the trajectories towards capability. The last chapter in this section gives a detailed case study of one young man's trajectory from gangster lifestyle to a participating citizen.

The final section also has four main chapters which draw together the findings in an analytical fashion describing the common threads of interest in the study. The first chapter in this segment focuses on the vulnerable lifeworlds the study's participants described. The analysis conceptualises the barriers to capability. Chapter ten focuses on the space within the voluntary organisations and examines their uniqueness as communities of learning for the disadvantaged learners. Chapter eleven and twelve examine the capabilities achieved and argues for an expansion of the capability approach respectively. A final chapter concludes the thesis. Chapter thirteen also has a brief recommendations section and summarises the argument of the study. The Thesis is presented in two volumes. Part I, II and the first two chapters of Part III are contained in the first volume. Volume II includes the remainder of Part III, Part IV, Bibliography and Appendices.

CHAPTER 1.0 - INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

The social milieu has been transformed by the knock on effects of modernity, technological advances and affluence. For a significant number of people, the fast pace of scientific development, globalisation and prosperity have translated into enhanced well-being. Food, information and transportation have never been so widely available. With increased resources, more people are able to buy and do things that were once reserved for an exclusive few. Modern household equipment, low intensity jobs and easy access to arts and entertainment have created opportunities for individuals to live more fulfilling lives. Collectively, societies have also modernised, improving economic and civil participation, as well as governance mechanisms. In turn, new institutions and opportunities for learning and development have emerged. Twenty first century life has however thrust many new challenges on daily living. Prosperity has not spread evenly in the United Kingdom (Hills and Stewart, 2005), thus inequality has increased exponentially (Toynbee, 2008; Walker and Walker, 1997). Statutory institutions are replacing traditional societal networks as these support frameworks buckle in the new social regimes. Some of the networks, especially in contexts of disadvantage, catered systemically for social and educational development in young people. Today, the more vulnerable members of society, in the face of growing poverty and fragmenting family and community relationships, are struggling to learn and develop skills for participating in modern systems and institutions. Indeed, some modern norms – using the internet, democratic participation, use of information to make choices - place them at a disadvantage because they are ill equipped for engaging with such practices.

Young people can become susceptible to ‘dysfunctional’ lives if they do not develop the skills or capabilities to live in modern globalised cultures. Without capabilities vulnerable members of society face growing poverty, fragmenting family and community relationships, and will continue to struggle to learn and develop in modern systems and institutions. In fact, some of these institutions, place them at a disadvantage because they are ill equipped for engaging in them. Seventy percent of young people according to 2008 - 2009 data from the British Crime Survey (Walker, et al, 2009), are able to engage positively and constructively in their families and communities. Most of these fortunate individuals are growing up in relatively comfortable communities and attending good schools. Young people in stable families and prosperous neighbourhoods are more likely to obtain the support, care and education required for adult life (DFES¹, 2004). However, some young people do not have these crucial benefits. Indeed, there are adolescents who struggle to obtain the most basic necessities of shelter, food and clothing. Besides, even where material resources are accessible vulnerable young people are lacking other crucial development needs like emotional or learning support which invariably deter or delay their capability development.

Given this backdrop, Richard Layard and Judith Dunn (2009) argue that trends in modern society make life “more difficult” for young people. They cite the increased pressure on parents to succeed as a major concern. As adults aggressively pursue material well-being and individual aspirations, children no longer have the full attention, support and guidance of experienced carers. Newspaper headlines remind us almost daily that familial relationships and friendships are no longer safe and constructive for young people. Commonly reported cases of abuse, neglect and violence have surfaced. Robert Lawy

¹ DFES was the department responsible for education and skills until June 2007. It was absorbed along with the departments for trade and industry to become The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). The department was responsible for improving the focus on all aspects of policy affecting children and young people, as part of the Government’s aim to deliver educational excellence. May 11th 2010 a new government replaced the DCSF with a Department of Education. This Thesis refers to documents and policies of the government before May, 2010.

(2003) suggest that young children who do not have adequate development and care may struggle in mainstream education. Childhood development is different for children in these kinds of situations. They rely heavily on other social spaces to develop their understanding and skills. Their friends, the media and school experiences shape their worldview considerably.

The influence of the quality of our social environment on development and well-being is becoming better understood. Sen (1979) has extensively examined how various non-economic dimensions can influence patterns of human development. For example, when excluded communities are accorded rights of democratic participation, their voice ensures neglected needs are taken into account. Deneulin (2006), in the same vein, argues that “socio-historical agency” has to account for aspects of human development. For instance, women have gained freedom from men's abusive authority by collective action which has transformed structures of living together into ones enabling individual human beings to acquire agency and exercise choice (p.68). Social factors can be linked directly to contexts of disadvantage; young people who are not yet fully independent (Barry, 2006) become vulnerable to neglect which may set adrift in abusive social spaces. Such psychosocial pathways have led some young people into disillusion, violence and crime (Woodfield, et al, 2000). In disadvantaged neighbourhoods in particular, such causal pathways are responsible for poor mental health, low educational achievement and welfare dependency (Morris and Kalil, 2006; Marken, 2000). These complexities are intertwined with political, behavioural and attitudinal dimensions as well.

Twenge, et al (2002) suggests that there are direct correlations between young people's achievement and their perceived social status, self esteem, confidence, friendships, and motivation. The challenges of economic and emotional deprivation have widespread effects on young people's personal choices. Poor choices can be made in favour of ephemeral gains with disastrous consequences. Potentially the

depth and breadth of the damage can be severe. Inevitably corrosive social costs follow for entire communities.

The impact of these integrated vulnerabilities on families, schools, health and social services is resulting in spiraling economic, social and political disruptions. Young people in vulnerable familial circumstances are now being taken into care, sometimes because of the emotional and physical assault they inflict on family members (DCSFb, 2007). The educational system has had to develop new systems to cope with behavioural difficulties (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills {OFSTED}, 2007). By the late 1990s, school exclusions had risen to an all time high of 12,000 (DFESa, 2001). Figures may have declined since then because schools are able to place disruptive students in offsite centres whilst keeping them on the school roll (Parsons, et al, 2004). On average, 6.4% of young people are persistently absent from school (DCSF, 2008). The figures rise to above 11% in some boroughs. 7.3% of school days are missed nationally, mostly due to young people's incapability to engage in social and educational institutions.

The number of people with learning difficulties has also increased mainly due to improved life expectancy for people with complex and profound difficulties, Down's syndrome and Autistic Disorders (DoHb, 2001). At the turn of the millennium, 2% of the UK population had a learning difficulty (DoHa, 2001) and the figures are expected to rise by 11% by the year 2021 according to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS, 2007). People with mild learning difficulties can have normal lives and social relations, but, generally learning difficulties introduce complexities and increase the chances of individuals' vulnerability. CAMHS (2007) suggests that young people with learning difficulties will find it more difficult than their peers to live and participate in society as global agents because they have limited social relations, scant education or stimulation and restricted freedoms.

Public institutions are ill-equipped to respond to the needs of these vulnerable young people. They often respond to unruly behaviour by excluding and reprimanding the ‘problems’ (National Youth Agency (NYA), 2005a), in a bid to limit the damage done to the public. Schools and statutory organisations targets and funding obligations to meet that encourage them to keep vulnerable young people out of public view. Voluntary organisations are responding to the needs of vulnerable young people with distinctive strategies of learning to empower their potential and capability. By meeting the economic, social, educational and emotional needs of the young people in susceptible conditions, these organisations can help support a transition to more functional lifestyles. This research investigates the strategies voluntary organisations employ to meet the needs of vulnerable young people. It also examines the key processes that support positive changes in young people’s lifestyles and pathways within such organisations.

My research examines the challenges vulnerable young people encounter. My investigation will also show how voluntary organisations are responding to and, in many cases, meeting the functional needs of young people who are ill equipped to face the challenge of 21st century life. The roles and responsibilities of individuals and organisations involved in the lives of developing children are changing. What types of barriers disrupt learning and development of the vulnerable young people in the United Kingdom? The study investigates three groups of young people who clearly have problems in mainstream education. The first group: young people excluded from school, these young people have a variety of problems which keep them out of institutions of learning. Secondly, I investigate young people in care who live very different lives compared to their peers. Some of them find learning difficult, since they are preoccupied with their basic sustenance. Thirdly, I study young people with learning difficulties need special educational environments. The next section elaborates on the issues related to vulnerable young people who are.

1.2 Disaffected Young People

Young people's susceptibility to crime, illegal substances, teenage pregnancy and antisocial behaviour has been linked to their upbringing and social background (Parsons 1999, Lloyd et al 2003). Data from the Office of National Statistics (2008) show that one fifth of the population now live in low-income families². Of these 30% are likely to be disabled children and 40% are likely to be from ethnic minorities. More than a third of people living in relative poverty are children (ONS, 2008). 50% of lone parents are in low income jobs and more than a million children in the UK live in families where no adult is in paid work (Social Exclusion Unit, 2003). Government policies have significantly reduced the number of children living in poverty by supporting parents with employment opportunities. Yet, the UK still has the highest proportion of children living in workless households in the entire European Union (SEU, 1998c). Children from deprived backgrounds have a 50% chance of living in social housing and form a significant percentage of the 10% of 16 year olds that fail to achieve five GCSE's at any level (SEU, 2004). Of 16 to 19 year olds in this category one eighth are not in education, training or employment (SEU, 2004).

Without the support structures of families and good friendships, young people can become misguided by the influence of bad practices and street life. On the streets, young people find themselves in different types of unruly situations (Brand, and Ollerearshaw, 2008). Bullying, fighting, alcohol abuse and impoliteness are common disruptive street practices. Negative peer pressure also compels young

² The most commonly used threshold of low income is a household income that is 60% or less of the average (median) household income in that year. The latest year for which data is available is 2006/07. In that year, the 60% threshold was worth: £112 per week for single adult with no dependent children; £193 per week for a couple with no dependent children; £189 per week for a single adult with two dependent children under 14; and £270 per week for a couple with two dependent children under 14. These sums of money are measured after income tax, council tax and housing costs have been deducted, where housing costs include rents, mortgage interest (but not the repayment of Principal), buildings insurance and water charges. They therefore represent what the household has available to spend on everything else it needs, from food and heating to travel and entertainment (ONS, 2008)

people to experiment with drugs, sex and crime (Murphy and Roe, 2007). Young people in schools which the government regards as not sufficiently meeting the needs of its pupils (failing schools) seem to be in deprived neighbourhoods and are more susceptible to the sustained influence of street life (Audit Commission, 2008). Failing schools tend to exclude more needy pupils (Abdelnoor, 2007) further exacerbating their dependence of living on the streets. The risks of maintaining such conditions increase if parents have little or no influence over the activities of their wards. Young people with carers who have long-term disabilities, new or unsettled immigrants or those who have poorly developed parenting skills are most at risk (Home Office, 2005a). Young people who are not positively engaged in skill acquisition and leisure activities represent the largest percentage of teenagers involved with the criminal justice system (Central Office of Information, 2008). Also, young people with disabilities and emotional or mental problems do not necessarily obtain the additional support they need from their families and statutory institutions (CAMHS, 2007). Their conditions can lead to disillusionment and a dependency on the welfare system that is unhealthy.

The Audit Commission's (2009) report (*Tired of Hanging Out*) and a Joseph Rowntree Foundation leaflet "Campaign against Anti-Social Behaviour" published in 2005 showed that young people are viewed as the major perpetrators of antisocial behaviour. In particular, they were held responsible for graffiti, loud noise in residential areas and public places and littering. Home Office statistics (2008) also show that police hand out restrictions to young people due to inappropriate language and aggressive and intimidating behaviour (Walker, et al, 2009). Antisocial behaviour among young people seemed to have increased dramatically in the last 30 years (Millie, et al, 2009), due probably to limited positive activities (Davies, B. 2006) and confusion about boundaries (Davies, J. 2006). The reports aforementioned have pointed to the inaccessibility of positive activities for young people as a major reason for antisocial behaviour. The Joseph Rowntree analysis points out that many deprived

communities have little or no social amenities (JRF, 2009). Particularly, the dilapidation of leisure resources for young people in some areas has influenced creative but negative pastimes. Antisocial behaviour, the Audit Commission (2009), found is fuelled by rivalry and inadequate adult supervision. The data from this report suggests that young people who were positively engaged in structured activities like sports will shun antisocial activity.

Crime committed by young people is on the increase. Petty crimes are still the most widespread (Roe and Ashe, 2008; Central Office of Information, 2008). However, theft, antisocial behaviour and violent fights have become more frequent according to Home Office reports (Roe and Ashe, 2008). 7% of the young people are classed as frequent and serious offenders. Crimes committed by young people now also include drug selling offences, criminal damage, assault, sexual offences and gun and knife crimes. Data from the British Crime Survey of 2006 - 2007 (Roe and Ashe 2008) found that of the 4% of young people who admitted carrying dangerous weapons regularly, 83% claim they do so for personal protection. Statistical bulletins published by the Home Office (Home Office, 2008) show that crime amongst 10 – 15 year olds is often characterised by alcohol and drug consumption. Young people who have relationships with frequent offenders were also found to be more likely to become offenders (Cullingford, 2006). Data from the Home Office (2008), shows that males between sixteen and nineteen years of age are the most serious and frequent offenders (Walker, et al, 2009). The trends suggest that alcohol, drugs, relationships with frequent offenders tend to project crime as acceptable behaviour in this group of regular offenders (Cullingford, 2006). Regular offenders tend to be “highly impulsive” and perceive that their main carers have poor parenting skills. They do not trust the police and have negative attitudes towards their local communities (Brand and Ollerearshaw, 2008, Cullingford, 2006).

Teenage pregnancy has been gradually reducing in the United Kingdom over the last decade (SEU, 2005). However, British teenagers still account for the highest percentage of teen pregnancies in Europe (ONS, 2005). In February 2009, the Government (Home Office) revealed that conception rates among girls aged 15-17 rose from 40.9 per 1,000 in 2006 to 41.9 per 1,000 in 2007. For girls aged 12 to 15 pregnancy rates have risen from 7.8 per 1000 in 2006 to 8.1 per thousand in 2007, (ONS, 2009). This increase is the first in five years though the statistics show varied percentage decreases across some parts of the country. Statistics also show that girls born to teenage parents are more likely to become teenage parents themselves (ONS, 2004).

The contexts of poverty, ill health and deprivation together with the failings of institutions of learning reveal how vulnerable young people are descending into dysfunctional lifestyles. The next section looks at the nature of their vulnerability.

1.3 The Nature of Vulnerability

Vulnerability means being defenceless in the face of harm or danger. As a result personal safety is threatened. According to the United Nations Charter for Child Rights (UNICEF, 1989), safety includes protection from threats to well-being and provision of basic needs. Safety needs of the most basic kind comprise food, water, shelter, warmth, support and such things that enable and sustain a good life (UNICEF, 1989). In these respects, children are often deemed as some of the most vulnerable members of our society and require the support of caring adults and communities if they are to avoid danger and to develop their own independent life skills (UNICEF, 1990; DCSFa, 2007). If such provision is absent or inadequate, children are not only denied basic elements of a good childhood, they are also at risk of growing up unprepared for the responsibilities of adult life (Layard and Dunn, 2009).

The conditions that make young people vulnerable are varied. The two root causes, which have been acknowledged extensively, are poverty and lack of coping mechanisms or skill sets (World Bank 2000; UNICEF, 2007). The scarcity of resources experienced by people in poverty has far reaching consequences on their physical, mental and emotional health and well-being (Deaton, 2001; Mullahy and Wolfe, 2002). Poor people do not consistently have the means to eat nutritionally balanced meals or afford relaxation and entertainment. Medical research has shown that poor people have higher levels of disability and ailment (Paterson and Judge, 2002). Poverty also implies enhanced risks and an inability to withstand major disruptions or “shocks” (Percy-Smith, 2000), these impacts on a person’s emotional stability - hopes, ambitions and relationships (Pearce and Hillman, 1998; Whelan, et al, 2003). Thomas Pogge (2002) identifies political consequences caused by inequalities in resources on capacities to participate in public life and influence decision making about goods and resources. In this regard, parents who are obliged to take on jobs with irregular shifts and long hours will not be able to support their children in some school activities. Poor health and inaccessibility to civil action groups also stifles individuals’ potential to make voluntary contributions to communities and society in general.

Young people who lack physical and emotional nourishment are at risk of developing behavioural problems (Harrington, 2006). Frustration and anger can lead to depression and other mental complexities. Young people with poor inter-personal skills find communication, relationship building and teamwork difficult. They quickly learn to use physical aggression, violence and theft to obtain their needs of food, attention and affection. Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2006a; 2006b) and Child Poverty Action Group (2008) substantiates this, drawing parallels between poverty, educational underachievement and crime. Cullingford (2006) and Lloyd, et al (2001) also point out similar connections. Economic, social, educational and cultural inadequacies are intertwined and impact negatively on children’s development. The result is dysfunctional behaviour and lifestyles.

Vulnerable children do not grow up in a cocoon. In fact their vulnerability may be exacerbated by various elements within society. For example, children who are looked after by Social Services consistently underachieve educationally (SEU, 2003). Children with disabilities do not get the support they need because structures are inadequate or absent (Sloper, 1999). There is difficulty in assessing children and young people's vulnerabilities (Piachaud, 1987; Spicker, 2007). This is because some people can manage their vulnerabilities better than others. Nevertheless, young people should not have to be burdened with the anxieties and complexities of fending for their basic needs because they lack the requisite skills. The quality of public understanding of children's vulnerable circumstances varies considerably as do the proposed remedies.

1.4 Society's Search for Understanding

In some areas young people's antisocial behaviour is challenging community lifestyle: people feel threatened by intimidating behaviour and the potential violence of street gangs. The use of verbal and mental abuse, intimidation and violence is well reported in the mainstream media which is in danger of generating a 'moral panic' with sensational headlines about crime involving guns, knives, alcohol and drugs. News reports about young people that dominate the headlines include bulletins about very young fathers, young offenders, and tragic crimes involving knives and guns. These crimes, which are now reportedly almost daily, include detailed accounts of young people murdered in busy streets or stations by their peers. The sensationalisation by the media according to Monica Barry (2006) fails to capture how societal features are linked to the reports of stabbing, gang rivalry and grievous bodily harm on the streets.

Public policy organisations (for example, the Audit Commission, the Rowntree Foundation, and the Children's Society) have made considerable contributions to the analysis and deliberation of these issues of vulnerable young people. The Audit Commission has highlighted excesses and waste with reference to policy directed at young people. In an earlier report, *Misspent Youth: Young People and Crime* (Audit Commission, 1996) the Commission focussed on the alarming rate of young people involved in crime. It concluded that money spent by the police could be put to better use if prevention was the aim. Its recommendations included strategies to improve parenting skills, structured education for children under five and support from schools for young people involved in truancy and exclusions. It also recommended that support should be provided for young people involved with drug and alcohol abuse and for increased positive leisure activities to be made available.

The Audit Commission's 2009 report, *Tired of Hanging Around*, on young people's leisure amenities show that service provision is still terribly poor in some parts of the country. This is due mainly to poor comprehensive area-based approaches and funding arrangements. In the report, young people attest to the fact that their antisocial behaviour and criminal activities are instigated by boredom and poor guidance (p. 30). The recommendations from the report include improving the engagement of parents, young people and communities in local projects and for funding to be made available to projects that performed consistently well. The Audit Commission's work on schools (1999) and housing conditions (1996) also show trends and development in vulnerable young people's circumstances (Audit Commission, 1996, 2003). The reports give detailed analysis of how government policy and funding are impacting the lives of young people in boroughs across the country (Audit Commission, 2008). Social housing conditions as well as the services of housing associations and private landlords are evaluated (Audit Commission, 1998, 1999). Its annual National School Survey reports on school's perceptions about the services of Local Councils. These details provide evidence of the services available to young

people in their local boroughs from various perspectives, showing that vulnerable young people lack basic life skills and the capability to engage in normal community life.

The Rowntree Foundation (Cater, and Coleman, 2006; Willow, et al 2004; Bailey, 2008b) has published significant data about the welfare of children which has broadened research foci and policy development, particularly its analysis of the various contexts that precipitate vulnerability, i.e. children in workless households, low-income households, disabled children and children of disabled parents. The voices of young people have been brought to the fore in some of the reports. Therefore, understanding of young people's view on issues such as planned teenage pregnancy, the use of cannabis and social housing conditions has been improved. The Rowntree series (1998 – 2008) on monitoring poverty and social exclusion in the UK also analyses government progress and challenges failing policy. The reports were critical of government target driven policies, claiming that these make it more difficult to take into account holistic needs of vulnerable people.

The Children's Society provides support directly to young people via its links and networks with various partner organisations. It is an advocate for children's needs and concerns, and acts as a powerful national lobbyist. Its work on the plight of disabled children, children in care and children who care for ill relatives have helped to improve understanding and lobby government on issues concerning children and young people (Layard and Dunn, 2009). In its report *A Good Childhood* (Layard and Dunn, 2009), concern is raised about the moral values of young people. According to the report, more than 66% of adults believe there is a decline of moral values in young people. The report concludes that increased commercialisation and individualisation of the British society has made adults live more selfish lives at the expense of their children. Since children today have more money, more technology and less adult supervision, the report suggests this has created a space for young people to develop a new youth culture. Such a culture which increasingly alienates adults restricts the freedoms of young people to

play safely, develop positive friendships and critically assess their experiences and environments. The Children's Society reports that the inequalities in communities, particularly in the education sector preserve the vulnerability of young people (Layard and Dunn, 2009). It also claims that mental health problems have increased among the young because of the deterioration of the quality of their experiences. Unstable family relations, deprived neighbourhoods and the lack of discipline and values in community have contributed to poor health. To improve the well being of young people the organisation implores Government to tackle inequalities in schools and remove stressful barriers like examinations. Parents are asked to commit to supporting their children till the age of 18 by providing comprehensive emotional and physical attention.

These public reports have highlighted four main areas where strategies of support are needed. First are the conditions in which many vulnerable young people live - their physical and emotional environment. Secondly, the social arrangements and connections they have with frequent offenders (some of which may be relatives), as well as incompetent, disabled or terminally ill parents. Thirdly, their interaction with the public and authorities such as schools, police, social and health care services etc. Lastly, the problem of young vulnerable people involved antisocial behaviour or crime. What has the Government done to change the situation?

1.5 The Response of Government and Public Policy

There has been increased concern about underachievement in education and the increase in numbers of disruptive and unruly students; this broadened beyond the realm of the education authorities at the close of the last century. The Government's analysis of the problems facing young people led to greater awareness of the issues affecting vulnerable young people in their

everyday lives. An appreciation of poverty issues, the growing instability within families and the evolving social landscape dominated by peer pressure and anti-social activities have taken root since then. The link between poverty and the disadvantages that dominate the lives of people who live on the margins of society kindled the social exclusion debate in the 1990s. The Social Exclusion Unit (SEU), established in 1997, was meant to reinforce support for people at risk. Specific initiatives tackled the identified problems of teen pregnancy, truancy, school dropouts, drug abuse, homelessness and low income. The focus on supporting children and families grew out of the SEU, beginning with Sure Start and Children's Centres (1999). Sure Start is expected to provide children and their families with services that will improve their well-being and opportunities for the future (DCSF, 2007a; 2007b). The programme is coordinated by local authorities and delivers integrated services, which include early education, career advice, and health services within a community hub. Other strategies aimed at tackling "the disconnect" between young people and their communities are Schools Plus: Building Learning Communities (1999) and Extended Schools (2002).

The Government's concern for vulnerable young people was accentuated with the death of Victoria Climbié. Lord Laming's inquiry (2003) revealed that Government agencies were working independently and thus leaving many young people vulnerable. The Government's response published as *Every Child Matters* (DFES, 2003) and followed by *The Children Act (2004)* proposed the creation of Children's Trusts in England to bring together education, social services, youth services and other agencies under a single director. This major structural change was to be accompanied by a fundamental change of culture with professional services and communities required to work together towards common purposes.

The overarching purpose of the new strategies is to ensure that children, their parents, families and communities accrue tangible benefits. *Via* Children's Trusts, government agencies are integrating services and processes and thus able to deliver an integrated front line service. Professionals are forming coalitions that enable them to engage with young people's needs on various levels and in different dimensions. Services within schools are to be linked to others in the community, providing information on various aspects of health, career development and leisure etc. The synergy will eliminate simultaneous, repetitive efforts that do not target holistically the needs of service users. Also children's services are becoming more responsive to changing dynamics within families and communities. Progress is tracked and evaluated by an assigned coordinator. More importantly, children and young people now have a say in the services that they desire and need. Endowing young people with voice means that they are participating in the processes rather than simply being "objectified".

Traditional services that failed to take into account specificity and distinctiveness are giving way to strategies which focus on all the needs of all children. First of all, given the unique circumstances every child faces, agencies are required to identify explicit needs. Secondly, agencies mould services around the support needs of the individuals. As a result a wide range of initiatives have been developed as well as new supporting roles. Children Trusts are employing mentors, careers advisers, and support workers for youth in offending cases and newly specialised social service officers. To ensure that young people have access to the service provision and resources within their communities, government have also worked on upgrading local children's services.

Another goal of the *Every Child Matters* program is to improve the learning experience of young people by engaging with families and communities. Schools are obliged to tailor teaching and learning to individual need. The *2020 Review Group* (2007) points out that all schools need to be working towards implementing personalised learning for all its pupils. The objective of the personalised learning curriculum is to ensure that all children and young people are able to realise their full potential. Achieving the best possible outcome for each individual regardless of obvious inequalities is a task that involves extensive collaborative action. Personalised learning is defined as

“Taking a highly structured and responsive approach to each child's and young person's learning, in order that all are able to progress, achieve and participate. It means strengthening the link between learning and teaching by engaging pupils – and their parents – as partners in learning”. (Gilbert, et al, 2006:21)

The challenge for schools is three fold. Incorporating non-teaching professionals in the framework of mainstream education is the first and perhaps most significant hurdle. Secondly, including parents, some of whom find it difficult to engage with their children's learning and often feel at a distance from their children's schools. Lastly, schools are now officially widening the scope of learning to include all aspects of development, including social, emotional and civic developments. For schools to meet these challenges effectively they need to work very closely with partner agencies.

The Government's programme takes into account the research of the public organisations discussed above, as well as other voluntary organisations. The Audit Commission's report (1998)

on Inter Agency working identified various areas in which it was essential for agencies to work collaboratively. The report emphasised the need for joint plans, which represented the holistic needs of young people. Young people most in need of interagency networking were identified as young people in care, young people with disabilities and those who have offended. Coordinated services, the report stressed will better serve young people and ultimately serve to maximise the resources of agencies. The Audit Commission published a review of Children's Trusts, (Audit Commission, 2008). It was the first independent assessment of the organisations since their creation in 2004. The review was critical of the pace and robustness of the Trusts. It urges greater cooperation between Trusts, schools and GPs. This view is shared by the Rowntree Foundation, (Lloyd, et al, 2001) which has followed a strategy of interagency working in schools and health services over the last decade. Apart from stressing the effectiveness of delivery that interagency working promotes, the Lloyd, et al study also examines other benefits. They demonstrated that interagency working reduces long-term cost (Lloyd, et al 2001; Bengner and Carter, 2001). Overall effective interagency working promotes service delivery.

Progress in developing the Government's new collaborative practice is, however, often frustrated or even undermined by the tensions and contradictions within Government departments (Mulgan, 1998). Too many government organisations still work independently in a bid to help vulnerable people. These have the danger of undermining efforts to improve outcomes for children and young people, as duplication and inefficiency could cause apathy. There is an effort to 'join-up' interventions in ways that target needs and create better efficiency. In parallel with the *Every Child Matters* agenda are reforms that are designed to strengthen schools as strong autonomous institutions (for example, the creation of Trusts; *Higher Standards, Better Schools for all*, 2005; *Education and Inspections Act*, 2006). Strong independent schools may satisfy the

competition agenda but undermine the Every Child Matters policies. Autonomous schools are more attuned to performance targets and are not encouraged to give time and effort to the weakest and most needy pupils. Investments are focused on activities that will boost the school's ratings. The inconvenience of disruptive and weak pupils is dealt with by excluding them. The high rate of exclusions has been curbed by policy which requires schools to retain its failing pupils. Schools are now obliged to provide personalised learning services for them as well. This service is usually carried out via home schooling, in-school centres or at alternative centres.

The continuing tensions suggest the need for current strategies to be complemented by a more creative approach to learning. The provision of support for vulnerable young people who remain neglected by mainstream schools can be met by the voluntary sector. Already studies by the National Youth Agency (2006b) are commending this idea.

1.6 The Role of Voluntary Organisations

The Government has increased funding for alternative education for the training and positive engagement of young people. Voluntary Organisations (VOs) have become major partners with governmental institutions and have taken on the privileged responsibility of influencing social, political and economic policy which directly affects young people's development. The numbers of voluntary organisations involved in youth education and training have increased dramatically in the last twenty years. Organisations particularly dedicated to engaging youth outside of official settings started springing up some two hundred years ago (Jefferies, 1979). At the time, the emphasis

was on youth participation and engagement in activities outside of school and informal learning³. It was not until 1939 however, that the Board of Education acknowledged the work of voluntary organisations by formally persuading local education authorities to work with voluntary organisations in the establishment of services for youth (Board of Education, 1939).

The social exclusion agenda and the recommendations from the Victoria Climbié` inquiry, have highlighted the need to once again improve local social connections and networks for young people in voluntary organisations. The Labour Government has included faith institutions, private and voluntary organisations in its fight against social exclusion (SEU 1997, 2005). David Blunkett's endorsement in 2001 enhanced the third way agenda of the Labour government "*Voluntary activity is the cornerstone of any civilised society. It is the glue that binds people together and fosters a sense of common purpose. It is an essential building block in our work to create a more inclusive society*" (Blunkett, 2001). Government still controls schooling and the curriculum however, and the imbalance of political and economic power has led to an awkward relationship. The new partnerships with government are creating new paths for voluntary organisations, yet on the other hand generating tension with the public as the independence these organisations once widely acclaimed has been eroded significantly.

Traditionally, voluntary organisations have enjoyed wide spread support in the UK, due to the trust relations they engender with the public. Many have developed from the realm of faith-based institutions, corporate business and civil society organisations. However, with the emphasis on a "third way" sought by government to bridge the gap between state and private sectors, these trust relations are being debated. The public once supported many voluntary organisations based

³ Voluntary Organizations taught practical, social, cultural skills as well as religious instruction to young people (Smith, 1988; Davies, 1999). Examples are the Boys Scout, Girls Guide etc.

on shared values and the voluntary service aimed at helping the communities. Now, these same organisations rely solely on government funding, their associations with the communities' are evolving to become relations of confidence (Tonkiss and Passey, 1999). In many ways voluntary organisations are no longer “voluntary”.

Research in relation to the modus operandi of Voluntary Youth Organisations or their overall effectiveness besides socialisation is lacking. The effect they have on young people's pathways is still debatable. The Government (DFES, 2006; SEU, 2003), however, acknowledges the hard work of youth based projects and clubs. Particularly as measures of academic qualifications and achievements of vulnerable young people in these voluntary organisations are increasing. With better systems for evidencing the outcomes, specifically using the Every Child Matters framework (The National Youth Agency, 2006a)⁴; these organizations run the risk of becoming formal academic institutions. The Department for Education and Skills made a move to supervise the work of youth organisations with a view to making them more productive.

Voluntary organisations are able to achieve more than academic targets. Parsons and Hailes (2004) discuss their contributions within mainstream education in their research. The Joseph Rowntree publications (Philip, et al, 2004; Shiner, et al, 2004) point to soft skills which help the young people develop capabilities for living functional and productive lives. The emphases on social learning and informal structures, these reports suggest have benefits for vulnerable young people who are not able to participate in other educational institutions. Voluntary organisations which support psycho-social development are like learning communities. Young people, who are excluded from school, those in care and those with learning difficulties, form a significant part of

⁴ It is important to note that the ECM policy implementation is not focused on performance or standards alone. This multiple agenda works to engage young people at vary many important levels of development

the vulnerable individuals unable to engage. These young people need to grasp basic developmental skills before they are burdened with academic goals. They will need to “learn to learn” (Bamfield, 2007) to be integrated into their communities (Bailey and Jones, 2006). The informal capabilities they lack because of their vulnerability can be developed in informal settings like the voluntary organisations.

This Thesis examines the role voluntary organisations assume in developing the capabilities and well being of vulnerable young people. In the next chapter, a literature review will help unpack the major features of this research. It will discuss vulnerable young people and their needs and focus on applying the capability approach to problems of social exclusion.

CHAPTER 2.0 - Vulnerability, Capability and Communities of Learning: A

Review of the Literature

2.1 Introduction

This study focuses on the processes Voluntary Organisations (VOs) employ to improve the capabilities and well being of vulnerable young people. This chapter reviews literature which supports an understanding of the basic concepts of vulnerability, capability and well-being; it also examines the policy instruments used to tackle social exclusion. The review is divided into four sections. The first focuses on vulnerability in young people; examining the forms experienced in contexts of disadvantage. It also investigates the significance and impact of vulnerability. The discussion pinpoints susceptibility to social exclusion as a form of vulnerability which encapsulates the aspects being examined here. The second section discusses the capability approach which is used to develop analysis of the impact of deprivation on what vulnerable young people are able to be and do. Capabilities are also shown to be essential instruments for improving well-being. The third section examines policy instruments geared towards enhancing social inclusion and explores which measures focussed on improving capabilities are effective. The fourth section focuses on the forms of learning developed by voluntary organisations in support for vulnerable young people. The processes taking place within voluntary organisations empower young people, and support their ability to participate inclusively in society. The organisations form play groups where strategies of recognition, participation and collaborative learning are used for developing skills. Equipped with capabilities, vulnerable young people can make better use of opportunities to participate in mainstream society demonstrating that these capabilities play a vital role in supporting the quest for inclusion.

SECTION I VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE

Human beings are, Stålsett (2006) says, ‘homo vulnerabilis’, subject to danger and risks of various dimensions. Stålsett argues that anthropologically humans are in a state of permanent vulnerability: “an invulnerable human being, if that were to be possible, would be inhuman” (p. 9). Indeed, it is this collective vulnerability that endorse moral and social obligations towards the most vulnerable ensuring they have opportunities to change their circumstances. In so doing and thereby preserve the worth and dignity of all humanity is preserved. The vulnerability of young people is exacerbated by their age, because they are dependent on others for their well-being, welfare and development (Gilligan, 2000; Walker and Walker, 1997). Young people by law are exempt from the duties of production, and to an extent responsibility, until they are deemed to have attained the skills required to participate in their communities (UNESCO, UNICEF, Child Rights Commission 1989). These skills are amassed through the processes of socialisation and education. Such processes however could fail young people, leaving them vulnerable to an adult life without requisite skills and resources. Abuse, neglect and poverty are also known to impact negatively on young people’s transition to adult life (Bannathan, 1992; United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). If they are unable to participate in mainstream society vulnerable people easily become isolated and excluded.

2.2. Vulnerability and Social Exclusion

This section discusses the meaning of vulnerability. It examines vulnerability with respect to different layers, which relate to needs and existing abilities. It also focuses on the causes of vulnerability and how they restructure social identities and social realities to permit social exclusion.

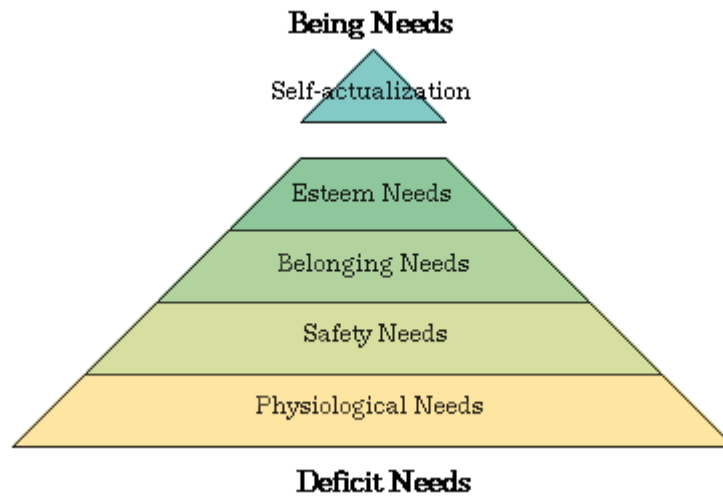
The meaning of vulnerability

Vulnerability is an interesting term bringing together two components of meaning, expressed by an individual's susceptibility to injury or harm. Someone is 'at risk', if she is capable of being wounded or damaged. The threat may be physical or psychological, immediate or gradual, internal or external etc (Chambers, 1989). Vulnerability therefore is a form of instability (insecurity). Serious risks to stability are rarely specific and simple; rather a complicated set of circumstances sets off a series of events that have a domino like effect on all aspects of living. Secondly, vulnerability connotes a person's lack of ability to deal with the various types of threat or damage to which she is susceptible. Vulnerability means people lack or cannot use social, economic, cultural or political mechanisms to their own advantage. It means dependency and lack of power or control to accumulate or expend capital rationally. In contrast, capability implies the sophistication and ability to employ coping mechanisms to deal with various threats or life challenges. The more resourceful and experienced an individual, the higher the likelihood of overcoming different levels of vulnerability.

The layers of vulnerability

The most common theories of vulnerability (Defenceless: Chambers 1989; Entitlement: Swift, 1989) denote a state of helplessness, need, or lack set amidst a milieu of inadequate coping mechanisms or strategies (Whelan and Maitre, 2005). In Social Science, an early expression of the layers of need was developed in the work of authors such as Abraham Maslow (1943) and Carl Rogers (1961). Maslow described a hierarchy of needs that he originally noticed while working with monkeys.

Figure 2.1 Maslow's hierarchy of human needs

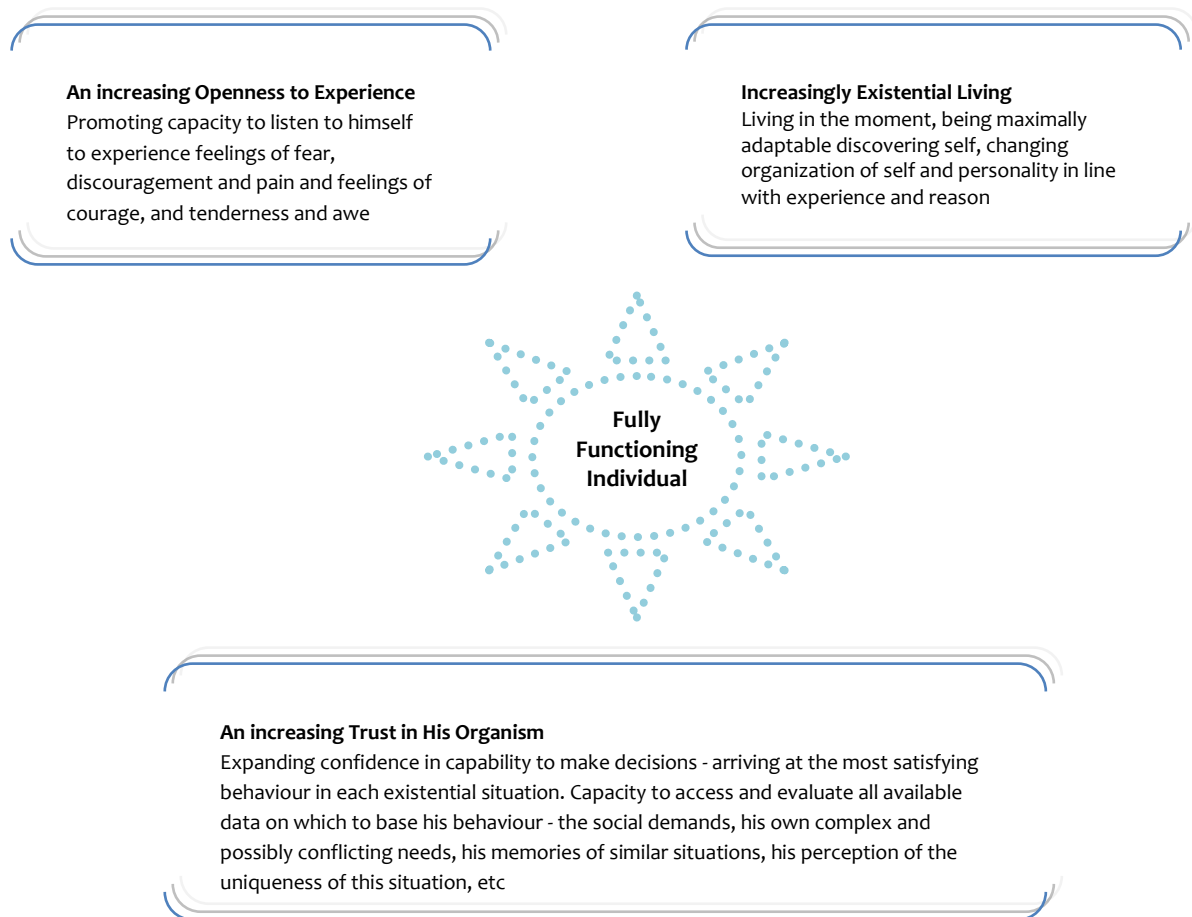


Beyond the physiological needs of air, water, food, and sex, Maslow outlined four other broader layers in ascending order -: the needs for safety and security, the needs for love and belonging, the needs for esteem, and the need to actualise the self. The first four needs were classified as deficit needs, which in effect mean they are those humans require to function acceptably. Only when fundamental deficit needs are satisfied would aspiration for higher needs begin. This hierarchy culminates in the desire to fulfil potential and enhance the utilisation of abilities.

Rogers (1953) reiterated the role of society/culture and 'experiential freedom' in the development of security in a fully functioning being. Rogers came to the conclusion that the 'good life' is not a state of being but rather a process which potentially could progress exponentially. *"The good life, from the point of view of my experience, is the process of movement in a direction which the human organism selects when it is inwardly free to move in any direction, and the general qualities of this selected direction appear to have a certain universality"* (1961:187). Rogers here isolated dimensions of choice, freedom and a common

humanity. The characteristics of the process of “becoming functional” he described as threefold depicted in the diagram below.

Figure 2.2 Roger’s analysis of the characteristics of a fully functional individual



A functional person, as far as Rogers (1961) was concerned is psychologically free and able to continually expand his capacity to live a more functional life. Such a person has a vast array of choices and can make informed decisions about the preference that would suit her. Though the goal of flourishing may involve different preference the human needs that underpin them are essentially universal. For example the requirement of belonging is fulfilled by loving reciprocal relationships by some and others decide to acquire the same through fame and popularity. The diagram shows that a functional person is concerned about what his actions ‘do’; aware that his

capabilities are fallible. This means that meaning is able to make decisions and adjust them to suit beneficial purposes. Rogers states that a fully functioning individual is

“more able to experience all of his feelings, and is less afraid of any of his feelings; he is his own sifter of evidence, and is more open to evidence from all sources; he is completely engaged in the process of being and becoming himself, and thus discovers that he is soundly and realistically social...”. (1961:191-2)

The depictions of secure and functioning individuals show that vulnerable people lack various social elements identified by Maslow and Rogers. They are therefore disconnected from society’s apparatus of operations – networks, education, information, economics etc – and always susceptible to danger and loss of control of their lives and experiences. This phenomenon is largely referred to as social exclusion⁵. According to Jos Berghman (1995:19) it “is a social process which creates and reinforces inequalities leading to a state of deprivation and hardship from which it is difficult to escape”. For young people in particular, the non-economic processes are obvious e.g. insufficient life skills and few opportunities to participate in societal life. Since young people are often not treated as fully-fledged members of communities they can also lack recognition, respect and voice. An examination of the issues involved raises many questions. How are inequalities created? What are the effects of these inequalities? Why is escape possible for some and not others? Inequalities are produced via various societal processes, for example some young people suffer neglect or insufficient attention and guidance from parents, or perhaps the lack of parenting altogether. Also exposures to bullying and negative associations can take place in school and in the community. Victims may take a defensive stance and probably join gangs to

⁵ Social exclusion is a shorthand label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems, such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown. – Social Exclusion Unit 1999.

gain some form of security or recognition. Vulnerable people may lack physical abilities, or lack emotional and social abilities like effective use of language, empathy or confidence. This means they may become socially isolated. There are also political and economic factors – marginalisation, irrelevance and differentials in economic and political power (Chambers, 1989; Kamanou and Morduch, 2002) that undermine human agency and participation. Nussbaum (2000:94) suggests that circumstances brought on by socio-political or cultural systems can inflect on the decision making of people who are vulnerable, as judgement is based on subjective experiences. Walker, (2006: 183) recognises significant features such as aspiration, voice, bodily integrity, and emotional integrity as indicators of flourishing. These socio-political dimensions of human functioning can actually depict how vulnerable a person is by demonstrating how much freedom and choice an individual possesses.

The causes of vulnerability

Vulnerability is thus complex, involving a number of dimensions of disadvantage which could lead to the same “spiral of precariousness” (Paugam, 1996: 49) identifies in multidimensional analysis of poverty. Jock Young (1999) argues that vulnerability in modern societies can be attributed to three interrelated layers. The first is susceptibility to socio-economic exclusion via the instruments of the labour markets and institutions enhancing knowledge, skills, training and education. This material disadvantage leaves individuals and whole households susceptible to the effects of ill health, insecurity and restricted opportunities. Economic deprivation relates to prevailing material standards of living (diet, clothing, housing) and inadequate access to income, services and amenities required to keep individuals out of poverty. The second is vulnerability to exclusion from civil participation and community networks, where communication and social links are inadequate. Last is vulnerability to injustice via exclusionary judicial systems and the lack of socio-political expertise. Francesco Devicienti and Ambra Poggi (2007)

demonstrate how that the dynamics of disadvantage at the individual level interact with processes at the societal level creating groups of marginalized people. Vulnerability is often triggered by an event or series of events, resulting in a process where an individual increasingly becomes incapable of flourishing adequately.

As described above the causal relationship between a person and vulnerable circumstances are defined by the intensity and structure of the threat as well as the individual's coping mechanisms. Due to the damage caused by lack, deprivation and non-participation a person may be resident geographically in a society but unable to participate in normal societal activities (Bhalla and Lapeyre, 1999; Burchardt, et al, 2002). This exclusionary process pertains to complex human interactions taking place mainly in the socio-economic and socio-political spheres (Lister, 2004). These dimensions are linked to the concept of human flourishing which Sen (2000: 6) argues is diminished by the interplay of "relational features" at work in the environment. This explains how outcomes are forged by the impact of a myriad of deficiencies which could be external or internal features.

The external causes: this refers to triggers outside the individual. Poverty is often mentioned as a feature which encapsulates economic and social disadvantages such as poor housing, poor nutrition, and poor purchasing power. There are other types of deprivation and hardship that cripple individual's abilities to deal with vulnerability; like poor health, lack of support or care, lack of political power, recognition and voice. External threats can also emerge which initiate personal or corporate damage as in the case of natural disasters, personal tragedies (death, divorce, rejection or abuse). To combat external threats, individuals need specific capabilities that target external features. For example, parents and family members provide security and training for young people in need (where necessary, the state or foster families deliver basic services). Corporately, communities also enhance the development of capabilities by

providing the support and safety nets that enable its members to flourish using their collective social capital or collective social agency (Walker, 2007a).

The internal causes: These originate within the individual, they may be within the individual's control, but sometimes are not. They include physical abilities as well as capacities concerned with emotional, relational, psychological, mental and social well-being. Personal traits characterised by disposition, personality, desires and ambition are also regarded in this category. Innate capabilities can sometimes be difficult to adapt or manipulate, for example a physical condition – hearing difficulties is potentially a form of vulnerability. Communities can provide opportunities for people with such difficulties to develop alternate means of flourishing and improving their well-being. For example mobility can be provided for those unable to walk, Braille for the blind and hearing aids for people with hearing impairments.

It is clear that the nature of developmental guidance, love, affection and guidance provided by parents and close family influence the progress, strength and direction of inherent capacities (Lawy, 2002). Children can be exposed to art, kindness or science and thus develop natural inclinations for these. On the other hand, children exposed to violence, neglect and abuse may develop similar dispositions and simultaneously, such individuals fail to discover their more natural positive inclinations (Aldridge, 2008). Internal frames of support can be stored up within the individual depending on the knowledge and resources they acquire by learning, interaction and socialisation. Either way, societies provide the fodder that empowers young people to utilise their inherent capabilities by taking advantage of the freedoms and opportunities available within them.

External and internal causes of vulnerability create dependence and thus a lack of confidence and capability to act autonomously. A person's capacity to withstand and confront vulnerable circumstances is dependent on the capabilities as much as on the kind of disadvantage she faces (Krishnakumar, 2007). A victim equipped with knowledge and resources (including access to information, audience with authorities, support networks and assurance of just practices) has better chances of tackling decision making problems. The same capabilities may be less useful if the threat is a medical one and there is no medical practitioner or equipment to hand. Where such inadequacies exist they undermine efforts to avert danger and reduce the options available. Support mechanisms developed by government policies and civil action aim to reduce or reverse exposure to vulnerabilities. Effective policies and strategies will aim to increase individuals' functional resilience and capacities to combat vulnerabilities. This study investigates specifically the measures and processes used by voluntary organisations aiming to support vulnerable young people's capabilities.

People who have developed coping strategies are able to withstand vulnerabilities better than those who lack such capabilities. The capability approach developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum articulates a theory that underpins how capabilities help people achieve full functioning. It is useful for assessing the quality of people's lives based on the functions they are able to achieve. The capability approach is a useful instrument for examining well-being and living standards.

SECTION II THE CAPABILITY TO FUNCTION

Assessing people's quality of life is a complex task. Important indicators are hard outcomes like their financial circumstances, how they are able to conduct their lives (their life expectancy, their health care and medical services; their education (availability, nature and quality), employment, the political and legal privileges the citizens enjoy, the freedoms they have, the conduct of their social and personal relations. It is also poignant to consider soft outcomes, like how people in a society are enabled to imagine, to wonder, to feel emotions that presuppose that life is more than a set of commercial relations.

2.3 The Capability Theory

An important theory has developed since the 1980s (Sen, 1980, 1985, 1993; Nussbaum, 1993, 2000) arguing that assessing these indicators requires analysis focused not on 'utility' (satisfactions), nor on 'primary goods' but individual's capabilities; of what they are able to do and be in their lives. The economist Amartya Sen built on the work of Adam Smith, while the philosopher Martha Nussbaum built on the tradition of Aristotle. They distinguish between the *functionings* of a person which describe elementary matters such as being nourished, or free of disease as well as more complex 'doings' and 'beings' such as having self-respect and taking part in the life of the community. *Capability* describes the ability of the person to achieve various functionings as part of living.

While there is much shared understanding in the capability theories of Sen and Nussbaum, there are nevertheless significant differences which reflect their different disciplinary traditions and interpretations. These different interpretations will be discussed in turn.

Amartya Sen: capability as opportunity to choose possible functionings

For Sen (1987), capabilities are simply defined as abilities, those things a person can “do” for instance walk, eat, breathe or talk.

“A functioning is an achievement, whereas a capability is the ability to achieve. Functionings are, in a sense, more directly related to living conditions, since they are different aspects of living conditions. Capabilities, in contrast, are notions of freedom, in the positive sense: what real opportunities you have regarding the life you may lead” (Sen 1987b, p. 36).

Sen however, does not presume this basic categorisation as definitive, since very basic capabilities can be viewed as mere means to a desired end. Walking is not the only resource for the achievement of mobility; people in wheelchairs can achieve the same function. In the same way, eating and breathing primarily support the function/achievement of physical health. By means of technological advances in healthcare people who do not eat or breathe can support their physical condition using medical equipment. Speech can be replaced with sign language if the communicative competence is possessed and understood and so on and so forth. Therefore, Sen’s definition of capability is expanded to include opportunities, for example access to a wheelchair, ramps, lifts or advanced medical personnel, equipment and Braille technology. Sen also incorporates another important standard in his definition of capabilities. He acknowledges the things an individual can ‘be’, for example a profession as in doctor, lawyer or politician as well as a state of mind or position – to be just, clean, fed, at peace. These beings too are expanded by means of external opportunities and multiple sets of resources. Beings and doings are constituents of well-being and means of achieving various functionings.

David Crocker (1995) notes that Sen makes these specifications for a purpose attempting to distinguish between what a person can do or be from what they are unable to do or be. For example a blind person

can indeed read if Braille equipment and training are available to him. Sen also includes inclination/desires, character traits and talents in his definition of capability. In as much as the broadness of his definition permits him to term almost anything a capability, it limits the scope for describing things that are not capabilities. This is a significant bottleneck, especially because Sen prefers to allow individuals identify and refine the capabilities they value.

Sen suggests that lifestyles are defined by the array of functions a person is able to do and be. This 'view of living as a combination of various 'doings and beings' is very important for Sen, (1993a:31) quality of life is therefore assessed in terms of the capability to achieve valuable functionings'. Capability describes 'a person's ability to do valuable acts or reach valuable states of being. The expression was picked to represent the alternative combinations of things a person is able to do or be – the various 'functionings' he or she can achieve' (Sen, 1993a:30).

Sen notes that individuals are able to choose from an infinite number of possible capabilities to form a diverse but unique personal collection of capabilities. The collection of selected capabilities can be defined as a person's 'capability set'. The emphasis on personal selection is important for Sen because choice and agency represent freedom. *Capability is thus defined in the space of functionings. If a functioning achievement in the form of an n-tuple of functionings) is a point in that space, capability is a set of such points (representing the alternative functioning n-tuples from which one n-tuple can be chosen' (Sen 1993a: 38).*

Functionings also vary in their complexity because individuals will differ in the way they assign meaning and importance to different functionings. These preferences come about because of genetic uniqueness but more so as a result of cultural and social arrangements. Indeed an individual may be obliged to choose a functioning because it is the only means of self-preservation. On the other hand, some choose to forfeit

short-term goals for long-term ones. For example university students spend a considerable length of time studying so as to gain capabilities for graduate jobs and salaries.

Human capabilities 'constitutes an important part of individual freedom' (Sen 1993a:33). Sen believes a person's capability reveals the extent of their freedom: 'the freedom to lead different types of life'. In order to evaluate these freedoms Sen (1987a; 1987b) suggests that environmental, social and cultural factors and political freedoms need to be assessed. Individuals who have the capabilities to overcome social exclusion have substantial freedoms. These freedoms are represented by the n-tuple permutations of functionings they can choose to achieve.

Martha Nussbaum: capability as potential, realising functioning

Nussbaum (2000:5) asks 'what are the capabilities which lead to 'truly human functioning?' She provides an account of the most important functions and capabilities of the human being, in terms of which human life is defined. We should ask ourselves what are the characteristic activities of the human being? What does actual or imaginable forms of life? (Nussbaum, 1999:40).

Nussbaum continues the search for Aristotelian eudemonia. She makes two distinctions:

- ❖ Mere human life: level one – bare, undignified: she rejects this
- ❖ Dimensions of a good life: the functionings which societies should seek for their citizens:

It is this level of quality of life that should be evaluated

“All animals nourish themselves, use their senses, move about, and so forth; what is distinctive and distinctively valuable to us about the human way of doing all this is that each and every one of these functions is, first of all, planned and organized by practical reason and, second, done with and to others. Human nourishing is not like animal nourishing, nor human sex like animal sex, because human

beings can choose to regulate their nutrition and their sexual activity by their very own practical reason; also because they do so not as solitary Cyclopes (who would eat anything at all, even their own guests) but as beings who are bound to other human beings by ties of mutual attention and concern”

(Nussbaum 1992:222-3).

Consequently, Nussbaum proposes that the human life is truly functional at a particular standard, beneath this yardstick human dignity is diminished. She draws up a list of basic capabilities that she argues are essential to human functioning:

Martha Nussbaum's List of Basic Human capabilities (Version from Nussbaum, 1999: 41 – 42 and 2000, 417-418)

1. *Life* - Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length i.e. not dying prematurely.
2. *Bodily health* - Being able to have good health, including reproductive health; being adequately nourished; being able to have adequate shelter
3. *Bodily integrity* - Being able to move freely from place to place; being able to be secure against violent assault, including sexual assault; having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction
4. *Senses, imagination, thought* - Being able to use the senses; being able to imagine, to think, and to reason--and to do these things in a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education; being able to use imagination and thought in connection with experiencing, and producing expressive works and events of one's own choice; being able to use one's mind in ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression with respect to both political and artistic speech and freedom of religious exercise; being able to have pleasurable experiences and to avoid non-beneficial pain

5. *Emotions* - Being able to have attachments to things and persons outside ourselves; being able to love those who love and care for us; being able to grieve at their absence, to experience longing, gratitude, and justified anger; not having one's emotional developing blighted by fear or anxiety.
6. *Practical reason* - Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's own life. (This entails protection for liberty of conscience.)
7. *Affiliation* - Being able to live for and in relation to others, to recognise and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; being able to imagine the situation of another and to have compassion for that situation; having the capability for both justice and friendship. Being treated as a dignified human being, whose worth is equal to that of others.
8. *Other species* - Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature.
9. *Play* - Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.
10. *Control over one's environment* - (A) *Political*: being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life; having the rights of political participation, free speech and freedom of association. (B) *Material*: being able to hold property (both land and movable goods); having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others.

Nussbaum argues that capability, not actual functioning (outcomes), should be the means of evaluating the quality of people's lives. Anyone who lacks any one of these capabilities, no matter what else she has, will fall short of living a good human life. The list makes provisions for a more precise definition. She distinguishes her version of a good life using measures of agency and rationality. Like Sen, she is less concerned with the degree to which utilities and resources can be exploited. She lays much more emphasis on what kinds of utilities and resources are available to the individual and the degree to which choice can be exercised.

The capabilities which one has control over, Nussbaum refers to as internal. External capabilities are the appendages i.e. the material and social conditions that support the option of converting internal capabilities to valued functions (Nussbaum, 1988; Alkire, 2004). This means internal capabilities of bodily, mental and social function can be supported by external capabilities such as food, purchasing power, political rights and even appreciation of friends or family. For Nussbaum these capabilities can be nurtured, acquired, developed, maintained, exercised, impeded, diminished, lost and (possibly) restored (Crocker, 1995:161). Nussbaum refers to integrated internal and external capabilities as combined capabilities, in an attempt to make evaluation less complicated. Crocker (1995) points out that Nussbaum's use of the definition "state of readiness to choose" permits her to assign weight to capabilities. She does not make any attempts to do so by pursuing the Aristotelian essentialist vision (Chakraborty and Udaya, 2003).

Nussbaum (2000) is firmly opposed to the idea that a trade off between capabilities is possible, particularly the basic capabilities that comprise her list. She argues that "just" government and societies should make provision for external capabilities. An assessment of service provision will thus evaluate the extent to which human flourishing is made possible in societies (Cohen 1993). Accordingly, her framework attempts to characterise basic human flourishing on a universal scale using an Aristotelian account of "the good". Nussbaum's (2000) more recent revisions of the approach defend this Universalist framework and oppose cultural relativism. She (2000) suggests that the standards of living of people who by way of their lifestyles cannot have basic capabilities are underprivileged. Several elements and components of capability as defined by Nussbaum can therefore be measured as political and social constituents of justice and standards of well-being.

Towards a critique of Nussbaum and Sen: The contrasts between Sen and Nussbaum's theories though not extensive have significant impact on dimensions of application. There are two main

areas of distinctions. The first concerns definition. Sen can lay claim to broader interpretations of plurality (functionings) than Nussbaum (Robeyns, 2000). His non-essentialist approach leans towards a more relativist position, which Nussbaum does not accommodate. Nussbaum's Aristotelian conception starts with the questions about what defines the human, and deductively defines what a meaningful life should comprise. In contrast, Sen's framework is concerned with the kind of freedoms individuals can enjoy given the circumstances they face (Lessman, 2007). He is concerned with the valuable outcomes which make life meaningful for individuals. His inquiry seeks to unearth barriers which restrict freedoms to do and be. In his view, removing personal obstacles will broaden an individual's quality of life. Because he acknowledges more distinctions in terms of the obstacles people face, his definition differs from that of Nussbaum. In a footnote to his 1993a paper, Sen acknowledges the differences in definition:

'To avoid confusion, it should be noted that the term 'basic capabilities' is sometimes used in a quite different sense from the one specified above, e.g. as a person's potential capabilities that could be developed, whether or not they are actually realised this is the sense in which the term is used, for example, by Martha Nussbaum).' (Sen, 1993a: 41).

Evaluative measures differ for the two thinkers only because of the distinction in definition. Sen is preoccupied with measurements of substantial freedom which he elaborates in his work "development as freedom" (1999). This for Sen is a measure of justice and equity (1992, 1999, and 2009). Sen's focus is on "options" as elements of capabilities. This is his justification for not pursuing a list of fundamental capabilities. Sen argues that the sets of options representing

n-tuple functionings are varied and expansive and will differ according to the evaluative exercise in question. Nussbaum is not convinced optional lifestyles exist below her universal account of a good life.

Nussbaum's conceptions of capabilities appear to be one-dimensional (Lessman, 2007) more so, because she concentrates on developing the framework into a theory of justice. Instead of focusing on multidimensional indicators she pursues simple unilateral ones that are more easily measured. Nussbaum's theory is consequently much more normative, providing unequivocal value judgements about the conditions needed for a 'good' quality of life. By presenting what she views as universal measures the ambiguity Sen's theory battles with is removed.

Different strands of the framework affect the Capability Approach's main purpose of evaluation of human well-being, but they can be seen as complementary. For Sen capable people are able to choose between a combination of functionings, i.e. they have substantial freedoms. His horizontal perspective places emphasis on the degree and weight of freedoms in a space (capability set or n-tuple functionings). Nussbaum's view is not mutually exclusive in the sense that she focuses on a longitudinal perspective. For her, the greater emphasis is on trajectories that tend towards fully functioning human beings. She insists on a fundamental starting point and argues that capable people need to progress by continually developing their capabilities and optimising their abilities.

Both Sen and Nussbaum turn to the concepts of agency and reason to deal with the issues raised by their positions on definitions and evaluative frameworks. Sen (1987a) points out that people can choose the capabilities they value based on what they consider reasonable. However, it is

possible for individuals to have limited information or lack capabilities to make rational choices. Instead of struggling with underachievement in mainstream education, an individual can decide to avoid school. This decision means he could gain acclamation and validation from activities in gangs and on the streets though forfeiting the opportunity to gain qualifications and skills of long-term value. Nussbaum (1995) refers to these types of decision as negative capabilities because they do not support the developmental process that will make individuals more capable or more functional. Similarly Sen (1981) describes what he calls negative freedoms in the same vein. Sen and Nussbaum argue that people should have alternatives that permit a rational choice which actually expands their freedom or functionality. Both Sen (1992) and Nussbaum (1995) argue that essential external support – i.e. external capabilities such as good service delivery, government aid, etc will limit the non factual choices people are forced to make. Freedoms empower individuals to make rational choices based on sensible decision-making. Education that supports young people’s opportunities to achieve will translate to fewer disaffected pupils dropping out of school since the vulnerable ones will not need alternative forms of recognition.

The capability approach shows that people are truly functional when they have requisite capabilities for living “the good life”. They also have options or substantial freedoms which make it possible for them to use the distinctive human features of rationality and agency to promote their functionality. Individuals with certain vulnerabilities require support to enable them to convert their resources to adequate functionings in order to achieve a decent standard of living. As Nussbaum (1993) points out external agents are an important dynamic of the process of developing combined capabilities. These could be voluntary organisations that support vulnerable young people by providing the safe environment where they can learn to develop practical skills and social capabilities or government enacting policies that ensure freedoms and flourishing. The

capability approach is a useful tool for evaluating the kind of lifestyles vulnerable young people lead. Such analysis helps establish what constituent parts of a person's lifestyle are healthy, positive and progressive. It can also show which aspects of support provided to vulnerable young people in the context of voluntary organisations are valuable to the development of their capabilities and well-being. In this study specifically I consider the capabilities that will enhance their capacities to live and learn in a socially cohesive manner.

2.4 Young People's Capabilities for Substantial Functioning

The Capability Approach provides one framework for assessing individual's potential for flourishing (Clark, 2006). Accordingly, judgements about the nature or extent to which young people are vulnerable to social exclusion depend on multilateral analysis of the capabilities and freedoms they possess. Young people's vulnerability is usually measured in relation to their families and the possibilities they would have as adults. This is because as Sen's analysis suggests familial conditions represent the bulk of young people's context of possible n-tuple functionings. Unterhalter and Walker (2007) argue that some young people may lose opportunities to develop valuable capabilities in their youth, which are essential to functionings they may choose in adulthood. For example, girls who do not participate in education in some countries will not be able to choose jobs and career paths they desire when they become women. Established empirical evidence indicates a number of readily identifiable 'risk factors' in childhood and adolescence that increase the possibility of a socially excluded adult life (Shiner, 2004; SEU, 1999, 2000b). These include: parental conflict and separation; early involvement in offending, drinking and drug use; and disruptive behaviour at school. However, young people have varied lifestyles and comparisons are complicated (Youth lifestyles survey 1999). What then are the capabilities vulnerable young people in the lack? Physiological needs are

commonly met in the UK; therefore the Vulnerable Children Grant (VCG)⁶ focuses on groups who face social exclusion because of their inability to engage in societies activities like education and social interaction through play. The grant focuses on individuals who require stable and secure environments, a sense of belonging and improved self-esteem. These include looked after children; children who are unable to attend school because of medical needs; Gypsy/Traveller children; asylum seekers; young carers; school refusers; and teenage parents; it also supports the reintegration of young offenders (DfES, 2002; DCSF, 2007a; SEU, 1998b; SEU, 2002a; SEU, 2002b).

Vulnerable young people do not possess the basic capabilities outlined in Nussbaum's list. Young people who cannot play, imagine, have positive affiliations, make practical decisions or experience bodily health because of their circumstances of exclusion from school, time in care or learning disability are not functioning individuals according to the capability approach. They also cannot be classified as living substantially functional lives because their freedoms are restricted by the vulnerabilities. As outlined above many external agents – parents, guardians, communities, public institutions such as schools, social services, the youth service etc – are responsible for provision of external capabilities which will expand their freedoms. Societal norms, government policies and judicial systems are also held to account. These instruments should support young people's development of capabilities as well as protect them from circumstances that are detrimental to their well-being.

By supporting young people's development a society committed to improving the substantial freedoms of its citizenry will provide opportunities for education, training and skill development. The capability approach from Sen's (1992) perspective in particular calls for greater equality *via* access to amenities and information about activities members can participate in – political, social, economic etc. He notes that equal opportunities do not translate audaciously to equal functionings because of the funnel of conversion

⁶ Provision for VYP introduced as part of the Standards Fund allocation in April 2003.

factors through which individuals will process their opportunities. Nussbaum (2006: 40) also addresses the notion of equality particularly in her analysis of rights for people who lack certain human functions of reason, intelligence and agency. Sen (2009) and Nussbaum (2006) support the idea that some choices will have to be made on behalf of others (for example vulnerable groups) arguing that these decisions should reflect the best interests of the individuals rather than economic or social conveniences. Nussbaum's list encourages activities for young people that will stimulate not only academic functionings but also aesthetic, emotional and social ones. The list includes leisure, personal interests (of varying kinds), empathy and sense of belonging (recognition and appreciation). Sen and Nussbaum imply in their theories that young people need the guidance and safety of a nurturing environment to learn to take responsibility for their own choices. Young people should not only be informed about the choices they are making in the present but also have knowledge about the consequences of their actions. This independence should develop with time as a valuable capability of its own. Cohen (1993) acknowledges that even the best policies will fail because by their own choices some people will make wrong decisions that will (un)wittingly diminish their functionings. Nussbaum's list is helpful because it presents a comprehensive understanding of basic capabilities and therefore implicitly shows the minimal standards which communities are obligated to provide.

Necessities: What do vulnerable young people need? In her research on female education in Southern Africa, Walker (2006) describes some of the basic requirements for capability development - education, voice, recognition, respect, know how (capabilities and skills) and just and fair treatment. Aldridge (2008) shows that young people need to be protected from activities that demean their humanity or restrict their capabilities to function, such as crime, lack of opportunities to socialise and be affiliated to others, educational opportunities that permit participation and development, and so forth. The three groups of vulnerable young people under

investigation face the possibility of entering adult life without qualifications, adequate social and life skills and a positive disposition to community participation. Young people in care have only a 50% chance of sitting their GCSEs and 26% chance of serving a prison sentence before their twenty-fifth birthdays (SEU, 2002b; DfES, 2004).

The Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care in a 2009 report “Securing Our Future Initiative” suggests that the support networks available to vulnerable young people today are inadequate. It argues for a “continuum of care” to be structured around young people who are vulnerable, designed to provide basic provisions – accommodation, health guidance and mentoring networks. The Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (2005) and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF, 2004a; 2007) have also stressed that good mentoring networks can have positive impact on the capacities and well being of vulnerable young people. Organisations that can deliver tailored responses to particular groups, provide effective reliable services and capable staff are deemed (Victorian Council of Social Service, 2006; Williamson, 2006) to be most successful. In line with the capability approach’s theory the above named organisations confirm that vulnerable young people need to be supported to develop capabilities that will enable them function independently and responsibly in their communities. Young people who are vulnerable hardly ever have just one need. Their circumstances usually require a series of interventions on different levels.

SECTION III: BUILDING CAPABILITIES IN EXCLUDED COMMUNITIES

The nature of vulnerability to social exclusion has been discussed above. In view of the discussion on capability, it follows that people who are susceptible to social exclusion lack the capabilities to function in

their communities. Sen (1993) suggests that functionings empower individuals to utilise freedoms and agency and therefore demonstrate the degree to which they are active autonomous citizens. The functionings of effective citizens should include basic economic, social, political and cultural features – adequate living standards, food, shelter, and health (Sen, 1987, Cohen 1993, Nussbaum 1993). Sen and Nussbaum expand the baseline to include other aspects of well-being; i.e. features of recognition and participation – education and psychosocial features, opportunities to make positive contributions.

The development of vulnerable young people is further restricted by inability to develop capabilities in mainstream society. They are in effect excluded from the processes of socialisation, which enable the development of basic capabilities – communication, participation and shared interaction. These conditions increase the risk of further vulnerability - homelessness, crime, gang membership, hopelessness, dejection, social stigmatisation etc (Istance, 2003; Lloyd, et al 2003). The spiral of isolation and deprivation breaks down into a vicious circle.

Two perspectives of social exclusion

The social exclusion problem could be viewed in two ways. The first is an individualistic perspective that assumes individuals are mainly responsible for their vulnerability. This approach assumes the individual needs to be tailored to fit the social mode. Advocates recommend increase in resource distribution, mass-produced training programmes and long term political surrogacy. Social exclusion can be perpetuated by the lack of resources and substandard living conditions, but simply increasing resources or improving living conditions cannot resolve the problem. Increased resources do not necessarily translate to the development of capabilities. Improved economic conditions may appear to bolster respect, recognition and perhaps economic capabilities, but this is only cosmetic.

Viet Wilson (1998) argues for a social perspective that shows an appreciation of the way social policies, power relations and disadvantage influence the exclusion process. This is the perspective that the capability approach is aligned with because it examines the root causes of dysfunction. It also argues for capacity building aimed at transforming lives rather than manipulating means to forge conformity. For vulnerable young people to escape from the cycle of dependency and non-participation their transition should be marked by the development of capabilities. These increase their participation and independence. Viet Wilson (1998) also argues that social solutions should strive to involve non-excluded groups. Social cohesion is a process which involves building bridges between the two groups. Those without capabilities can develop them by learning from those who have acquired basic capabilities through socialisation and education. The learning communities developed by voluntary organisations might provide a link between a life of vulnerability and a life of capability.

Table 2.3 shows a brief summary of mechanisms causing social exclusion and the policy measures taken to enable social inclusion. I use five main themes to illustrate that many measures are based on weak conceptualisations of exclusion. In education in particular, training programmes and specified career paths are encouraged for the disadvantaged because it is believed they cannot achieve beyond low-grade, working class levels. A UNESCO report (2003) states:

“...parallel systems of education have prevailed in many countries, especially in the North. This has created a ‘mainstream’ education system that does not have to cater for children who may challenge its orthodoxy, structure or functioning; and special schools and classes for particular groups of students such as students with disabilities, students from different ethnic groups, students who have challenging behaviour etc. Furthermore, this structure often maintains ‘special incentives’ for

teachers working in this 'specialised' area, such as better salaries, lower retirement age, smaller classes, etc. which impedes efforts in changing the way the system works" (p. 13).

Exclusion and semi-education keeps young people with low capabilities out of touch with the general public and eventually leaves them out of employment, political and social participation. The socially excluded and excluders remain separated and characterisations of the socially excluded that are sometimes unhelpful are encouraged in the process. Therefore though interventions may be well intentioned if they are not geared towards breaking patterns of isolation and poor capability development they may enhance the processes of social exclusion.

Table 2.1 Enabling Social Cohesion: Measures and Instruments

	SOCIAL EXCLUSION	INCLUSION POLICIES		POLICY INSTRUMENTS	
				Resource based	Capability based
Educational	School culture or ethos that do not support the “disaffected”, “dysfunctional” or other VYP; Citizenship studies – inadequate; Institutional injustice; exclusive curriculum; Elitist school selection; Problematic Learning environments in some schools ⁷ ; Excluded young people ⁸	Increase Access to education at all levels Multicultural citizenship Joined up approaches: involving multiple agencies and professionals	Training and employment – target based, performance based	Personalised learning, life long learning initiatives, support for local groups of learning – at home, school and in the community	Skills for applying academic and educational Knowledge?
Cultural	Accepted norms and values which are not Inclusive; exclusionary undemocratic processes; Power relations/social positions – inequitable; Increased Individualisation in modern society; Breakdown of social networks and systems that promote social and cultural capital are weak; Family networks and local communities are weak.	Rights Agenda Regeneration of local communities Prop social networks	Citizenship education Resources for parks, community centres and local attractions – often expensive and may be inaccessible to some	Community cohesion, promoting equality, enhance positive social networks, alliances, governance and order	Cultural skills for participating in society?

⁷ performance based approach not suitable learning community for VYP

Grappling with the integrationist approach – all pupils should have the right and access to mainstream education (Every Child Matters 2003; France and Sutton, 2007), except where circumstances make this unrealistic. “Raising standards” – Inspection/Competition/ League Tables/ Marketisation of School systems/Increased managerial functions/Increases in psycho-social circumstances/Truancy/EBD >/and need for pastoral support

⁸ Disaffection: Psycho-social issues - Series of failures and let down by (teachers, social workers, professionals); Mistrust in the system; Frustration/Bullying/Bad behavioural record; Absence of Community networks/Cohesive community values brought on by new configurations of family and community life; Negative social influences – Crime, Drugs; Mobility (social) Recently Arrived via Global migration or National migration- family disintegration/Poor parents looking for jobs/ Families relocating; Problems at home: Poverty/Socio-economic/Violence/Abuse/Family disintegration/Illness. Emotional and learning difficulties: School phobia, depression (all forms), schizophrenia, Asperger’s syndrome, Autism, dyslexia, dyscalculia, Attention deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and other forms of mild/moderate or severe learning difficulties.

	SOCIAL EXCLUSION	INCLUSION POLICIES		POLICY INSTRUMENTS	
				Resource based	Capability based
Political	Social inequality – prejudice/discrimination Output related funding Uneven civil participation	Increased equality Voice + access to social networks Sensible redistribution	Encourage political participation in elections Judicial practices	Recognition, skill development Egalitarianism, Involvement + participation, Redistribution	Political rights for Egalitarian Societies?
Social Socio-economic	Social divisions – class, ethnic, race Depreciation in child support Health deficiencies – people who suffer poor mental and emotional, people with learning difficulties Social disruptions- family disintegration, death (children deprived of social skills, fundamental education, appreciation, nurture and affection) Labour divisions – manual, mental, skilled, unskilled, racist, sexist, discriminatory pay – e.g. care, training, childcare	Reinforce citizenship Involved and supportive parenting Enable access to services and goods	Resources for welfare, council housing, target based social policies	Dynamic social institutions Bodily integrity and respect Enhancing individual’s bodily health, Emotional health, self worth, self confidence + Creativity, reflectivity, reciprocity	Social and Socio-Economic skill Enhancement?
Gender	Discrimination Parochial Male and female gangsters	Open debate Create opportunities Valuing people Breaking barriers	Parity	Parity, recognition, reflexive modernisation	Gender sensitive policies based on dignity and rights?

The table shows that resource based approaches do not actually improve the capabilities of people who are socially excluded. Capability based approaches on the other hand aim to develop individual's ability to function as part of society rather than alongside it. Young people need the same basic capabilities adults use for functioning. However because their independence and decision-making abilities are still developing they require assistance from members of the community who have experience. Experienced adults act as role models and mentors in their capacity as parents, guardians, care workers, social workers, teachers and members of the community. In the next section I will explore how youth workers who train to support young people through critical life stages improve the chances of vulnerable young people developing capabilities and their well-being.

SECTION IV: VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS - Communities of Learning

Voluntary sector organisations are driven by values that promote the welfare of the community. Unlike statutory organisations they do not exist to satisfy the requirements of the law or governance commitments. Since they depend on charitable donations and volunteers they are viewed as magnanimous projects with civic duties. They can be more flexible and probably more effective in impacting local communities because they include large sections at grassroots level. Voluntary organisations that promote the capabilities of young people have been working in the United Kingdom for almost two centuries. In the last decade they have formed increasingly close ties with government, mainly due to funding needs. Research has also shown that they have effectively engaged young people at the grass roots level. Government is hoping to draw upon this resource to influence the lifestyles of vulnerable young people.

2.6 Purpose of Voluntary Organisations

At the most basic level voluntary organisations provide a space for interaction and socialisation. It is not certain if this space attracts young people who are most in need. Kilpatrick, et al (2007) show from research in Northern Ireland that vulnerable young people attend voluntary organisations regularly. Reports from local youth services nationwide also prove that young people in care and those excluded from education are the most likely to attend voluntary organisations (Shiner, et al, 2004). Also, young people with complex needs are more likely to use local community-based organisations of their own volition (NYA, 1999; 2004). Not a lot is known about the effectiveness of these organisations. Do they harness the spatial space created in the centres productively in a manner that can enable capability development and transformation? Advocates of third sector participation in social cohesion initiatives say they do. In England research projects by the National Youth Agency and the National Foundation for Education Research (due 2010-2011) are investigating the ingredients and instruments for successful delivery of support to vulnerable young people within Voluntary Organisations. When these reports are complete they will shed light on the modus operandi and pedagogies of successful organisations. Government departments responsible for the oversight of vulnerable young people (DfES, 2002; 2003; 2004; 2006, SEU, 2003) already acknowledge distinctive purposes of voluntary organisations. The reports show that the space and activities empower the clientele by providing forms of education (informal and formal) outside of the school environment.

The voluntary organisations are seen in some quarters as the cheap alternative to proper educational programs (Milbourne, 1999). This argument is based on the perception that they only exist for leisure and recreation and cannot provide rich, in-depth learning experiences that will enhance capabilities for modern living. The organisations can however assert that vulnerable young people can enhance their personal development via the promotion of social skills and

capabilities. It is these forms of social capital that Fukuyama (1995) states have a direct link to economic capabilities. Putnam (1993) also claims that the connection between social capabilities and other forms of capital are strong, because it accounts for the potency of political and social life. Milbourne (1999) suggests that the quality of education vulnerable young people receive from voluntary organisations is the major concern, especially when this engagement is the only form of education they have and when the clients are from hard to reach groups (e.g. homeless, young people with cultural perceptions and traditions that isolate them and people with disabilities, etc). The question therefore is whether engagement with voluntary organisations puts vulnerable young people on a par with their peers who are engaged in formal education? Strategies to equip citizens for 21st century living focus not on how well they conform to standardized national criteria but on the substantial freedoms they possess to “be” and “do”. The quality of formal and informal learning depends therefore much more on the capability development of individuals and whether these capacities enhance their ability to make informed choices and exercise their agency.

Historically voluntary organisations focused on teaching practical, social, cultural skills as well as religious instruction to young people (Smith, 2002; Davies, 1999). This type of youth work was always associated with informal forms of learning and in the beginning it was seen solely as a complementary form of education (Smith, 1988; DfEE, 1995). Things have changed, youth organisations have become active hubs of formal learning (Cole, 2001). Though many voluntary organisations still concentrate on provision of complementary forms of informal learning outside of school, others have developed curricula for formal education. The latter make provisions for young people excluded from education and those with specific disadvantages. Some educational programs also exist for young adults who have been unable to complete their compulsory education curricula.

Increasing pressure is placed on services to evidence the skills and capabilities they offer to young people (Billis and Harris, 1996). In 2002 the government via the Department for Education and Skills launched the Transforming Youth Work initiative, designed to permit OFSTED to closely scrutinise the work of youth organisations. It is feared that voluntary organisations will be subject to the kind of marketisation and bureaucracy which schools have been subjected to (Knapp, 1996). Emphasis is likely to be placed on accreditation, a more nationalised structure based on targets and qualifications (Smith, 2002). Though many institutions are meeting these objectives, Mulgan (1998) and Leadbeater (1998) have found it difficult to reconcile the emphasis on accreditation with simultaneous pressure to engage disaffected young people. They argue that learning takes place everywhere and the processes can be guided in a manner that will empower young people with relevant skills for 21st century living and also give them the choice and opportunities to develop capabilities relevant to their own personal development in comfortable environs.

Etienne Wenger and Jean Lave (1991) argue that learning involves a deepening process of participation and this takes place within communities. They describe the associations that deliberately develop for this purpose as learning communities. Communities of learning can develop in formal and informal settings because situated cognition cannot be separated from action. Learning communities are distinguished from other arrangements by the preparedness of members to engage in activities for the purpose of learning. This is the kind of atmosphere good voluntary organisations set up for young people. Unlike curriculum-based arrangements which are performance based, such learning communities set up by the voluntary organisation are relevance based. Members include the clients who are (vulnerable) young people and the facilitators usually youth workers, adult mentors and volunteers. They all desire to interact regularly so that they can participate in shared activities, the purpose of this joint participation is to learn how to do the

things better. The major focus of voluntary organisations is the learning or development of life skills which are in essence capabilities (Hoffman, et al, 2004).

Organisations that are most successful in engaging vulnerable young people support their capability development through the use of creative pedagogy and committed youth workers. The most extensive research done by the NYA (2006a) shows that “young people’s achievement” was at least satisfactory in 90% of these youth centres. It was highest in project-based work and youth information advice and counseling and lowest in detached and centre-based youth work”. This suggests that learning and capability development is more likely where extensive consultation is used to design activities and curriculum. The staff, young people and management all work together to consistently implement the stated aims and objectives of a specific learning project. The next section discusses the organisational pedagogies that enable and support vulnerable young people’s capabilities.

2.7 The Pedagogies of Voluntary Organisations

Voluntary organisations create the enabling environment for a learning community to develop. They facilitate social interactions and networks in the space in order to create educational experiences that will challenge lifestyles and ultimately develop young people’s capabilities. They also provide activities that young people enjoy. Some activities are casual and inexpensive; others are inaccessible for individuals from low-income families. The activities are designed by the youth workers but managed by the members of the organisation – the community of learning. For effective and smooth running of the activities community members have to take ownership and responsibility of the club’s equipment and resources as well as the learning process. New members learn the skills and capabilities from and with old members. They learn to “become part of” the group, developing organisational

and team working skills. This type of participation and achievement strengthens vulnerable young people in many ways. They learn to “do” and learn to “be” and are transformed and strengthened by the capabilities they develop. The strategies of creating a learning community, specialised activities and structures for leadership and participation are discussed below.

The overall approach of voluntary organisations is situated within the realm of traditional non-formal education. This type of education is flexible and because it is not curriculum based, educational standards are inconsistent. Rather than relying on quantitative assessments non-formal educators aim to achieve a range of difficult to measure soft outcomes. Since attendance is voluntary, activities are bound by the turnout of clients and presence of youth workers. This type of constraints mean that the structure and dynamics of the group are changed on a daily basis; even the facilitation and leadership pace vary, because youth workers work according to rotas and operate differently. While formal education can deliver rigorous well-structured specialist training by highly qualified teachers, it is considerable disadvantageous for vulnerable people who do not have the capacities to adapt to its learning environment (Hirsch 2005).

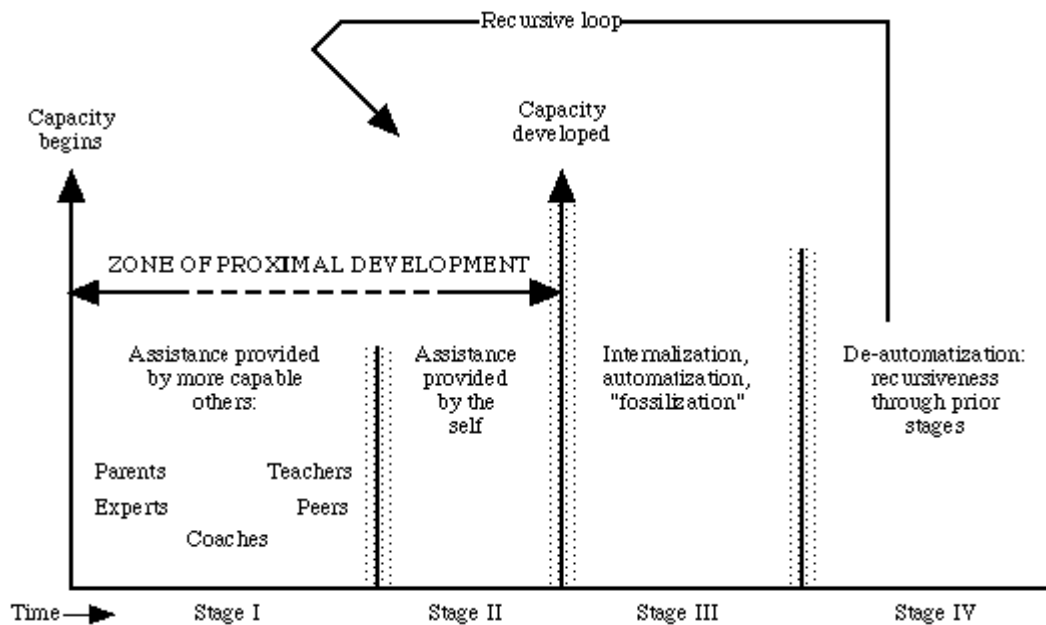
Combs, Prosser, and Ahmed (1973) make an important distinction between informal education and non-formal education. The former is characterised by the lack of structure and positioning. Non-formal learning on the other hand is organised educational activity aimed at specific learning clienteles and with intended learning objectives. These are the features Gordon Wells emphasises in his work on teaching and learning experiences. Wells (2002a) argues for a socio-cultural approach to education that uses ‘inquiry’ to mould and shape learning experiences for both teachers and students. Education should be structured not to measure performance levels on tests that have no immediate relevance to functioning; but

rather on the scale to which it contributes to proximal development. This kind of development is described variously by Vygotsky advocates as 'real' learning (Girod, 1990) because it represents the next level of achievement in a chain of cognitive processes that describe the processes of learning. The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is a concept developed by Vygotsky (1978) described:

“as the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86).

Wells distinguishes between socialisation and legitimate peripheral participation which assist students to internalize, reflect and evaluate the objects or tools they are working on in ways that enhance their capabilities. Tharp and Gallimore (1988) argue that all learning progresses in a similar pattern using a five-stage model (fig 2.3) to describe language learning in young children. The assistance provided in the zone of proximal development relates directly to the rate of capability development as well as cognitive abilities to ascertain, internalise and be reflexive.

Figure 2.3 Developing capabilities in the ZPD -



Excerpted from Tharp and Gallimore (1988:35).

Using a similar model Wells builds on the Cultural-Historical-Activity-Theory (CHAT- originally developed by Alexei Leont'ev in Russia), emphasising the notions of inquiry and dialogue taking place in the ZPD. Wells contends that guided inquiry about practical activities that are culturally relevant and historically connected to present realities provide effective strategies for learning. These types of activities encourage participation, empower individuals and ultimately allow functioning. For Wells (2008) the most important premise in the learning trajectory is one that provides opportunities for 'learning for understanding'. This is a prerequisite for change in attitudes/behaviour or capability development described by Wells (2002d) as – "informed and responsible action". The voluntary organisations are organised to motivate young people in their personal development.

In his work on learning communities Etienne Wenger (2001b, 2002) states that as social beings, humans construct meaning through the tools present in social communities and cultural practices. These tools (Vygotsky, 1979, Wells, 1999) give meaning to the things we do

and how we interpret them. Learning takes place in various forms of everyday life (Wenger, 2001b)

“Through exchanging questions, meeting in hallways, telling stories, negotiating the meanings of events, inventing and sharing new ways of doing things, conspiring, debating, and recalling the past, they [learners] complement each other’s information and together construct an understanding of their environment and work”(P.. 2).

Wenger suggests that learning should not be construed in individualistic terms as in the acquisition of information measured by standardised tests and units of intelligence (Wenger, 2007). Rather learning can be understood much more broadly as the capabilities developed when people engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour (Wenger, 2002). This is exactly the kind of process that powers learning in voluntary organisations. It is situated learning facilitated by certain features, which the voluntary organisations structure and maintain:

- Safe and relaxed atmosphere
- Combining learning with fun
- Offering small group and one-to-one work
- Supporting the development of practical and life skills
- Engaging with young people at their level
- Provision of opportunities for creative expression.

These features not only make the learning community attractive, but also help the young people maintain interest in activities and employ them to take joint ownership of projects and hence maximise learning opportunities. A supportive environment is a safe place where

community members enjoy the freedom to “be” themselves and “do” things they choose (Schierloh, 2008). Environmental safety checks ensure that the possibilities of danger to members from physical accidents are small. In the same vein a learning community has an atmosphere that guarantees the psychological, sociological and emotional risks to members’ well-being are minimised. Ground rules are established to spur good relationships, promote fairness, honesty and justice. Such a supportive environment permits dialogue, participation and reflection. Members should not be afraid to ask “stupid questions” or try new activities. These conditions enhance the collective learning experience of all members. They are encouraged to make decisions, express their ideas, opinions and creativity in an empathetic, polite manner. The community recognises and celebrates accomplishments and is rewarded with more opportunities to further develop skills and capabilities.

Activities in the organisation are the main vehicles of delivery.

“Youth work has a pedagogy which is based on learning by doing, often in small groups; tackling real life problems and finding real life situations, planned, done and reflected on; lessons learned and applied elsewhere. It is essentially educational group work” (Merton and Wylie 2002:10).

Voluntary organisations provide three different levels of activity. The first are academic qualifications delivered in stylised sessions leading to the award of NOCN⁹ and, ASDAN¹⁰ certificates. These involve course work, presentations and mini projects. Secondly, the voluntary organisations organise projects tailored to meet the need of a specific clientele.

These kinds of activities include information for teenage parents, sign posting for career paths

⁹ An accreditation service through a national framework of local Open College Networks offering a diversity of learning programmes which are equivalent to fractions of a GCSE.

¹⁰ Award Scheme Development And Accreditation Network is an awarding body approved by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) offering a number of programmes and qualifications to recognise and develop personal and social development skills

or tasks involving healthy eating, cooking and physical exercise. These projects could be delivered in a variety of styles, for instance workshops, drop-ins, themed activity, games or party events that showcase talent and creativity. Many voluntary organisations ensure that their projects reflect part of the government's Every Child Matters Agenda. Thirdly, the voluntary organisations deliver traditional youth club activities, which include arts, crafts, football, basketball, volleyball, swimming, cycling, video games, drama, dancing, singing, outdoor challenges at youth centres, residential weekend trips in the countryside, day trips to theme parks, bowling, canoeing and other creative activities for youth.

The activities in voluntary organisations also take on new meaning in view of the fact that they can simultaneously be community events, with the capacity to influence political and collective identity. Community participation gives vulnerable young people the opportunity to experience the functionings of people who are not socially excluded. They are exposed to the world of responsible citizenship and the use of social capital for positive outcomes. Therefore these institutions help mediate understanding of the two distinct worldviews. Some activities involve cleaning the street or discussion with public officers like the police, firemen or local councillors'. These activities do not just serve as deficit oriented approaches that solve problems like boredom and recreational crime in young people they impact their individual capacities to become leaders and decision makers (Shiner, et al, 2004).

As members of the learning community vulnerable young people are involved in the planning and execution of the activities. They are encouraged to work together, make decisions for which they would have responsibility. In order to be accountable to other members of the group, members need to develop psychosocial capabilities. In essence voluntary organizations are enabling the development of confidence, self-esteem and principles of management in vulnerable young people (Merton, 2004). These clients are able to transform their lifestyles

and develop positive identities through recreational activities that challenge their presumptions about the world. Hirsch (2005) observed that these club environments are repeatedly referred to as a 'second home' by participants. The setting becomes a familial environment where new forms of beings and doings can potentially transform an individual's attitude, behaviour and reasoning.

Pedagogies are however implemented by people. Within voluntary organisations, youth workers take on the role of active play coordinators or fun loving pedagogues. Their task is to facilitate the group's opportunities for learning and development. The qualities of effective youth workers and their modes of operation are the focus of the next section.

2.8 The People in Voluntary Organisations

Youth workers are the drivers of voluntary organisations. They consist mainly of semi-trained volunteers who describe themselves as having a passion for young people. Youth work training is not as accessible as teacher training and it is a low-income job. Most youth workers have on-the-job training, which requires that they possess basic qualities. Where qualifications are minimal this rarely affects the quality of the service provided because many organisations have well motivated and passionate staff that safeguard young people's interests and provide a safe working environment (NYA 2005b).

Effective youth workers should have a range of skills that will first and foremost maintain the safety and freedoms of the learning community. Since youth work is primarily about having "fun", youth workers are the sparks that ignite (or catalyze) the play and creativity in the environment. While successful youth workers will improve their skills as they work, they need to have certain qualities that will enable them work effectively. Their task is twofold, first they are

facilitators of the group, they will set the pace and by and large steer the activities and learning opportunities towards relevant outcomes. Secondly, they are mentors as they will no doubt be sought for advice and more likely than not become “confidants”. They also have to cope with the sensibilities of working in a learning community dominated by active and vulnerable young people. There are many risks involved to members of a learning community that includes individuals that lack certain basic capabilities. Youth workers have to be able to manage these risks and make smart and often split-second decisions that have the potential to “make or break” certain individuals or worse still the group dynamics. Table 2.2 below presents a list of qualities of an effective youth worker.

Youth workers are somewhat public workers because their work relates to dealing with and confronting issues in public life. The central aspects of their work involve children and young adults. In order to influence the social and personal development of vulnerable young people in particular, they have to form bonds of trust, confidence and appreciation. Cole (2001) demonstrates that this unique bond is developed through mentoring relationships. Youth workers are able to develop bridges across cultural gaps between vulnerable persons and the public. This special relationship distinguishes youth work from other adult-young person relationships (Smith, 2001; Colley, 2003). Youth workers are responsible for facilitating the learning communities so as to achieve an atmosphere of care, trust and growth. Where strong relationships of trust develop, mutual respect also flourishes (Davies, 2006). This extends to the peer networks of the vulnerable young person and it is within the context of such loyalties that youth workers take on the role of challenging lifestyles. Mentoring vulnerable young people is however considered a long-term process, which is delicate, cyclical and reactive (Shiner, et al, 2004). Studies by the Joseph Rowntree foundation (2004a) claim that mentoring can be damaging if the young person has negative experiences. The research also suggests that the effects of mentoring though impressive are somewhat exaggerated, as models of mentoring are by and large poorly theorised.

Table 2.2 Youth Worker Qualities

WHAT TYPE OF PERSON SHOULD A YOUTH WORKER BE?	
<i>Personal traits</i>	Tolerant, Not uptight, Understanding, A contact person, Flexible, Inspiring, Have good sense of humour, Kind, Prepared to help, Self-possessed, Organisational abilities, Self confident, Articulate, not appear uncertain
<i>Physical</i>	A little older
<i>Moral</i>	A good example, Trustworthy, Have beliefs/values, Role model, Should be able to admit to not knowing something
<i>Inter-relational</i>	Accept suggestions, Accept criticism, Give criticism, Empathy, Understanding, Active, Interesting, Orientated and real proclamations, Aplomb
<i>Political</i>	Loyal, Bear responsibility, Democratic, Comradeship, Does not rule over the group but leads it, Can justify arguments and decisions instead of permanently forbidding
<i>Professional</i>	To be aware of his responsibility, to have authority but not abuse it, Take time, Keep track of things, Not biased
<i>Creative</i>	Organiser, Improviser, Versatile
<i>Cognitive</i>	Intelligent, Initiative, Articulate, Have factual knowledge, Be able to perceive the leading of a discussion, Knowledgeable
<i>Social/ communication skills</i>	Sense of community, Can build up a rapport with members and parents, Should not grow away from the group, Explains decisions reasonably and transparently
<i>Facilitating skills</i>	Mediator, Have an overview, He should know everyone, Adopt and delegate abilities, Should have knowledge of group pedagogic, Observational, Should be able to recognise talents of individuals and apply them, No strong adaptations to suit the group members (as individuals or as a whole), Popular, Loyal to and love the group and its members

(Philip, Shucksmith and King 2004, National Youth Service)

It is important to note also that although youth workers are expected to improve the capabilities of young people, very little attention has been paid to their training and qualification. At present youth workers do not need to have any qualifications but they must be committed to working towards the minimal pre-qualification and vocational certificates. Professional youth workers with college degrees are more likely to have trained in the educational sciences, social work or social administration. However, in the last decade (2000 onwards) specialised courses in youth and community work have come on stream. Volunteers who have been trained independently carry out the majority of youth work. Further training for volunteers is provided by local youth services. Some of these lead on to officially recognised certificates, however, most of the training is non-standardised and lacks coordination in terms of administration, theory or approach. The Every Child Matters Strategy (JRF, 2003) has brought on fresh initiatives for qualification reform that include plans to integrate training for roles involving children, young people and families. The National Youth Agency is responsible for streamlining the training of youth workers and the introducing compulsory professional qualifications. The objective is to raise the productivity of youth workers and voluntary organisations in general.

The productiveness of voluntary organisations is being scrutinised more closely because of the efforts by government to use their services more. As such, government funding requires more elaborate evidencing that shows that policies are producing projected outcomes. The next section looks at the mode of selecting these outcomes and if a performance oriented approach can lead to the development of basic capabilities.

2.9 The Success of Voluntary Organisations: Outcomes for vulnerable young people and communities

Many organisations have found it difficult to articulate their achievements. This is the reason why voluntary youth work has been devalued for so long. However, as the lines between formal and informal learning blur in terms of the capabilities individuals can develop, youth work education has become more relevant. Although research (Scottish Education Department {SOED}, 1999) shows that young people develop positive attitudes, values and behavioral aptitudes that increase their self-confidence and capabilities within voluntary organisations these notions are difficult to quantify. It is equally difficult to determine how and when vulnerable young people are utilising the skills developed in their learning communities in other areas of their lives. Though the skills and capabilities in question are no doubt transferable ones, the link between the transformations of a vulnerable lifestyle to a functional socially included one is not unidirectional. Several processes can be employed to support a person's personal journey from vulnerability to capability, mostly by means of simultaneous interventions.

Voluntary organisations responsible for the well-being, accommodation and education of vulnerable young people are extremely rare. Most organisations have only a fraction of input in one or more aspects of development. Consequently it is the effect of this engagement on overall well-being that needs to be unpacked. What are the direct effects of engagement with voluntary organisations? One of the more traditional answers to this broad question is that young people learn to take part in society as empowered individuals and responsible members of their community (Brew, 1957; Smith, 1988). They do this by learning about themselves and others in the informal structures and activities offered by voluntary organisations. The National Youth Agency (2006) gives a more detailed analysis of the provisions that enable this attainment:

- Personal and social development – fostered through high quality relationships between youth workers and young people
- Promoting achievement – by raising the profile of achievement and helping young people to access accredited and nationally recognised awards
- Preventing social exclusion – working in partnership with other agencies to reduce the number of young people excluded from school
- Local democracy – through supporting initiatives such as youth cabinets, councils and assemblies
- Promoting political and civil awareness- Influencing policy and provision – through taking an active role in community affairs and decision-making
- Promoting psychosocial capabilities and choice – involvement in activities to support the community and the environment; Community cohesion and renewal – working in neighbourhoods experiencing racial tension;
- Support for vulnerable young people – through information, advice and counselling. (The NYA, 2006a: 17).

In this context voluntary organisations are like “informal educators” (Smith, 2005). They help vulnerable young people develop capabilities for living through social interaction and activities. Again Lev Vygotsky’s (1896-1934) activity theory shows how everyday activities and relationships can facilitate learning. For Vygotsky, the learning experience is dependent on social factors especially, the interaction between agents and their environments (Engeström, 1998). It is these collective deliberations that consciousness and meaning are developed (Miettinen, 1997).

“Psychological tools are artificial formations. By their nature they are social, not organic or individual. They are directed toward the mastery or control of behavioural processes...just as technical means are directed toward the control of processes of nature” (Vygotsky, 1981:67).

The voluntary organisations as shown above use the structure activities to support learning or development of capabilities. Benson, et al (2004) argue that well structured activities aid the development of six capabilities – competence, connection, confidence, character, caring and compassion as well as contribution (the 6 Cs). Dworkin, et al (2003) similarly point to the development of initiative skills such as learning to set goals, time management, controlling emotions and teamwork that takes place in youth centres via activities. Some of the simple activities could be played anywhere and indeed sometimes, young people play them unsupervised at home. In the voluntary organisations however, vulnerable young people will be encouraged to play with people they do not know, perhaps people they have certain prejudices towards. They will not choose to do this in their own settings or comfort zones. The social mix encourages a complex analysis of social behaviour and self which learners will have to understand and adjust to:

- Competition – healthy contests that encourage hard work and focus
- Understanding of Power (order, chaos, leaders, followers)
- Understanding of difference – race, gender, disability, sexuality
- Recognition and ego-boosting – achievement, praise and rewards
- Fun and joy
- Performance orientation – training enhances productivity
- Trustworthiness – people skills and relationship building
- Charity – mutual support
- Compromise – identifying common objectives
- Experience defeat – people can develop skills to varying degrees
- Destructive behaviour – negative capabilities and consequences
- Discover and encourage abilities – trials and training
- Experience and reduce insecurity – take risks
- Facing fears – build confidence

- Overcome inhibition – build self esteem and self image
- Undergo experiences one might not encounter – new/expensive opportunities
- Measure oneself, struggle and find out one's limits – honest feedback
- Analysis of oneself and of others – reflection, evaluation and decision-making

Through these activities young people learn to acquire and maintain peer relationships and develop valuable connections to adults. More importantly the activities enable young people to recognise their own agency in the capacity building process. *“Youth activities appear to be a context in which adolescents are active producers of development”* (Dworkin, et al, 2003). Bishop and Hoggett (1986) point to the fact that activities can serve to raise new interests for young people, which can have all sorts of implications for career and future hobbies. For instance bird watching in the wild or canoeing and hiking in the countryside can become the motivation for a career in zoology or a pastime throughout life.

Voluntary organisations can have as much impact on choice of career and lifestyles as schools (Smith 2003), though there is a strong inclination to keep a distinction between the two. Elias (1939) suggests that learning experiences in childhood formed enduring marks on learning disposition.

“It is the web of social relations in which individuals live during their most impressionable phase that is childhood and youth, which imprints itself upon their unfolding personality in the form of the relationships between their controlling agencies, super-ego and ego and their libidinal impulses. The resulting balance... determines how an individual steers him or herself in his or her social relations with others...” (Elias, 2000 (1939): 377).

Since voluntary organisations give priority to the process of developing learning experiences as opposed to performance driven products, their outcomes are more difficult to measure. Wells (2004) describes the learning experiences as tools or scaffolding, which ultimately supports

personal development. They include very basic cognitive processes like making assumptions, questioning and reflecting, the psychosocial skills needed to “be” and “do” with others and emotional skills to apply the knowledge to relevant personal problems. Learning in voluntary organisations helps to discover the self and potential *insitu*, besides delivering basic needs and connecting skills (Biesta, 2004, Lawy, 2006). These capabilities are essential to the development of a person’s agency - the ability to choose and solve personal problems tactfully without undermining other essential functionings.

The voluntary organisations are in effect improving the substantial functioning of the young people. Hirsch (2005) identifies the strengths of after-school settings that are not school-like or orientated to academic drill. Hirsch’s research, conducted over a four-year period at six boys and girls clubs located in low income, predominantly minority, US urban neighbourhoods, shows that the culture of the after-school center meets the needs of the young people by drawing upon and replicating positive features of their familial environment and peer group. They have facilitators and mentors who could become like parents in the ‘associational space’ (Jeffs and Smith, 2006). These kinds of relationships engender both dialogue and trust which some argue are essential for enthusiastic learning (Bishop, Hoggett 1986; Horne, M. 2001).

2.10 Conclusion

Young people who are disadvantaged may be caught in a web of vulnerabilities from which it is difficult to escape. They are trapped because they do not have the capabilities to function cohesively in society. Without these capabilities they will remain excluded from the functions of mainstream society and may make poor choices that are detrimental to their well-being. Voluntary organisations offer young people opportunities to develop capabilities. They can learn vocational and life skills and earn qualifications that will enhance their participation. More importantly they

learn by association and collaboration; they learn “how to learn”. These essential tools are the means by which other basic capabilities are developed. With new psychosocial and emotional capabilities, vulnerable young people have opportunities to “be” and “do”.

For an individual to continually achieve beings and doings she will need to improve levels of social cohesion as functioning humans with basic capabilities are distinguished by moral reasoning and adaptive social arrangements. This includes the feeling of belonging, access to goods and services and engagement in economic and socially valued activities (Burchardt, et al, 2000). Public institutions preoccupied with targets and bureaucracy do not support people’s ability to be and do. Voluntary organisations can provide spaces that enhance participation among disadvantaged groups who lack the capabilities to function effectively. They establish learning communities which support the development of capabilities that therefore empower vulnerable young people to choose functionings that will improve their well-being.

CHAPTER 3.0 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analytical framework used in this study. It begins by illustrating how the dynamics of vulnerability work to restrict individual's freedoms and agency. It discusses solutions to the social exclusion problem by means of non-formal education. The chapter examines theories of learning and participation that support capability development. The focus is on Gordon Wells' dialogic inquiry (theory of cultural historical activity) framework. The premise of this framework is that learning communities, shaped by the voluntary organisations, are creating new spaces for vulnerable young people to develop practices of learning which enable them to develop capabilities. This process enables vulnerable young people create their own distinctive web of relevant functionings and thus, become active, responsible citizens.

3.2 From Vulnerability to Capability

The process of supporting vulnerable individuals become capable has to consider the dynamism of the social exclusion process and individual and social contexts. The complex web of vulnerability as discussed in the previous chapter revolves around a number of features. The European Commission (2003) identifies six major features of social exclusion: - time, chance, resources, network dynamics, environment and endurance. Examples of which are:

- ❖ Time: - Disruptions occurring simultaneously such as parent going to prison and death of a friend
- ❖ Chance: - Personal circumstances – health, family status, class

- ❖ Resources: - Poverty or lack for long periods
- ❖ Network dynamics: - Constant association with individual involved in crime or non participating citizens
- ❖ Environment: - Living in negative social or cultural spaces
- ❖ Endurance:- individual ability to withstand vulnerability, i.e. coping mechanisms

Each of these has its own unique signature on the way the exclusion process affects individuals and the capability approach acknowledges such inimitability. It is important therefore in this study to examine the trajectory of the participants.

An individual's resources and capital can be placed on a four dimensional axis demonstrating the means by which they become capabilities and are translated to functionings in personally unique ways. The first axis is a personal one; this includes genetic factors as well as simple demographic indicators that Nussbaum (2000) initially referred to as internal capabilities. They can be construed as a resource but are often bestowed by 'chance'. The second axis depicts environmental circumstances. It is a continuum because these factors affect whole populations, but the way in which they influence people is based on the interface with personal circumstances. For example, a bad winter may make an arthritis sufferer more susceptible to bad health but reduce the pollen count in the atmosphere, which affects people who suffer from hay fever. The third axis is similarly banded depicting the way social processes impact on the general populace but have differing effects. Two children living in a deprived neighbourhood may both be susceptible to a socially excluded life. If one has access to interesting books and is encouraged to enjoy reading, by an admiring teacher or mentor (who recognises that her circumstances leave very few opportunities to learn positive social skills), the child may develop capabilities that another child in similar circumstances will not. All three features are obviously affected by chronology, the fourth axis. A child who appreciates reading

as a toddler has opportunities to develop capabilities for academic prowess and expression early in life than a child who had the same capability lie dormant till he became a teenager (Lawy, 2002).

- (a) Personal axis –gender, age, ability
- (b) External or environmental axis – income, climate, access to public goods
- (c) Inter-individual or social axis – access to social, economic and cultural capital
- (d) Chronology – time

Three elements intersect with a chronological axis to create unique trajectories for developing capabilities. The dynamism and interplay that is involved in converting available resources to capabilities makes human capability and functioning endless (Walker, 2006). It can be extrapolated therefore that capability development cannot occur in a vacuum. Vaughan (2007) analysis shows that functionings are in fact brought about by the way these unique features interact and integrate in individual circumstances.

Therefore, we need to understand what the exclusion process does to individuals.

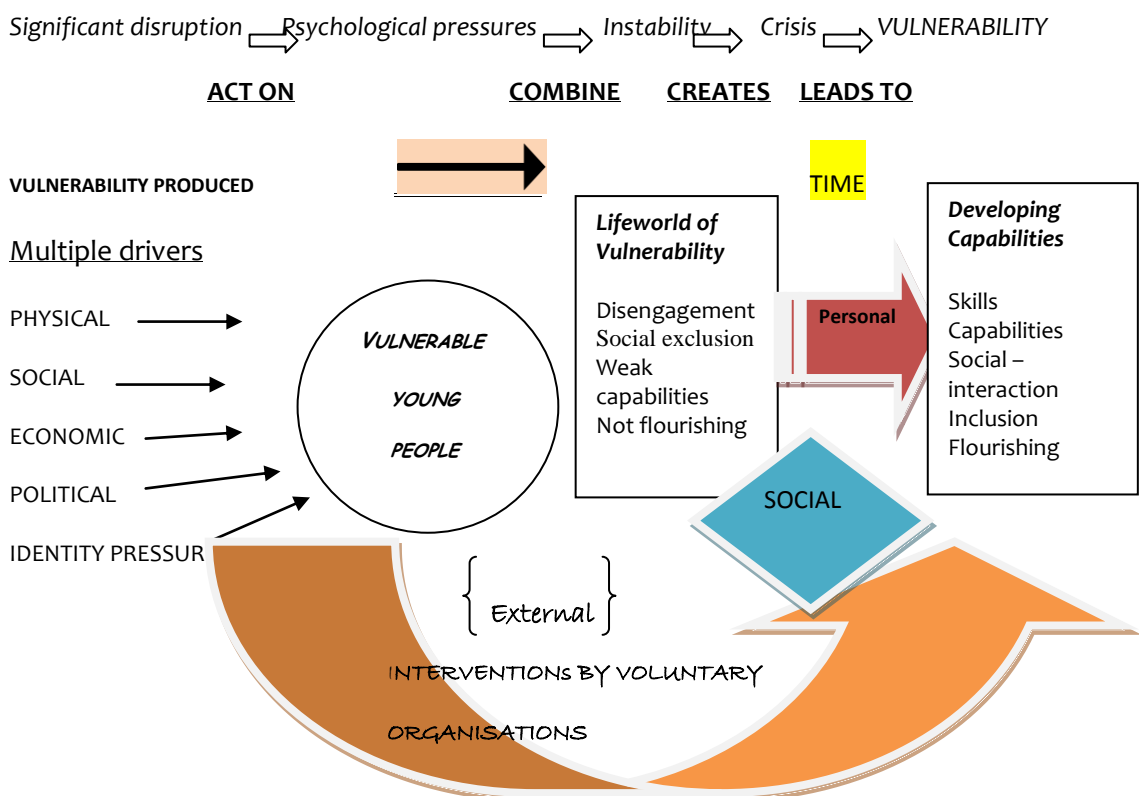
Environmental and political factors can place barriers to opportunities for work, education, training, social learning and economic independence. Social features affect the way people interact with the public; vulnerable people usually lack the capabilities to take part in social networks and activities (Istance, 2004). The European Commission (2003) also found that vulnerable people have very limited access to public goods and institutions. Overall, the feeling of being helpless and not being able to make decisions about their daily life is a sign of the profundity of isolation.

Young people who are in such situations join groups either formally or informally as a means of coping with their circumstances. As the Amici dei Bambini (2008) report concludes they form their own lifeworld - a world that subjects may experience together (Eden 2004). Pierre Bourdieu's (in Calhoun, et al. 1992) notion of *habitués* is similar to the concept of a lifeworld; relating to multi-social actions in everyday life. Seidman (1998) describes how social coordination and systemic regulation take place in a lifeworld by means of shared practices, beliefs, values, and structures of communicative interaction. Institutionalism can govern some of the communicative interaction but this is not always the case. Seidman like Bourdieu argues that we all live in a lifeworld where the culture and practices support the development of our constructed identities. The same patterns help us define situations, coordinate action, and create social solidarity. Jürgen Habermas (2005) suggests that this occurs by communicatively coming to a shared understanding. Though learning can take place in the lifeworld of vulnerable people, it is more common for this to be inadequate or negative.

Several elements are identified in vulnerable lifeworlds like self-determination, community atomisation, illegal practices, and a feeling of incapacity with respect to change (Shiner, et al, 2004). Youth gangs are the more common examples. Others are just groups of people who are rebelling against public systems and institutions; they become involved in illegal and anti-social activities. People with learning difficulties do not have the opportunities to engage in the public world because their abilities are limited. They cannot engage in the public lifeworld because they are non-participants. Compelling them to engage without giving them the capabilities to do so can lead to increased polarisation (Ainley, 2003). Vulnerable people need to develop capabilities for living in public sphere effectively.

To put the concepts into context it is useful to briefly outline aspects of vulnerability and the resultant social exclusion process that the vulnerable young people in this study are facing. The table below shows how vulnerability features are converted to a lifestyle in the vulnerable lifeworld. However, it also shows that vulnerable young people from these lifeworld can be transformed by the intervention of voluntary organisations. These encounters help them to participate in meaningful activities with colleagues and youth workers who understand their “lifeworld” and can support them on a journey of transformation to a capable lifestyle.

Figure 3.1 Vulnerability created by numerous drivers and destroyed by personal, external and social interventions



The diagram shows how the lifeworld of vulnerable young people (VYP) is created by a range of integrated causal factors. The drivers are a result of instability and dysfunctionality. The vulnerable life world contracts the lifestyle choices and range of alternative living arrangements its members have access to. The interventions of voluntary organisations do not necessarily remove the risks the drivers pose. Instead they empower individuals by developing their capabilities to confront the risks and make better choices. The intervention helps people expand the repertoire of resources and freedoms they have access to by employing personal and social features to develop capabilities. The learning process is therefore the major link to achieving valuable functionings. This process takes time but over the period young people learn how to function by “learning with” others involved in the culture and norms of the public world. The next section further discusses the learning via enculturation process.

3.3 Learning via Enculturation

Human beings are distinguished from other living beings by a number of attributes, the most obvious being our ability to creatively adapt our environment and indeed ourselves to our evolving needs. Gordon Wells (2000) argues that the evolution of the species has been enhanced “through engagement in tool-mediated joint activities that both individuals and societies develop in mutual interdependence”. For the goals of enculturation of young people and development to take place, societies use tools and cultural artifacts to negotiate meanings among participants (Vygotsky, 1981; Wells, 2000). These tools can be the entire repositories of a culture; they include language, inanimate objects and physical articles or relics that provide for cultural transmission (Wilson, and Myers, 2000). The development of participants is therefore dependent on the access they have to tools, the modes of knowing the tools support (Wells and Haneda, 2002) and the interaction with other members of the communities - ability to share and

enable knowledge building. It is within such learning environments or communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) that learning is situated (Wilson and Myers, 2000; Jonassen, 2004). Wells (2002b) referred to the process as “apprenticeship” into society’s ways of acting, communicating, thinking and valuing”.

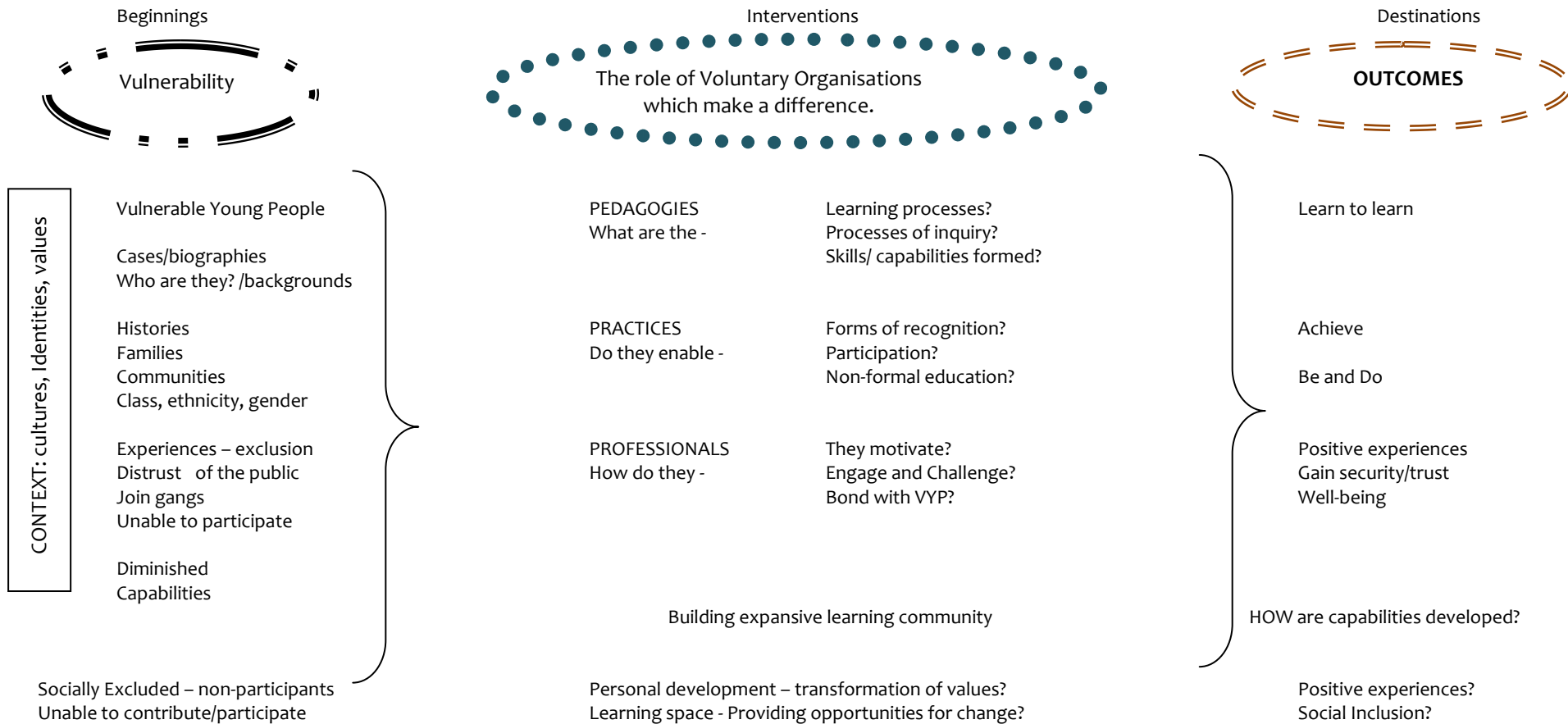
Communities can lay claim to a capability set much like the individual, the difference being that public goods are not the property of individuals. Like individual capabilities, a society’s capabilities are constantly being renewed. New norms are adapted, new discussions and debates evoked, individuals move socially within this structure as well. Furthermore, these capabilities are advanced and converted through the process of enculturation, which includes education, socialisation and activities that encourage participation, voice, recognition and (re) distribution. However, only community members involved in the activities can benefit (learn) from the community’s capital or capability set.

Jack Whitehead (1989) argues that learning is not only situated within activities it is also a “value-laden activity”. He refers to values “as those qualities, which give meaning and purpose to our personal and professional lives”. Whitehead’s work (1989, 2005), focuses on the methods practitioners can create in order to enhance their ‘unique pedagogies’ by embodying their educational values in their practice. This ‘living educational theory’, transforms into real life judgements in everyday practice (Farren, 2005). For Farren, the transformation includes a ‘web of betweenness’, which refers “to how we learn in relation to one another and also how tools (e.g. activities) can enable us to get closer to communicating the meanings of our embodied values”. Farren (2005) illustrates how this conceptualisation expresses education as “‘power with’, rather than ‘power over’, others”. It is such educational experiences that enhance the learning experience beyond mere knowledge acquisition and social responsibility. As Farren (2006) put it “I learn and grow, recognising the contribution I myself make as an individual, and

also recognising the contribution dialogue, participation and collaboration with others achieves”.

This is the kind of learning the communities of practice ought to engage with. Community activities will serve as triggers for the young people’s development of all types of capabilities, which transform their personal development as Farren and Whitehead point out. The transformation is a “learning process” itself which involves critical value judgements, collaboration with others, communication and decision making. Good interventions should acknowledge the agency, autonomy and choice of the individuals because it is important that the participants are involved in the process – “power with”. Also learning communities intervening in the lives of vulnerable young people need to acknowledge their backgrounds and their current lifestyles; using tools and artefacts they can work with like games and recreational activities. Figure 3.2 depicts the intervention process that may enable capability development in vulnerable young people.

Fig 3.2 Voluntary Organisations intervention: The journey of VYP from vulnerability to capability – active participating citizens, confident, secure, contributing, achieving



3.4 What Interventions Make a Difference?

Figure 3.2 presents the framework for the examination of the question “*how do voluntary organisations improve the capabilities and well being of vulnerable young people?*” I investigate the processes, resources and activities that enable young people who are at risk of a socially excluded adult life, journey into more functional lives. Their destination is a new life in which they can convert their capabilities into functionings by drawing from and contributing to social processes, social capital and other community configurations - economic, political or cultural. The investigation dwells on the pedagogies, processes and people enabling capability development in voluntary organisations.

Pedagogies

Growth and change occur by means of learning. The means or style of learning facilitates not only the process, but also the rate and quality of the learning process. Many scholars argue that learning is situated in communities (Duke, 2004; Wells, 2000, Engeström, 1987; Wenger and Snyder, 2003); it is supported by the interdependence of participants and facilitated by tools and artifacts (Vygotsky, 1981). The CHAT theory, a major dialogic learning presupposes that:

- “The basic 'unit' of human behaviour is purposeful activity jointly undertaken with others in a particular time and place and in relation to a particular culture.
- In all major domains of human activity, goals are achieved by people carrying out actions mediated by tools, both material and symbolic, of which the most powerful and versatile is language.
- Individual development (cognitive, social and affective) results from participation in joint activity with more ‘expert’ others, in which the individual masters the culturally

developed tools and practices and 'appropriates' them as resources for acting and thinking, both alone and in collaboration with others.

- Learning is greatly facilitated by guidance and assistance that is pitched in the learner's "zone of proximal development."

The focus of the investigation is on pedagogies which inform the constructive process of transformation of the vulnerable young people's dispositions. In particular the study examines the interactions taking place *via* dialogue, play, social interaction and participation. Wells (2004) found that Children who developed rapidly had more experience of interactions with interested conversational partners. The partners shown interest and cared about the conversation. What this means is that caring others – particularly, but not necessarily, more knowledgeable others are an essential part of the learning process. It is important that the participants are responsive.

Effective learning is internalised in such a way that it can be drawn upon for "independent critical judgment" and "imaginative but responsible action" in the real world where decisions need to be made. It is not just something you do in a classroom. Do the pedagogies of voluntary organisations support expansive learning in various dimensions? Wells (2006) points out that if education concentrated only on topics that interested the learner, such learners would be unsatisfactorily equipped for real world living. Ideally the learners need to be acquiring a range of culturally valued knowledge and skills. This according to Wells (2008:9) is a prerequisite for engaging effectively as a global citizen and successfully achieving in productive employment. The pedagogies of the intervention process should introduce learners to new areas of study and investigation in captivating and systematic ways and simultaneously provide opportunities for them to take initiatives in developing their own particular interests and areas of expertise. The

pedagogies examined in this Thesis include principles which support critical analysis, decision making and negotiations.

Practices

The organisations ensure that their members are exposed to a wide range of activities. These structured for non-formal education purposes. Research suggests that when vulnerable youth are exposed to a “broad distribution of extracurricular activities that afford them constructive, developmentally appropriate opportunities” (Peck, et al, 2008) they improve their academic resilience. These kinds of activities constitute part of the interventions examined in this study - sports, art and crafts, structured challenges and outdoor trips etc. Such activities provide the structure for the development of initiative (Larson, 2000) where young people learn to set goals, plan and make decisions (Heath, 1999; Rogoff, et al, 1995). The activities and engagement also provide the context for the development of basic emotional, cognitive, and physical skills (McLaughlin, 2000). Youth activities according to Dworkin, Larson and Hansen (2003) have the potential to develop “personal exploration”, self-knowledge, and a stronger sense of identity (Fredricks, et al., 2002).

The activities and space also provide for interactions which become learning tools and objects. The young people chose the objects of their inquiry alongside the professionals and they are encouraged to improve their understanding. This method is important as Wells (2007) shows that for learners the meaning of cultural tools and objects, relationships within the community and beyond her identity can act as a catalyst for learning. The activities the young people are offered are everyday activities, which the professionals creatively modify to enhance learning opportunities. Since as developmental theories suggest young people have an inherent

potential to thrive and develop (Lerner, 2004; Lerner and Benson, 2003), in the right learning environments they have improved chances of doing so (Damon, 1997; Larson, 2000; Lerner, et al, 2003).

Gordon Wells and Guy Claxton (2002), explain how inquiries that promote learning like relationship building or mentoring and counseling are aided by practical solutions to a collective problem (activity). The solution would be embodied in an object that is “constructed by the group through their collaborative action and dialogue” (p. 20). The object becomes an artifact since it is used as instrument for solving the problem at hand but it is also “the material embodiment of the group's knowing” (Engeström, 1987). Wells (2001) notes objects are not always material, they could be bricks, plans or even theories. These objects can continue to be developed, i.e. they are “improvable objects” (Wells, 2001). The processes that enable knowledge building in reference to these objects are based on individuals’ past experiences.

“...both the way in which they construe the situation and the resources that they bring to bear depends, in turn, on the manner and extent to which, from their past experiences of participation in similar situations with others, they have appropriated the practices, tools, motives and values in terms of which the activity is organized within the larger society.” (Wells, 2001:4).

Learning by means of dialogic inquiry learning takes place over successive cycles in what Wells and Haneda (2000) define as the “spiral of knowing”; this shows how over time the practices of participation and engagement can aid transformation.

There are other practices in voluntary organisations that can make a difference to vulnerable young people’s learning and capability development. The ethos of the organisation, the way

young people are treated and valued, the interactions and relationships taking place (Hirsch 2001; 2005) are important factors. Mahoney, Stattin and Lord (2004) argue that where the practices of an organisation lack structure and skill building objectives, vulnerable young people are more likely to become more antisocial by learning from peer facilitated activities. There is a danger in creating communities of learning for vulnerable adolescents alone. Best practices involve inclusion for young people of all capabilities in a structured, skill oriented environment where positive learning experiences are facilitated by experienced professionals.

Professionals

The mediating role of professionals cannot be over emphasised. Majority of the staff employed in voluntary organisations are youth workers. Some specialist staff involved in counseling, mental health or social work in are also present. Scales, et al (2006), account for a number of positive outcomes arising for the engagement of young people with responsible non-familial adults. These engagements can foster support for academic success, respect for cultural differences, dialogue about shared values, such as equality, honesty, and responsibility; support for empathetic feelings towards others etc (Larson, 2000). The youth workers though have special experiences that support the vulnerable young people in the organisation. They are facilitators who ensure their clients have realistic boundaries and expectations. Youth workers are caring, affectionate, model good behavior and inclusive.

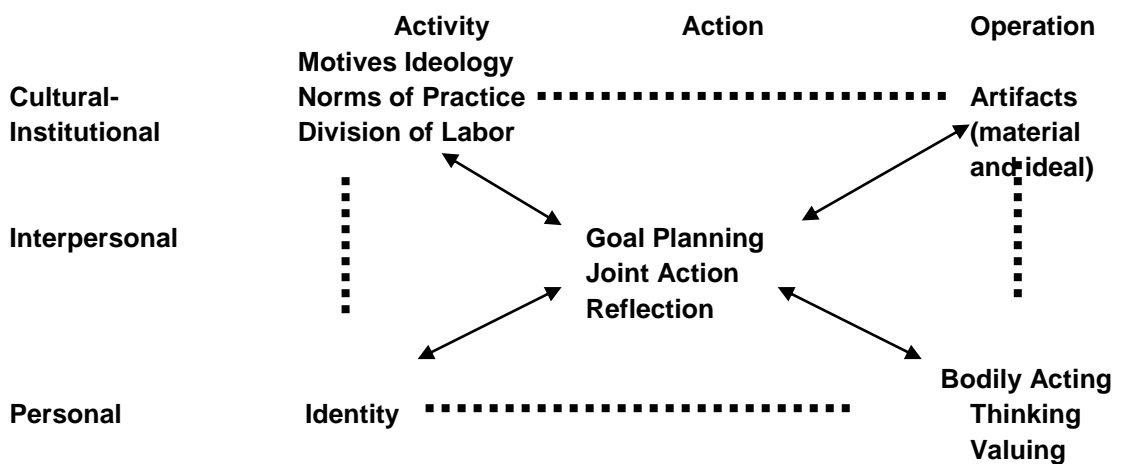
Gordon Wells (2003) emphasises the importance of facilitators who are constantly engaged in the processes of learning along side (power with; Farren, 2006) learners. The influence these professionals bring to the space is a crucial component for the community of practice, which the voluntary organisation embodies. Wells (2001) relates many different outcomes achieved by learning with facilitators. In particular, the learners' societal, interactional, and individual features are impacted by the relationship. Wells (2008) citing Rogoff's (2003) work states that

the relationship between learners and facilitators is not hierarchical nor is the material flow unidirectional. All members of the community learn together and this activity creates trust and motivation, two important ingredients of the transformational relationships of youth workers and young people (NYA, 2007). Youth workers can also be effective mentors. What is important is the notion that youth workers, unlike teachers, are not symbolically privileged members of the learning community.

Making It Work

The interventions are geared towards developing capabilities in the learning community. It is important that the young people overcome their vulnerability. The way the identities of the young people are constructed via relationships with other members of the learning community (Lave and Wenger, 1991) is important. Rogoff (2001) argues that the identity construction may be patterned alongside that of the mentors or youth workers but is in fact a social process that enables a “crafting” rather than a mimicking of the actions of others whether by cohesion or choice. Crafting is a social process, which enables identity formation, it also influences individual’s disposition to objects, social norms and the learning process itself. Becoming more knowledgeable and skilled by means of this participation is effective, because the achievement could create a sense of pride and motivation. Identities can be crucially and fundamentally shaped by knowledge. Such “knowing” is a constant process in communities of practice. Wells tries to emphasise the pivotal role of interpersonal relationship illustrated in figure 3.3

Figure 3.3 Gordon Wells Centrality of Interpersonal Action (Wells, 2007)



In the diagram above Wells (2007) points out that the major outcomes of the learning process are goal planning, joint action and reflection. All three are mediated by interpersonal action. He notes that even elements which exist on the personal plane such as identity and bodily action, thinking or personal values are influenced by cultural/institutional elements. That is personal beliefs and values have been passed on via generations of cultural and social operations. The modifications they assume are the contributions of individuals in the present generation; the values become operational in diverse ways because they are used as tools/artifacts for learning. These interpersonal actions simultaneously impact on individual's dispositions- acting, thinking and valuing.

My research investigates the strategies voluntary organisations develop to empower young people, asking the question what effects the different approaches have on generating inclusion. To do this, the study examines the capabilities and well being of vulnerable young people who are currently involved in voluntary organisations seeking to analyse how their experiences in these communities of learning are shaping observable capability development. This research focuses on the young people's journey from vulnerability to capability. How do processes taking place in the voluntary

organisations affect the journeys' of the participants? This intervention facilitates a number of experiences, which this research seeks to analyse. Table 3.4 shows the specific capabilities the learning communities can provide to enhance capability. They use interventions that vulnerable young people involved in negative lifeworlds can engage in, in spite of their inability to participate in many public world activities. As discussed above the pedagogies and people are specifically selected to enhance the learning experience of such individuals. With the capabilities they develop young people can make positive contributions to the public world, learn in it and become more socially included.

Figure 3.4 What interventions make a difference

	CONTEXT of vulnerability and exclusion	INTERVENTION – role and practices of VOs	OUTCOME
PERSONAL	Vulnerability Exclusion	In Care, Excluded/At risk of Exclusion/ With learning Difficulties Ages 12 - 18	Economic/Political/Physical Deprivation Ill health, Mental instability, Emotional and behavioural difficulties, Homelessness, Lack of respect, Political disadvantage, poverty, Frustration Social Exclusion Chronic poverty, functional illiteracy, Lack of skills, capabilities, Lack of social, life skills Crime, Violence, Dependence on Welfare
SOCIAL	Voluntary Organisations Intervening	Empowering Activities and support Mentoring, Drop in sessions, Peer mentoring, Drama, Art, Dance, Sports, Team work, Residential, Personalized activities Care and Giving Responsibilities Deciding rules, implementing rules, taking ownership, ensuring order, holding each other accountable, Showing courtesy, Demanding and receiving respect Qualification and certified skill acquisition ASDAN Awards, OCN	Well being and Capabilities PHYSICAL Health, Accommodation, Food, Water SAFETY – Security, Assurance, Social security/welfare BELONGING - Friendship and love ESTEEM/EMOTIONAL Stability, Identity, Respect, Recognition, Motivation Social Inclusion FUNCTIONING CAPABILITIES Participation, Collaboration, Voice ACTUALISATION – Social contribution
INSTITUTIONAL	Structures, practices, codes	Qualified youth workers, Joined up activities with schools, social services, LEA, Connexions, Parents	Range of Outcomes - INCLUSION Skills of negotiation – value Participation – engagement, education, training Creative, reflective skills – Voice, agency Engagement – Taking responsibility, making informed decisions, making positive choices Influence/Outcomes Confidence, Self Esteem, Interaction, Goal setting, Decision making, Planning, Perseverance, Law abiding citizens, Active agency, Taking responsibility, taking initiative, making informed decisions based on creative, logical thinking, considerate, self controlled, emotionally stable, Creative, Ability, Acting fairly, Achieving

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter lays out the frameworks for the research. The investigation requires a thorough understanding of the vulnerability the young people experience. This vulnerability is unique because of individual circumstances, but it is also revealed in the lifeworld in which the vulnerable person associates. Vulnerable young people can become less isolated from the public world if they are able to develop the capabilities to participate therein. Learning experiences with people in the public world can help develop the capabilities for functioning in the public world. Voluntary organisations provide the space for CHAT principles and communicative interaction to be used in the context of communities of learning. The research looks more closely at the process of transformation from the vulnerable lifeworld to capability in the public world.

VOLUME 1

PART II

PART II: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The second part of this Thesis concerns the methodology used in the study. It consists of one chapter. Included in this chapter is discussion on the basic principles and basis for the methods and design explored in the research. It also presents the research questions, hypothesis and detailed description of the research process. The chapter carefully outlines the instruments that were proposed for the study based on the progressive focussing technique. This method is used for working through the research experience, based on understanding from chapters two and three. Gradually, the chapter unpacks major indicators and key aspects of the study are clarified. Some aspects of the methodology were altered or refined to capture data as accurately as possible, on the basis of fieldwork realities. The changes were also adopted in line with key ethical considerations, particularly with respect to the well-being of the vulnerable participants; the ethical issues are also contained in the methodology chapter.

CHAPTER 4.0 – PRINCIPLES, DESIGN AND METHODS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is subdivided into three sections which discuss the principles and methods to develop the study, as well as research design and processes. Section I examines the mixed method principles and epistemology informing the methodology. Section II describes the aims, questions and hypotheses which have shaped the study and proceeds to consider the progressive focusing design used and its justification. The methods used for investigating the ‘real life’ of vulnerable young people in voluntary organisations are discussed, instruments and approaches to data analysis, in particular, the procedures used to unpack the raw data are also outlined. The discussion shows the variables that were taken into account while formulating the design, why and how some aspects of the methodology had to be modified in tandem with field experiences and modalities as well as the instruments and methods used as alternatives to proposed ones. Section III details the research experience. It provides descriptions of how validity and reliability were ensured. The section also considers the limitations of the research and the ethical considerations which influenced the study.

The types of interactions as well as the status of the young people present several methodological challenges. Therefore provision was made for different levels of engagement and analysis of varying types of data. During the course of the study, therefore, some aspects of the design were modified to (a) precisely capture the data required to analyse the process taking place in voluntary organisations or to (b) make provision for the vulnerable young people’s long term emotional wellbeing. These modifications are discussed in Section III.

SECTION I: METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

4.2 A Mixed Methodology

The central objective of my research is to examine the contribution that voluntary organisations make to develop the capabilities of vulnerable young people. Is it possible to identify the contributions which these voluntary organisations make to the capabilities and well-being of young people? To investigate this question, I adopted a mixed methodology of qualitative and quantitative approaches. The bulk of the research used qualitative approaches to capture the meaning and experience of vulnerable young people in voluntary organisations, but where necessary, quantitative techniques have been used to collate numerical data, including compilation, comparisons and analyses of data from socioeconomic contexts. Quantitative data was sourced from the National Office of Statistics (ONS), The Local Council (Riverton), and the participating organisations. Data from the Local Education Authorities (LEA) and teachers in Pupil referral units were also provided in quantitative formats.

Numerical information such as number of young people abstaining from school or number of young people in care is best presented and analysed in quantitative formats – charts, graphs statistical values, etc. So also is information about young people classified as vulnerable and the kind of (or lack of) education they receive. Such data has been analysed in quantitative form by various researchers in sociology, criminology and education (Booth, Colomb, and Williams, 2003; Rice, Burnhill, Wright, and Townsend, 2001). Analysis in such quantitative formats makes the data easy to understand and simple to explain. It also makes the data set easier to manage given the mutations that occur synchronically and temporarily during the course of research. Yet these analytical

frameworks are limited, in that analyses from previous studies cannot be superimposed on new ones. If it is true that part of the intention of research inquiry is to build on the conclusions of previous studies then quantitative methods alone are inadequate. This is especially true when measuring social attributes such as behaviour and attitudes like this study does. Human beings are complex and both researchers and participants have unique traditions, assumptions and concepts that influence the outcome of a study over time; these need to be understood and appropriately accounted for.

Effective quantitative research usually requires a very large sample. The logistical difficulties inherent in gathering a sufficiently large sample have the potential to sabotage the study in its entirety. For this reason, proper planning and time should be given to design in quantitative analysis. For doctoral research, time can be a constraint. Large samples also tend to be more expensive and not cost effective for individual research as opposed to government - sponsored research or those organised by large-scale companies. In spite of these complexities relatively short, touch-and-go and rigid interviews in quantitative design are also not well suited for studies that aim to impact real life situations like mine. If the data is not handled sensitively a range of statically errors can occur. The misuse of sampling and weighting processes can completely undermine the accuracy, validity, and projectability of a quantitative research study (Golafshani, 2003). However, quantitative methods are useful for triangulation, better understanding of causal relationships and increasing the availability of probabilities for critical analysis and interpretation.

The social practices of various actors have different meanings and purposes and they need qualitative research methods to understand them. This interpretative technique (*verstehen*) is much more effective for analysing these practices as a whole and the

contexts in which they are located (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative methodologies also enable critical analyses and permit the researcher to accommodate ethical considerations. Following on from methods used in developing the capability approach, much of the in-depth analyses were collated using complementary qualitative methods. Case studies, interviews, observation, surveys, questionnaires and documentary analysis of data and policies are employed to collate and analyse data. This method is particularly useful for examining notions that cannot be determined using quantitative analysis. Qualitative data depicts more robustly individual motivations, desires and values. Interviews are used extensively in this research. This instrument is used to collate data from young people, parents, teachers, youth workers, managers of voluntary organisations and youth work officers. I collated data in 2007 as a participant observer in three voluntary organisations over a period of twelve months. Some follow-on interviews and clarifications continued over an extended six month period in 2008. Surveys and questionnaires were used where they were more appropriate for the young people, parents and organisations.

Using tests and techniques in qualitative research enabled me obtain more in-depth information. Though qualitative research is highly subjective, it investigates more than percentages and statistics. It enables the possibility of expanding understanding of the feelings, impressions and viewpoints of the interviewee. The interviews and questionnaires were comparatively longer and definitively more cumbersome, nevertheless, they allowed for candid and multifaceted responses. The outcomes are often richer data, saturated with insights from different angles and perspectives. The data could also be used more flexibly since the responses are broader and extensive themes emerged in this analysis unlike when respondents use simple tick-box methods.

This, I believe offered certain benefits adding to the validity and relevance of the research project itself (Robson, 2002).

If these intuitive and subjective personal inputs can best be obtained through qualitative research, it also means that the researcher also could be easily swayed by the said material or personal intuition. To avoid this methodological problem, research checks were introduced to ensure the aims and objectives of the study were not compromised. For example, opportunities were used to test validity using interviewer corroboration, peer debriefing, prolonged engagement, negative case analysis, audits and confirmation from participants (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). These safeguards were used to support genuine data collection and analysis. The personal intuition and premonitions of the researcher were clearly recorded, stated and discussed in research diaries and field notes. All data was corroborated and triangulated (Mathison, 1988).

The analysis in qualitative design is more subjective and deals with a small sample size, projectability is less probable. The approach guarantees broad and wide-ranging responses though definitive conclusions may require further research with longitudinal studies and larger samples. The research conclusions should be applicable in practice, though different interpretations may be expected from such subjective methodology. The scrutiny afforded the methodological process and the clear reporting procedure should make this study relevant to similar scenarios. The researcher acknowledges the biases, assumptions and values she brings to the study. This is another reason why complementing the two approaches is valuable. More constructive conclusions can be drawn from the study.

4.3 Epistemological Assumptions

This section takes a brief look at the traditions of social science, which lie behind the approaches used in the study. One tradition proposes that inquiry should follow the model provided by the natural sciences. This is the positivist belief that knowledge is a compilation of value-free facts. Positivism assumes the existence of an objective world that can be known through universal laws (Robson, 2002). These facts or general laws as they quickly came to be known in the natural sciences are the basis for all types of inquiry. The methods for capturing knowledge are deductive (Robson, 2002; Kelle, 2001). Hypotheses are postulated based on creative conjectures, then data is collated to test these ideas. If the data did not falsify the hypothesis it could be provisionally accepted. This framework of analysis proved very attractive for testing stable, monotonous phenomena like revolving planets, plant and animal physiology or geographical occurrences. However, the same is not true for complex dynamic phenomena. Change and chronological modifications mean that causality and structure are not as static as once assumed; many factors need to be considered to interpret dynamic trends. It soon became obvious that not all conclusions fitted neatly into the framework of natural science. Simple laboratory experiments that could not be replicated in real life circumstances - less apply to the real world – are unhelpful to social scientists. Social scientists and philosophers argued that taste and personal opinion impacted on what we construed as reality. In fact, Robson (2002) suggests that social scientists have yet to create general value free “laws”. Robson summed up this argument when he says quantitative measurements... cannot capture the real meaning of social behaviour” (Robson, 2002: 23).

Reacting to the limitations of natural science, a practice of inquiry has evolved more suited to the social world, that acknowledges that mankind and human interactions (including the activity of research) construct different kinds of knowledge. This approach acknowledges that knowledge is not altogether 'value free'. At best, facts are laden with the value judgements their interpreter bestows on them and in no way dissociated from the personality and social position of the investigator. The antipositivist tradition¹¹ also does not accept that all facts are transcultural; specifically social inquiry is about understanding and informing situated social practice (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Social scientists have increasingly accepted the position that knowledge of the social world is dependent on understanding the meaningful involvement of participants in that social world (Schram and Caterino, 2006). They therefore acknowledge that positivist objectives like commensurability and generalisation are not completely achievable in social inquiry due to distinct aspects of human existence - meaning, rules, norms, reason, etc.

This tradition has been criticised because it can appear to lead to the conclusion that there is no objective knowledge of reality. It means the social and cultural assumptions of researchers influence inquiry and resultant (relative) conclusions. The interpretative tradition's response to such criticism argues that inquiries seek to understand the world through the lenses of various perspectives. The interpretative position suggests that truth can be interpreted in different ways and it is influenced by the social constructs of people. If there is no objective truth, but many subjective "truths" how could we make sense of causality itself? Perhaps this is because "truth" may in different causal contexts.

¹¹ Also known by in its differing variants as constructivism, interpretative or naturalistic (Robson, 2002: 24).

The methodology of the interpretative approach is inductive. Data is first collected and then specific generalisations are made based on uniqueness. The form of knowledge qualitative methods advance cannot be tested by statistical means. Case studies and individuals are analysed as the object of the investigations.

Richard Pring (2005) in his work on philosophy of education and educational research has downplayed the distinction between the two traditions of positivism and interpretivism as over exaggerated. He calls the apparent unique distinctions as ‘false dualisms’ citing the fact that researchers blur the distinction between individual and social constructs. Qualitative research can complement the quantitative approach and vice versa because both traditions support understanding and knowledge of truth. Pring draws particular attention to the way educational research is used by policy makers in generalisable terms and the way it can be used by parents in very specific terms.

Though qualitative research has contributed a lot to the methodology of social science research it still does not mean that qualitative research is purer, or inherently better than quantitative methods. Miles and Huberman (1994), succinctly point out that “qualitative analyses can be evocative, illuminating, masterful – and wrong” (p. 284). By combining both methods, it is possible to approach inquiry in a more dispassionate manner using a variety of methods. Pring (2005) argues that unique situations that justify specialised qualitative methods will always have aspects that are not unique. For example, though values may be individually construed they are often socially embedded. Quantifiable claims that will benefit policy makers can be reached when educational researchers study underlying social rules and interpretations of individuals, as well as the way social structures in general constrain activities.

“Personal ontological assumptions affect one’s epistemological assumptions; both suppositions have bearing on the methodology of choice. We cannot select a methodology arbitrarily since each one brings with it epistemological and ontological assumptions” (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007: 9).

The researcher chose a multidimensional approach because the methodology is best suited for evaluating youth work with vulnerable young persons. There are many reasons why this is the case. The most obvious being the complex socio-economic conditions and environments that induce vulnerability in the first instance (Hills, et al, 2002). This is a multidimensional issue requiring multidimensional methodological approaches. A mixed methodology is also beneficial because it combines the advantages of both qualitative and quantitative approaches and because it improves our level of understanding of the substantive subject area (Lewis and Lindsay, 2000). For instance, qualitative research can be used to triangulate the results of a quantitative study (Lerner, 2004b). The importance of this has been emphasised by many researchers (Bryman, 2006; Brannen, 1995). Qualitative methods bring depth to the breadth of quantitative approaches. It may be the case that conclusions could be far from complementary; yet, the macro level procedures that quantitative methodologies are able to unearth can still be explained in differing contexts by the in-depth micro level analysis of qualitative data. The research design which utilizes both methodologies is described below.

SECTION II RESEARCH DESIGN

This section presents the research’s aims and objectives, the study’s design, methods and strategy and a final division which outlines the way data was analysed.

4.4 Research aims and objectives

This research focuses on vulnerable young people and how voluntary organisations in particular, influence the development of their capabilities and well-being. The aim of the research is to offer a more holistic overview of the development/learning that is taking place in vulnerable young people as a result of their engagement with voluntary organisations. The investigation takes into account the reservations of previous studies, for example Furlong, et al (1997) have suggested voluntary organisations only play a minute role in the lives of vulnerable young people. Other authors, notably Coles (2000) and Philip, et al (2004) argue that vulnerable young people experience better levels of socialisation and are educated in these organisations. Secondly, the study seeks to underpin the significant elements of the process of empowering individuals to become capable citizens and increase understanding of how and why these elements are effective in the development of capabilities of vulnerable young people.

It is important to note that the major focus of the empirical investigation is the processes taking place in voluntary organisations with respect to the capability development of vulnerable young people. The study examined how these processes enabled transformation in vulnerable young people by building their capabilities to live functional and flourishing lives in the public world. The study involved interaction with real people and actual lifestyles; therefore, the research design took into account the fluidity of the research environment. Ethical considerations including care of the participants are key components of the investigation. The range of people involved in the study included vulnerable young people, staff in voluntary organisations and other institutions or officials involved with young people: the families and carers of the young

people, as well as the adults responsible for their welfare (Social Services, Connexions advisers, teachers etc where applicable).

The research had the following objectives:

- *Identify the need(s) addressed by voluntary organisations who engage vulnerable young people;*
- *Assess how this need(s) is/are addressed;*
- *Construct a theoretical framework that describes the learning and development taking place i.e. the capabilities being developed by the vulnerable young people;*
- *Provide an overview of the strongest and most effective elements of the vulnerable young people - voluntary organisations relationship.*

In addition, the work will:

- *Identify implications for the use of voluntary organisations in the development of capabilities and well-being in vulnerable young people;*
- *Identify most effective and most positive procedures and features of the vulnerable young people - voluntary organisations relationship;*
- *Inform understanding of the vulnerable young people - youth worker relationship.*

In order to appropriately tackle these aims, the study focuses on a number of key questions.

4.5 Research Questions

The Thesis seeks to respond to these key questions:

- How do voluntary organisations improve the capabilities and well-being of vulnerable young people?

- Do vulnerable young people find that voluntary organisations make a difference to their capabilities/well-being?
- What motivates vulnerable young people to improve their capabilities and well-being in the context of voluntary organisations?
- How do vulnerable young people improve their capabilities/well-being in voluntary organisations?
- What kind of activities and processes develop the capabilities and well-being of vulnerable young people within the context of voluntary organisations?
- What theoretical frameworks can be used to understand the nature of learning for capability development for young people in voluntary organisations?

4.6 Research Hypotheses

The hypothesis of this study is that vulnerable young people learn and develop capabilities for engaging with the public world by taking part in activities that are constructed to be more responsive to their particular needs. The learning process is facilitated by youth workers, mentors and peers in structured voluntary organisations.

The process supports individual's journey from vulnerability to capability. Capability development would be investigated in two bands

HARD – Observable/physical outcomes – the development of skills: indicators - accreditation, certificates of good behaviour, appointment to lead etc

SOFT – less tangible outcomes the development of social skills; indicators - empathy, commitment to attending, keeping promises, restraining from hitting or abusive and rude behaviour, negotiation etc.

4.7 Research Strategy

The entire strategy of the research has involved fieldwork and off field strategies mostly described in detail above. Non field strategies were planned and structured reading and writing requirements as well as the proper handling of data and analytical components.

The field work strategies involved engagement in different types of voluntary organisations and their work with vulnerable young people. The fieldwork was organised as follows:

1. Examine approaches, practices, ethos, structure etc of voluntary organisations.
2. Preliminary mapping exercise- Review voluntary organisations in Riverton: visit local authority, Behavioural Support and Connexions; documentary review and analysis of available information. Discussion with Behavioural Support staff, Looked After Children Education Services (LACES) staff, social education workers, schools, known children charity workers, Chrysalis, National Youth Agency (NYA), youth support services.
3. Developing analytical framework - In-depth discussions with voluntary organisations: Visit selected organisations (thirty). The definition of the term voluntary was adapted to be more inclusive of agencies that were funded by the statutory sector while at the same time retaining their independence. Appreciate the relationships and procedures in the organisations.
4. Develop typology of voluntary organisation provision – current activities, age range of participants, target sector, vision and mission. Determine samples and case studies.
5. Outline case studies – detailed study of practice that effects the capability development and sense of well-being of vulnerable young people in voluntary organisations.

Further selective focus based on biographies of vulnerable young people within voluntary organisations.

6. Managing data – transcribing, reporting, writing narratives, coding, analysing, interpretation.
7. Presenting findings and writing of report.

4.8 Research Design and Methods

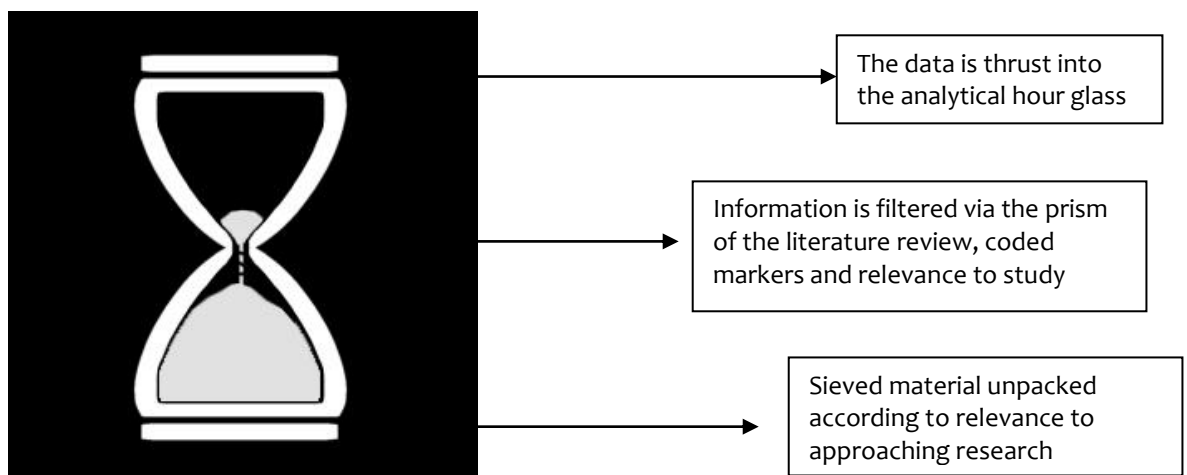
The research focused on vulnerable young people between the ages of thirteen and nineteen, and who have been excluded from mainstream education, those in care and those with learning difficulties. This section describes the pre-field design as well as occasions and circumstances that lead to some modifications in the design, although the latter is discussed in greater detail in the final section.

It was significant for a study involving real lives and professionals that the research process used here avoided highlighting only the presuppositions of the researcher or the research participants. As a result, stemming from the literature review, a process of progressive focussing (Dearden and Laurillard, 1977) evolved. Research issues, questions and appropriate methods gradually emerged under research observation. This process of enquiry was chosen because of the varied ambiguities and challenges that evolved in the fieldwork of an empirical study involving real scenarios that do not fit neatly into the experiment versus control group model. Not all research processes resulted in the intended outcome, the challenges encountered and alternative instruments used are detailed below. The naturalistic evaluation of progressive focussing is quite fluid in that the processes represent an interaction between a research viewpoint and a field activity (Stake, 1981) which is embedded in a real world scenario. The process requires that a researcher arrives on the research field with a firm understanding of the research problem; but with flexibility in terms of committing to a study plan, as the unique

circumstances evolve and the intricacies of the research problem become clearer. The interactions in the field combined with the analytical process of the literature review brought into focus expanded research questions, relevant interactions and problems. As various themes emerged from the observations and interviews, the hour glass method was used to filter the more relevant themes into classes and layers which are used to develop the capability approach in the later part of the thesis.

The hour glass method is an approach that filters large amount of material into prioritised chunks. As with most qualitative approaches the study compiled a large amount of data. All of the data was processed by the researcher, but in order to separate the more relevant material from the bulk of the material this deciphering technique is used to “trap” the more remarkable pieces of data.

Figure 4.1 Hour glass method of filtering data



Most of the material eventually gets through the middle, the irrelevant data may be interesting but do not pass through the scrutiny of the filter and are quickly laid aside. As material comes through the filter in fine and orderly stages the researcher can more easily mark, code and prioritise material.

The process was accomplished in multiple stages. The first stage required observation of the research sites based obviously on the key markers raised in the literature review. At this stage the sample, types of clientele involved and strength of youth workers team are under examination. As the inquiry progresses, only relevant issues are pinpointed using the hour glass process. First of all, a range of significant indicators were highlighted and then packaged into themes. The themes were then examined and analysed, themes which overlapped with theory from the literature review were noted. Some themes stood out such as the role of the youth workers, social interaction and practices which dissuaded young people from unsociable activities. Some new themes emerged because of the frequency of their occurrence in the data or the priority afforded them by research participants, for example, team building activities, concepts of recognition and community participation. From these themes the study progressed to a reporting and theory building stage. The themes are unpacked in the latter half of the thesis. The exploratory research process incorporates quantitative and qualitative methods and is described in brief below.

i. Develop understanding of the main research objects via progressive focussing.

The vulnerable young people are examined in the context of their locality, the city of Riverton, as well as their interaction with the voluntary organisations. Secondary data in the form of statistical and documentary reports were gathered from the National Office of Statistics, Local Education Authorities, Voluntary Organisations and local organisation responsible for tracking vulnerable young people's progress. National Office of Statistics (NOS), Riverton LEA, and some local Ward resources were used to map backgrounds and trajectories of vulnerable young people. The statistical material also gave a portrait of the diversity, working life and general influences prevalent in Riverton. This was

significant in terms of making comparisons with findings from the raw data and shaping the analysis.

A review of the document provided by the LEA details the activities of non-school providers was undertaken. Riverton has mandated a data team “Riverton Student Tracking” to coordinate the activities of Alternative Education Providers in the Council. Riverton Student Tracking also has contact with voluntary organisations involved in Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP); consequently the team provided records dating back to the year 2000. Voluntary organisations keep policy statements, annual reports, records of young people’s achievement and management practice etc. These documents are maintained for the purpose of evidencing activities for funding purposes and were used at this point. This stage involves:

- *Examining the models of intervention – purpose, mission, vision;*
- *Comparing approaches taking account of the different needs of groups of vulnerable young people within the 13 - 19-year age group, different timescales and geographical location;*
- *Investigating the organisational structures that support planned interventions – local community based, national etc.;*
- *Exploring how perceptions held by young people inform the development of interventions, the structure, ethos and practice of organisation;*
- *Examining how staff perceive their role within the different settings etc.*

Studying the indicators of vulnerability and understanding how vulnerability links to social exclusion was a significant aspect of the progressive focussing model used here to support the researcher’s appreciation of important themes like identity, class, motivation and the personal experiences of vulnerable young people (Lawy, et al 2004;

Cote and Levine, 2002). The researcher noted key aspects of voluntary youth work (mentoring, seeking advice) and the importance of the youth worker – youth relationship which has been identified as a crucial relationship and pivotal in the engagement of vulnerable young people who have poor relationships with other significant adults (NYA, 2005b; Crimens, 2004).

ii. Constructing populations of voluntary organisations in the Riverton area

This stage began the sampling phase and it was an attempt to identify and involve the most suitable research sample for the investigation. The challenge here was to identify the different types of voluntary organisations and create typologies of their work/practice with vulnerable young people. The matrix used is shown in Appendix 4.1.

The priority was to identify voluntary organisations in the Riverton area and find out their aims, objectives, target group and influence in the community. Many youth – based clubs were identified in the initial survey. Most of these were community based or faith based. Further investigation via the Local Education Authority revealed two more extensive lists. The first list constituted groups that were not qualification oriented. The second listed groups that focussed on supporting young people gain qualifications directly. The later were linked to the alternative provision team. Drawing on these lists, the researcher visited thirty of the existing organisations. It should be noted that some of the listed organisations had closed down or stated that they were unable to run due to funding constraints. The researcher grouped the voluntary organisations visited into categories:

- Group A Youth clubs and leisure groups
- Group B Established guide and scout networks
- Group C Charities running projects – mostly short term

- Group D Qualification courses delivered in informal clubs
- Group E Alternative provision centres

These groups correspond to the combined classification of Coles (2000) and Hirsch (2005). This is probably because voluntary organisations are increasingly taking on influential roles in the community and government funding is increasing; allowing voluntary organisations to do more practical educational projects. Several meetings were arranged with the Alternative Provision Team - Riverton student tracking, Behavioural Support Services, Looked After Children Education Services (LACES) and Youth Support Services. At these meetings the researcher sought to clarify figures, links between the LEA and voluntary organisations and the structure and evaluation of the provisions available. It became apparent that the range of voluntary organisations who engage more often with vulnerable young people could be reduced to three i.e. groups A, D and E (see table below).

Table 4.1 Overview of voluntary organisations in Riverton

Group	Description
Group A	Informal youth clubs running drop in sessions, sports activities, arts and crafts and sometimes mentoring
Group B	Boys Scout, Girls guide etc Running activities for young people who wish to gain social and life skills in community and in rural settings (camping). Some qualifications offered
Group C	Specific projects run for certain target groups in designated communities e.g. traveller children, black boys etc
Group D	Informal settings offering qualifications to young people who find formal education difficult – OCN, NVQ, ASDAN
Group E	Out of school centres which enable young people to continue with school curriculum in an alternative format with the aim to return to education or proceed to college or training. Centre address behavioural social and learning difficulties

The researcher's assumption at this point was that the LEA, Youth Services or Community Services had relationships with all organisations in Riverton. This was a simple benchmark as many of the voluntary organisations relied on public funding and referrals from statutory organisations. The researcher came across only one voluntary organisation, which was funded by a faith-based organisation and loosely affiliated to Riverton student tracking. Voluntary organisations not funded by the government (directly or indirectly) did not offer extended opening times. This meant that the researcher could not choose voluntary organisations that did not need to conform to some kind of statutory provisions and guidelines or the other to guarantee funding and referrals. However, many of the voluntary organisations retained unique identities and ethos, in contrast to the statutory funded youth organisations. The definition of voluntary organisation was adapted to suit the realities of the ongoing field work.

Unsuitability of Groups B and C

In general brigading, scouting and guide organisations¹² are structured around activities that give young people new opportunities like international travel, camping community service projects, and trying new activities. The overall aim is to teach young people to contribute to society, develop spiritually (the origins are faith based), encourage teamwork, gain pride in achievement, and to acquire self-respect and leadership. In the 1970's the organisations became co educational in the United Kingdom.

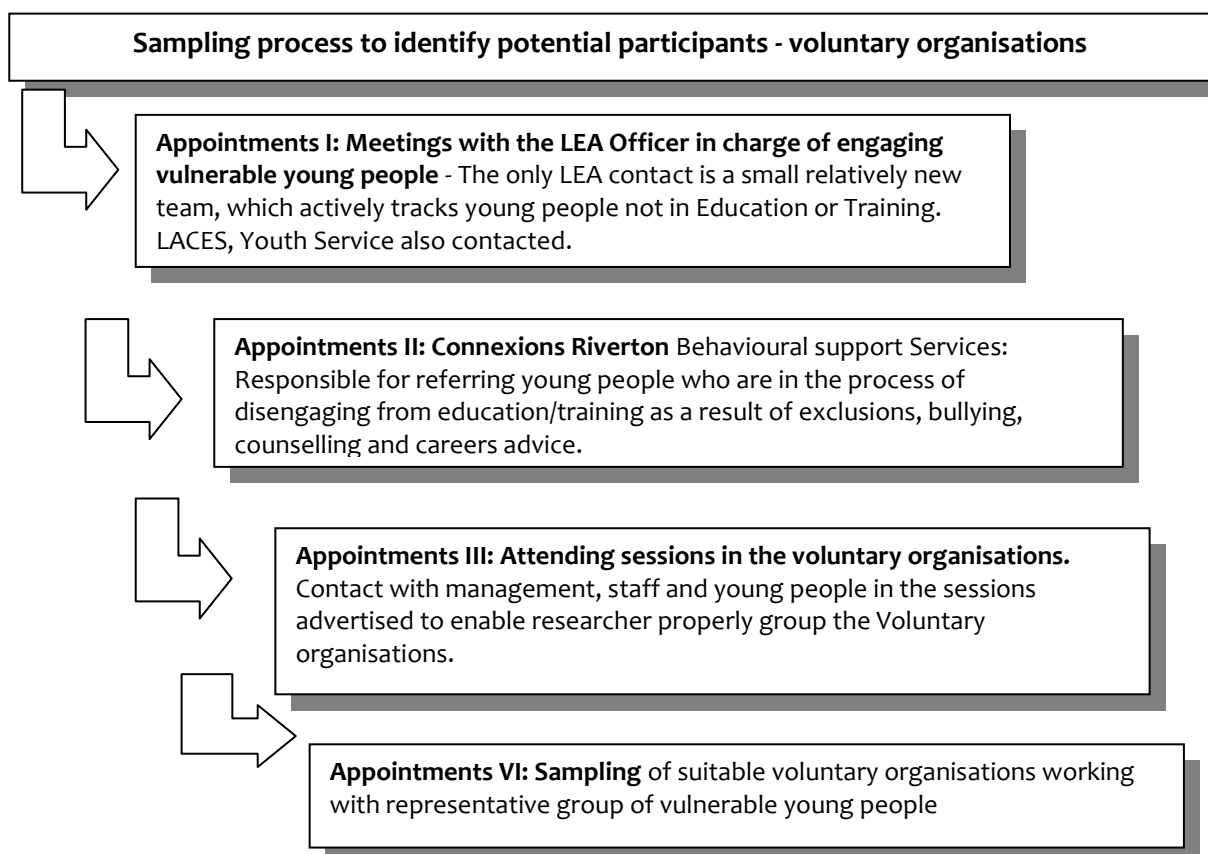
¹² The movement of Boys scouts began in 1907; the first scout camp was convened by Robert Baden-Powell on Brownsea Island in Southern England. Baden-Powell scout methods of using outdoor activities to develop character, citizenship, and personal fitness qualities among youth was built upon the success of William Alexander Smith faith based Boys brigade. The Boys brigade which started in Glasgow in 1883 was already an international organisation by the 1890's. Girls' movement began in London two years after the Brownsea Island event (Jefferies, 1979).

These types of organisations exist in Riverton; many of them though are heavily dependent on volunteers. As such, meetings are often interspersed, sometimes at irregular periods. The researcher attended a number of sessions around the city as well as some recruitment initiatives. The sample group was too inconsistent for this particular study. Many Charities running projects have similar activity based patterns centres. Again, the irregularity of their funding and clientele made them unsuitable samples for this study. Besides, these small charities concentrate on small projects for specific neighbourhoods and particular groups for certain periods of time. Once this general classification has taken place, the next procedure was to get an appropriate sample from the suitable groups identified.

iii. Sampling

This Stage was a more rigorous process involving investigating the practices of the organisations which have could potentially be used in the study. The criteria used were based on the research focus, firstly locating the appropriate clientele (i.e. vulnerable young people in voluntary organisations) and secondly organisations which actively engaged the group of vulnerable young people in question.

Figure 4.2 Sampling Process



At this stage personal contact was made with organisations including informal conversations with management, staff and their clientele.

Table 4.2 Contacts in with potent participants in sampling process

Contact	Affiliation	Responsibility
Coordinator – Riverton disengaged pupils tracking team	LEA	Overall work coordinator for YP not in education, employment or training
Contact in Behavioural Support – Riverton Centre LEA	LEA	Educational Social worker and Psychologist supporting YP about to leave education – exclusions, bullying, self withdrawal etc
Contact LACES – Education Centre	LEA and Children Homes	Coordinators in charge of all YP in care
Management and coordinators Voluntary organisations	Various Voluntary organisations	Trustees and coordinators in charge of Voluntary organisations
Youth workers, mentors and clients in Voluntary organisations	Various Voluntary organisations	Staff who run day to day activities Clients in the organisations

The discussions with the potential participants concerned the types of clientele, ethos, practice and general activities of organisations. The process involved more discussion with the management and staff. The organisations deemed suitable were contacted although a majority of these would not permit research engagement with the vulnerable young people in question. These access problems were often justified based on the combination of problems the young people faced. Many youth coordinators involved with young people in care were quick to turn away researchers. First of all, they cited the well-being of the young people, some of whom have already participated in research programmes and had difficulty “talking about” their problems. Where vulnerable young people are statemented¹³, have severe behavioural issues, have been excluded from at least two schools and are still struggling to engage with their Pupil Referral Units (PRU); the management were not keen for researchers to question them. Some organisations were eager to showcase their success stories – people who came to them “a few months ago dishevelled, confused and angry but are now blossoming like diamonds in the sand” (youth worker). It is also understandable to have youth organisations guard their activities from research studies that are not in their control due to the fact that government funding for these vulnerable young people needs to be shown to be effective. Many large organisations simply turned down request to become participants citing the young people’s challenge to overcome vulnerability as their main aim. They claimed research studies and particularly participant observations could thwart their primary objectives or distract the young people.

Other organisations pointed to the combination of personal, family and social problems which most of the young people deal with. The management of the institutions did not deem it fit to subject the young people to any kind of study, which they felt, will have an

¹³ This refers to an official statement which clearly describes the learning needs of young people in the education sector who have special needs.

effect on their rather fragile circumstances. Other institutions were not comfortable with the methods the researcher proposed. They did not want any recorded interviews or observations to take place. The management of the institutions were not willing to look at any ethical proposals or confidentiality protocols. Of the organisations involved in this final sampling there were three broad classes

- Organisations screened due to erratic operations – one-man organisations with limited budgets, Middle class girls guide and scouts groups with no suitable clients.
- Organisations unwilling to participate – large organisations sceptical about recorded interviews, organisations declined in the interest of their clients' well-being.
- Sample group – voluntary organisations with a track record of five years engagement with young people, had smooth operating rotas and clear structure. They also had the clientele that could be classes as vulnerable young people and had with limited access restrictions.

The institutions that opted to be included in the study were quite enthusiastic about external verification of their services. As such researcher went on to discuss ethical considerations

- Role of researcher in sessions as a participant observer
- Criminal Record Checks and Child Protection policies
- Interview and observation protocols
- Format of interviews, record keeping and equipment
- Contact with parents, parental consent and legal status
- Contact with staff

- Regular updates with management to discuss issues and progress

Participating institutions included

- ❖ Youth Clubs – Heathtop, Ilkridge and Funaley
- ❖ Accredited Informal Learning Organisations: - Ilkridge and Funaley
- ❖ Alternative Education Centres offering course: - Funaley and Ilkridge

Most of the organisations provided more than one service increasing their contact with clients. These organisations were chosen because of their suitability to the research sample and because they granted access to the researcher. The sampling criteria were based on the following:

Figure 4.3 Criteria for Sample

<p>Vision and mission of organisation:- Ethos of organisation centred around capability development and social interaction</p>
<p>Current activities:_ Activity structures to meet the needs of vulnerable young people – YP centred, professionally structured and evidenced</p>
<p>Age range of participants: - 13 – 19 Some organisations allow YP with learning difficulties to continue attending until they are 25</p>
<p>Target sector:_ - Vulnerable young people – struggling with education, in care or with learning difficulties</p>

Quantitative material obtained from the LEA and particularly the local organisation responsible for tracking vulnerable young’s people’s educational progress was scant and unidirectional. Large amounts of data depicting trends were provided to researcher but the material did not show the details of work done with the vulnerable young people

involved in this study; key indicators peculiar to this research were also missing. Instead the data showed number of young people in care, numbers who have being excluded from schools around the borough and if they had attended another institution or gone on to alternative institutions. The data was useful, in that it clearly showed the most successful alternative education centres – places where young people made successful transitions to employment, further training. The quantitative data from voluntary organisations was used to understand historical trends and the variety and richness of its clientele.

iv. Studying practices in the participating institutions

The bulk of the field work involved data collation from the sample. Two major instruments were used – interviews and observations. Observations were structured over the course of a year with the researcher attending two or three sessions a week in each organisation. One organisation closed during this period. A log of the researcher's engagement with the organisations is available in Appendix 4.2. Interviews were scheduled after the first three months conducted by the researcher now registered as a 'voluntary youth worker' in the organisations. During the period, the researcher developed trust and respect amongst staff and clients and used the various instruments to unpack and analyze the practices of the organisations and response of clientele. Table 4.3 shows the total number of interviews conducted: (see Appendix 4.2 and 4.6 for more detail).

The interviews were organised in batches after extensive consultation with the youth workers. The staff made recommendations to the researcher based on their understanding of the research goals. The researcher was also able to put forward names of individual clients that were of interest to the investigation based on their engagement

in the period the researcher had been at the organisations. The interviews were semi structured, involving open ended questions which the interviewee could answer by using illustrations, examples etc. The first batch of interviews were designed to be simple and basic, the second set of interviews were a bit more in-depth, but still followed the uncomplicated design principle. In a few cases a third interview was arranged to clarify specific issues. The interview protocol is attached in Appendix 4.3. Many of the interviews lasted between twenty to thirty minutes. Interviews with young people with learning difficulties were a bit complex to undertake without “leading questions”, support from youth workers, teachers from the special school and parents was helpful during such interviewing.

Table 4.3 Interviews conducted during research

INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED				Alternative to Interview	Observations
Interviews conducted with young people		Full Comprehensive	Not Completed Or Limited	Questionnaire administered	Sessions attended
	Ilkridge	5	12	-	20 + 3 = 23*
	Funaley	6	13	10	54+18+10 = 82**
	Heathtop	5	6	6	120+ 4 = 124***
Sub-total		16	31	16	
Interviews conducted with young people's parents/carers					
	Ilkridge	2	2	-	
	Funaley	5	6	-	
	Heathtop	3	6	5	
Sub-total		10	14	5	
Interviews conducted with youth workers					
	Ilkridge	3	-	-	
	Funaley	7	-	-	
	Heathtop	14	-	-	
Sub-total		24			
Interviews conducted with managerial staff					

	Within Voluntary Organisations	5	-	3	
	Within Local Education Authority	3	-	-	
	Within Youth Service	2	1	-	
	Within Social Care/ LACES	4	1	-	
	Sub-total	14	2	3	
	GRAND TOTAL	64	47	24	

* Two sessions per week (term time) attended excluding fortnightly Sunday afternoon visits to care home. One-to-one sessions were routinely cancelled and rescheduled as such there were twice as many visits; club activities were regular though. Ilkridge closed in the summer of 2007 half way through the study. Nevertheless follow up interviews and clarifications continued with staff and some young people.

** Two alternative education sessions (term time) attended per week with young people in and out of school. Six such sessions were cancelled due to school activities or disruption. One drop in or club session attended in the evening per week. Drop in sessions were more regular but club was cancelled some twelve times. One session per week attended during Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) in summer and Easter holidays.

*** Two drop in sessions per week followed by club (term time) were attended per week (term time). Even when sessions were cancelled, alternate staff activities or discussion took place. One session per week attended during Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) in the summer.

The interviews with youth workers averaged an hour. Discussions with youth workers also took place frequently and some impromptu sessions were recorded in interview format. Typically interviews were transcribed so both interviewer and interviewee could review the transcript. An example of a transcript can be viewed in Appendix 4.4.

Observations by the researcher were recorded after the sessions as the original protocol included a clause that did not permit “inspector with clip board” note taking in sessions. The Centre coordinators were keen to ensure that the young people did not feel that they were being inspected. Also as a participant observer and registered volunteer, the researcher took part in activities in the centre like other volunteer youth workers. It was easy to take notes in class or sit-down sessions but more difficult in bowling alleys or swimming sessions. As good relations developed with the staff, after each session, the researcher was able to compile notes immediately after sessions with youth workers. This experience was in itself interesting as sometimes youth workers shared their reflections on their actions and practice. An observation log is included in the Appendix 4.5, which details a session’s recording.

The literature and data gathered are analysed and interpreted to provide evidence such as:

- Incidents of negotiation
- Peer discussion and problem solving
- Young people adhering to their own ground rules
- The enforcement of discipline
- Incidents when guidance is sought/given etc

This analysis shaped the preparation of the instruments as illustrated in discussion above.

Quantitative techniques were used to collate some background data from the organisations depicting their size and staff strength. These instruments were simple measurement, handling of graphs and statistical data. These show the range of young people involved in the centres, staff and management. Other background information about the young people had to be analysed quantitatively using mathematical and statistical processes. The quantitative data sets were obtained from the Home Office, Office of National Statistics and Department for Children, Families and Schools, etc. The data represents vast sections of Riverton and in some cases regional variations which had to be analysed quantitatively to depict the conditions and circumstances peculiar to Riverton and the suburbs of the voluntary organisations.

v. Investigating processes involved in capability development in voluntary organisations.

As a result of the preliminary exploration with voluntary organisations, the focus shifted to the phenomena of interest i.e. activities and practices in voluntary organisations. This involves many types of processes because though the voluntary organisations work directly with young people, there is a lot of interaction taking place with donors, potential donors, the Local authority, other statutory organisations, schools, law enforcement, communities, parents etc. Many of these activities impact on the practices of supporting young people and indeed many young people are involved sometimes directly in the said activities. The progressive focussing technique is used to shift through the practices so as to identify practices that are majorly concerned with capability development for the purpose of this study. Consequently the study focuses on the sessions the young people attend, their interactions with staff in the organisations, planned activities and conversations in the centres.

During the recognisance phase the researcher identified the phenomenon geared directly at capability development in the Centres. Some of these were obvious – educational activities with clear objectives and outcomes which included certified courses and quasi educational sessions. Others were noted in the literature, in particular mentoring like activities which highlighted the significant relationship between vulnerable young people and youth workers. Outdoor activities and new recreational activities were also significant in this respect. In the course of the research young people noted other less obvious phenomena – the boundaries set by the organisations, the role of young people as co-facilitators, the support provided by organisations and youth workers which extended into personal friendships and counselling.

A new challenge thus emerges at each turn. What were the conditions which affected these patterns in terms of making them potential or even successful at influencing the phenomenon of capability development? This line of inquiry was quite specific to each individual and as the findings will show only case studies with detailed and robust data could be traced with any level of confidence. So the examination delved further into the trajectories of the young people at the centres, as it became clearer that activities and conditions outside the Centre were as important as those in the centre with respect to transformative power. Indeed the organisations seemed to use the information from outside the Centres (background of vulnerable young people, liaison with parents and law enforcement authorities, etc) as a means of working with their clients.

These activities do not take place in isolation, as noted above the network of interactions taking place in voluntary organisations are driven by funding needs, historical and cultural phenomena and the needs and activities of clientele in the

organisations. These interactions surface in the data and the findings depict a detailed presentation of the backgrounds and ethos of all the organisations.

The hour glass approach is used again as the data from the interviews, observations and case studies emerged to analyse the outcomes of the phenomenon discussed above.

What are these practices in voluntary organisations achieving? These outcomes are not simply certificates but some more substantial skills – capabilities – are being developed.

The analysis compiles another list of themes which are discussed in Part IV where they are narrowed down to definite capabilities.

This section has presented the sampling, interviewing and analytical processes used in this research. These will be expanded in further chapters where the findings and analysis are presented. The data compiled from interviews, questionnaires, observation sessions and secondary sources will be outlined with respect to the young people's perspective (chapter 5), the voluntary organisation's role and staff narratives (chapter 6) and the effectiveness of the practices/interventions (chapter 7). The methodological instruments captured a range of essential indicators and themes which are analysed in turn in Part IV. The following section shows the ethical deliberations considered at various stages of the research process.

4.9 Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained approval for the study from the Riverton LEA and the Warwick Institute of Education. The latter is a mandatory component of doctoral research at the University which enables a research student reflect on ethical issues pertaining her Thesis and it assist with practical guidance for fieldwork. A check list of procedures to

follow to ensure ethical conditions were in place was compiled for the study. This included a detailed interview protocol for participants, introductory letters to voluntary organisations and government officials and alternative plans for unforeseen circumstances or child protection issues. Access to young people and voluntary organisations was obtained – enhanced criminal record check, registration and introduction completed with each organisation. It is important that as a researcher involved with vulnerable young people all reasonable measures to safe guard the confidentiality, dignity and sensitivities of the research participants, their guardians and the participant environment was taken. This is in accordance with major research organisations ethical conduct (BERA¹⁴, 2005; BPS¹⁵, 2006). Some participants were deemed too fragile as they had too many negative experiences, which interviews would only serve to compound. A team meeting with youth workers and some carers was used to establish such circumstances. Social workers and project workers are very aware of these kinds of cases and are quick to act as gatekeepers. A high level of responsibility and moral integrity was held as researcher acted cautiously but professionally.

The voluntary organisations were appreciative of the University of Warwick's ethical code of conduct and guidelines which was provided for their perusal. Children have rights that should not be violated in research; professionals should act as moral and human beings, treating subjects fairly as they would like to be treated (Robson, 2002; BERA Ethical code {2006}; BPS Ethical Code {2006}). It is important that participants are fully aware of the purposes of this research and understand its implications. Though pseudonyms are used, participants are informed that the material form part of a research thesis. All these considerations taken into account must not undermine the need to sincerely report the findings accurately and professionally.

¹⁴ British Education Research Association

¹⁵ British Psychology Society

In order to protect the anonymity of individuals and groups involved in this study, areas and people would be referred to by pseudonyms. In general, youth work goes on in relatively every ward in Riverton. These areas include inner city areas, affluent neighborhoods and ethnically concentrated areas. The level and type of youth work provision varies between areas. All avenues were exhausted to ensure the vulnerable persons were protected from taunting, bullying and perhaps abused in due to the nature of the sensitive studies. What they choose to disclose, how this is interpreted and how the information is disseminated is clearly outlined in each interview. It was discovered that the interview process itself has various kinds of effects on the young people. Some approach the interview with pride; others are more timid. Conducting pilot interviews proved to be quite useful. The interviewee had opportunities to make ethical consideration in the subsequent interviews. Ethical consent forms are also efficient as they make clear what ethical considerations have been taken and allow for a more relaxed atmosphere during data collection. It could form a basis for testing the reliability of the data collated in an interview.

4.10 Analysing the Data

A description of the instruments used in analysing the data starts below. I have already described the hour glass technique used to sieve through the data in above. The second most important tool for analysis was the coding system.

A coding system was used to analyse the data as part of the hour glass approach. This system organised key themes from multiple interviews and the mass of field notes and diaries. The data is first broken down in such a way that it becomes expansive (i.e. shape of the large portion of hour glass) but as the concepts are framed using the analytical

framework; they filter into themes which are brought together in new ways. The open coding system simply labels key events in this case it used to highlight key practices and transformational conduits – knowledge of working with others, confidence building etc. A complete theme table is presented in Part IV. The process involves “questioning the data” so that the answers which support detection of properties and dimensions which can be grouped into conceptual labels.

The data is significantly condensed by this process of coding, Part III presents the findings. Quotations from the core category (vulnerable young people) and their narratives (embellished by other categories in the study) are presented. The analysis is succeeded by discussion on expanding the capability approach.

Data analysis and presentation has involved articulating the thesis in a coherent and academic manner. The process involves structuring argument, layering of content in appropriate dimensions and expanding discussion.

4.11 Validity and Reliability

These are two important aspects of methodology that in effect test the propositions of an investigation. Since there are so many assumptions and inferences made in the process of research it is necessary to ensure that the intermediate processes are indeed fulfilling the purpose of measuring accurately or asking the right questions. Validity relates to the study's efficiency of measuring intended objects. It describes the degree to which the evidence supports interpretations of the data and that the manner in which the interpretations are used is appropriate (Moskal, 2003). Validity checks support a researcher's analysis and process of reaching conclusions by showing the relationships

between concepts and variables, establishing causality where appropriate (Creswell and Miller, 2000). There are two types of validity. First is internal validity which concerns the “soundness” of an investigation. Internal validity ascertains that an investigation passes the scrutiny of being a valid line of inquiry (Healy and Perry, 2000). For example, in this study, the researcher checks ensure that vulnerable young people are indeed lacking capability and attend voluntary organisations. This causal relationship must precede the examination of capability development in the said organisations. External validity concerns threats to the way the results of the study could be generalisable, with particular reference to other samples or situations. In this study for instance there are three major factors: the population of the main sample (vulnerable young people), the settings of the voluntary organisations – as pedagogies, practices and professionals differ across the board and the numerous interactions taking place between the two and other social and statutory organisations.

There are a number of threats to internal and external validity. Some of which include:

- Historical issues: it is difficult to ascertain the trajectories of vulnerable young people, particularly as this study is not longitudinal. The participants are already classed as vulnerable and now attend voluntary organisations;
- Time-dependent internal changes: circumstances change often quickly and sometimes without reliable explanations;
- Effects of other practices: the participants are involved in so many organisations and see a number of professionals, there is a need to focus on the causal effects of links with the voluntary organisations in the study;
- Instrument error: interviews and questionnaires may fail or not work appropriately;

- Selection or assignment errors: some narratives and stories could not be used because of ethical issues;
- Depreciation of sample: some participants left the organisations or withdrew their participation.

To counter these issues the researcher undertook a preliminary study which:

- Examined the voluntary organisations and their clientele extensively before choosing appropriate samples;
- Worked closely with professional involved with the participants to ensure they were catered for and understood interview protocols;
- Triangulation is used to ascertain the genuineness of narratives and observed data (Mathison, 1988). Narratives are collaborated, analysis done and triangulation is undertaken;
- Examined relationships with organisations outside of the voluntary organisations – LACES, LEA, Youth Service, Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) etc.;
- Worked as quickly and sensitively as possible with individuals who were willing participants but due for transfers from children’s homes, major assessments (for a few young people with learning difficulties) or pending court cases;
- Used appropriate interview methods and questionnaires as appropriate
- Instruments tested for rigour;
- All participants were given opportunity for feedback;
- Participants were assured that pseudonyms will be used and ethical considerations and confidentiality were given top priority;
- Included a wide selection of sample cases to account for cases that could be withdrawn – most participants who withdrew did so early on without causing major disruptions to the study. Interview database is presented in Appendix 4.6.

Reliability is concerned with the accuracy of the actual measuring instruments or procedures in as much as it verifies the results - can the results be reproduced accurately? The issues that affect reliability are bad recording habits, tiredness (especially in longitudinal studies), errors in judgement, outright mistakes and subjectiveness. The research was conducted in a professional manner to ensure that such reliability issues were minimised. Records were kept adequately in electronic form and hard copies and methods and data checked and re-examined. In the following section the actual research process is described.

SECTION III EXPERIENCE OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The study focuses on young people who have already been classed as vulnerable. By adopting a multi-dimensional approach I have identified the various socio-economic components underpinning vulnerability and corresponding links if any to educational achievement and social development. Though it is often suggested that youth workers are able to recognise positive outcomes in young people in voluntary organisations (France and Wiles, 1996), others have often challenged the validity of measuring effectiveness. This is made even more complex because of the emotional and personal attachments that youth workers (especially in the voluntary sector) so often have to their disturbed clients. Watts (1990), for example, argues that it is very difficult to evaluate any organisation that does not have clear goals. Attributing effectiveness to the numbers of young people who attend particular youth groups is a basic measurement, but also inherently flawed. Young people may turn up to programmes not because of the quality but for mere social reasons. It also may be the case that the social outcomes that stem from these meetings are not positive ones.

“The importance of learning through association with peers was highlighted in the HMI report into youth work in Scotland where it was argued that the club provided a ‘safe’ environment ... pleasant, enjoyable, social atmosphere, with the educational element of the programme distinctly under-played ... and was clearly a meeting place where young people could learn from each other.” (Furlong, et al, 1997:8).

Negative behaviour learned from peers can be destructive, but there are limited means of verifying if practices in voluntary organisations effectively deal with such situations. Pseudo - analysis based on emotional attachments prove inconclusive (NYA, 2005b). It is important to make careful explanations and draw evidence based inferences from the statistical data. Interpretation of statistical results could be tainted by the assumptions and values of the observer, consequently, statistical results will always yield more than one interpretation. That is why it is important that the explanations are collaborated by triangulation. The same is true for data collated from interviews and questionnaires as well. It is important that the research process and the assertions of validity are consistent with the traditions of the methodology. It is also equally important that ontological and epistemological positions are clarified. The positions are outlined in section one. A summary of the processes experienced in the field is outlined below and some other research encounters are outlined below.

Table 4.4 Outline of Research Process

Purpose	Intention and Instrument	Outcome	Challenge	Alternative research process/instrument
<i>Data collation - Documentary analysis</i>	Understand background, trajectories of vulnerable young people, pinpoint measurable indicators. Use of secondary sources	Quantitative data from NOS useful and indicative of circumstances common to vulnerable young people and their families Data from LEA and VOs was scant	Secondary data largely inappropriate for quantitative analysis	LEA/ VOs had not kept the kind of quantitative data that could measure research indicators. Collate data available
<i>Recognisance survey - Records collation from potential participants Phone calls, formal contacts, introductions</i>	To have a record of numbers of participants and clientele in the study. Data represented in tables to give indication of type, size and numbers of research participants	Records were collated directly from observations and verified via VO management Sample could be drawn	Large amount of data not relevant to eventual sample group	Use what is available and make good use of qualitative methods
<i>Sampling of VYP – excluded from school, in care and with LD</i>	Appropriate sample size corresponding to research investigation	Sample size disproportionate due to numbers of VYP attending VOs	VYP in care are least represented in study due to access issues, their frequent mobility around care homes and personal problems. VYP with LD are not particularly cared for by VOs. Overrepresented at Heathtop the VO which catered specifically for YP with LD	Narratives of the three different groups to depict specificity and analysis to underpin similarities with respect to vulnerability Adjust sample frame
<i>Observations and interviews</i>	Collate qualitative data	Many interviews scheduled – time wasted Incentives and alternative research instruments offered – interviews at home or more comfortable spaces, use of questionnaires	Access challenge – not able to work with good case studies or in some organisations and contexts. Some VYP going through difficulties – unwise to burden them with research responsibilities/Risk of triggering psychological and emotional trauma/Fear of disclosing criminal past	Some data was not admissible, some data not collated

<i>Ethical issues Interviews – participants unwilling to disclose certain information</i>	Collate in-depth narratives of vulnerability, experiences and development in VO	Narratives appear to be truncated or incomplete	VYP want to keep certain personal issues confidential	Some narratives are truncated Some interviews did not go ahead
<i>Data coding and analysis interpretation</i>	Build relevant themes and highlight areas of research interest	A series of tables were developed which reflected the main themes of the interview. This was systematically condensed as interrelated themes were merged based on theoretical exercise in chapter 2	Some relevant data highlighted in findings, not all themes could be adequately pursued here.	Paradigm model used to augment basic coding system
<i>Interpretation of data and theory building</i>	Present findings in a coherent manner	Expand the analysis to incorporate ideas and themes outlined in chapter two. Expand the capability approach model using findings		
<i>Writing</i>	Prepare thesis	Process of rewriting and reflecting on research and articulating findings		

The table shows all the aspects undertaken in the research process. I have described most of the stages in the previous section. Note that the stages depicted in the table involved the utilisation of various methods and instruments and in some cases served more than one purpose. For example as the data collation began, the literature review complemented the coordination of data sought; this in turn shaped the frame of the research design, as did the recognisance phase.

4.12 Dilemmas of the research experience

As noted in the previous section, the process of sampling was challenging given the fact that:

- a. The notion of “voluntary organisations” as a whole changed once field work began. The original perception that voluntary organisations are independent, autonomous, self directing institutions was erroneous. There are few independent organisations in Riverton; the only one involved in the study that is completely autonomous is Ilkridge. It was discovered that most voluntary organisations in effect lose their autonomy to funding agencies which are government controlled. The perception of what a voluntary organisation is was thus adapted once fieldwork commenced. The process is detailed above.
- b. Working with vulnerable young people is in itself a challenging experience. The participants had numerous dilemmas of their own, as such their consistency and reliability was indeed poor. Strong liaising with youth workers and mentors permitted the research process to continue, as vulnerable young people failed to appear for scheduled interviews or focus group discussions. As outlined in the section above, interview styles and venues were changed and some incentives were offered to help the young people maintain interest in the study.

- c. The researcher took into consideration the fact that her background and perceptions were not always similar to the views prevalent in the United Kingdom. Time and effort was taken to build good relationships and develop bonds of trust in each organisation particularly with young people, before research instruments were introduced. In some cases the researcher's different nationality and experiences were a natural introduction and set up discussion topics and ice breakers.
- d. Interviews were difficult to complete because of the many appointments that were missed. The process took a few more months than expected and good interviews and data were collated in the end.

4.13 Ethical Issues

The section on ethical considerations details the formal issues that were undertaken before the research. However, in the course of the field work in particular a few other ethical concerns arose.

Some participants were not comfortable recording details of their criminal past or even incidents that they now disapprove of. In such cases the researcher did not insist that they share these experiences. Where some of the stories had already been pieced together, narratives were excluded to respect the wishes of the participants in line with the interview protocol.

Young people in care with complex and often disturbing accounts were also permitted to refrain from discussing incidents and accounts that would otherwise have made the narratives richer. The emphasis was on collating data that directly had relevance to the

development of capabilities and ensuring the process did not in any way “wittingly” damage the participants.

4.14 Risk assessment

Researcher took note of the complexities and risk involved in working with vulnerable young people. The table represents a brief analysis of risk factors and how they are to be minimised.

Table 4.5 Assessment of risks

Nature of Risk	High	Medium	Low	Comments
Lack of access/gate keeping		***		Preliminary contacts with estimated networks. Clearly presented interview procedure, ethical and confidentiality arrangements
Emotional stress for participant		**		Strong contacts with staff, secure, comfortable environment. Good professional relations
Researcher bias			*	Triangulation, proper record keeping, audit trail
Lack of engagement	***			Voluntary, opt out at any time
Data Saturation		*		Data reduction techniques. Emphasis on focus
Insufficient data			*	Boosting sample

* The stars represent the intensity of the risk.

4.15 Expectations

Although difficulties were encountered in terms of access to organisations, however, a completed Criminal Record Bureau check and a good introduction of research aims met with less resistance. Maintaining a professional attitude is important. The young people are suspicious of “uptight education inspectors” and sometimes they view researchers in the same way. Sustaining professional involvement was a challenge as participant observer; sometimes the voluntary organisations assumed the researcher was only a registered volunteer. I had to travel long distances across the city to keep up with appointments and maintain rapport with different organisations. The study was time consuming. Dealing with the logistics, moral responsibilities of working with participants across a big city was an enormous task. Costs and time constraints meant that a more comprehensive in-depth longitudinal study that tracks young people’s experiences in Voluntary organisations could not be carried out. The field work spanned just eighteen months in total. There were difficult decisions to be made on a case by case study which involved sustaining involvement with participants, child protection issues and confidentiality. A lot of considerable time was expended trying to gain access to voluntary organisations and potential participants, dealing with bureaucracy and the “gatekeepers” of some centres was particularly time consuming and de-motivating.

4.16 Conclusion

This chapter outlines the methodology used in this research; a mixed methods approach was suitable for two reasons. The combined methods give breadth and depth to the research. The research process was divided into manageable sections for the purpose of

validating the data throughout the process. Also specific triangulation measures and checks are introduced to check for reliability. Careful consideration is given to ethical components of this research. Participants are extensively educated about the process and purpose of research and cared for and respected accordingly. Careful methodological processes that permitted participants to give informed consent or opt out of seemingly uncomfortable circumstances were outlined in the interview protocol. They could also seek the support of youth workers during the interviews and surveys. The design, methods and instruments were adapted to maintain ethical integrity without compromising the authenticity of the research process.

Progressive focussing was used extensively throughout the process to enable the researcher choose, adapt and make malleable research methods and instruments. The fact that the lives of real people were involved formed a key component of the study and the means by which clarity and perception were sharpened by field experiences and the review of literature justifies the use of this approach. The chapter also explained the means by which validity and reliability are ensured and outlines ethical considerations undertaken in the process of the study. Detailed description of the research design and the adapted process are included in the chapter.

VOLUME 1

PART III

PART III: RESEARCH FINDINGS

Part three of this thesis presents the findings of the study. It consists of four chapters, the first two – chapters five and six – are descriptive accounts presenting data which illustrate the background of the vulnerable young people and the activities of voluntary organisations respectively. Chapters seven and eight develop the analysis by presenting data about the experiences of young people within the voluntary organisations. Chapter five consists of data collated primarily from interviews with vulnerable young participants. It describes the experiences, background and communities of vulnerable young people, particularly exploring their assessments of their vulnerability, exclusion and lack of capabilities. Data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS), Local Education Authority (LEA), Home Office, the Riverton Council and other documents provide background information for the investigation. Chapter six then presents data about the practices of voluntary organisations. The two main sources are interviews with the staff and the observations of the researcher. The chapter includes detailed descriptions of the organisations and their practices – ethos, values, development and activities – as these relate to the unfolding capabilities of the clientele. Documents and collaboratory evidence from the city council and ONS provide background information as in chapter five. The following chapter draws upon the data provided by the young people about how their experience of the voluntary organisations enhanced their capabilities and personal development. Parents, carers, youth workers and officials involved with the youth service, corroborate the accounts. Chapter eight includes a comprehensive narrative of a young person's experience as a gang member and how the interventions of a voluntary organisation developed his capabilities for interacting with the public world (civic life beyond the secluded vulnerable subculture). The chapter begins to pull the data together in an analytical format. The conceptual framework

presented in chapter three is used to develop theoretical comprehension and explanation of the processes taking place in the learning communities.

CHAPTER 5.0 - VULNERABLE LIFE WORLDS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to map the “lifeworld¹⁶” of the vulnerable young people with respect to the findings of this study. A lifeworld depicts a space, or more specifically a subspace occupied by a group, with distinct physical, social and cultural arrangements. The chapter presents data about the background, experiences and environs of the vulnerable young people who participated in the study. There are details of the physical environment where the young people live, as well as, the social, cultural and emotional factors that affect the landscape of their learning and development. The descriptions will reveal the prevailing attitudes, behaviour and accepted norms in the community of the vulnerable young people and this “space” will be mapped with respect to the vulnerable young people’s accounts of the constraints and choices they experience. Generic descriptions are used in this section to characterise the city in which the study took place. An account of wards and communities follows, providing the context of backgrounds and sociological status of the participants. The second section situates the sample’s three groups – vulnerable young people who are excluded from mainstream education, those in care and those with learning difficulties – in their communities. The circumstances of the young people are detailed with reference to their familial backgrounds and experience of education. The section provides a variety of narratives drawn from the young people’s accounts. Finally, a brief discussion of the layers of vulnerabilities explored in the study is undertaken; this will be developed in chapters seven and eight.

¹⁶ This relates to the sociological concept of ‘everyday life’ – a space experienced together by intrinsic subjects

SECTION I THE CITY OF RIVERTON

The background analysis of the Riverton area sets the context for understanding the lifeworld of the study's participants. This section also depicts data that shows trends in socially excluded communities and the kinds of vulnerabilities prevalent in the city.

5.2 Contexts of diversity and poverty

Riverton is a large metropolitan city in the centre of England. Its diversity is comparable to other large metropolitan areas in the country, with residents from a range of national, ethnic and religious backgrounds. However, compared to other major cities participation in the labour force is low, people with qualifications make up smaller percentages and there are higher levels of long-term illness (ONS, 2008). As such, people dependent on benefits, social services or in need of support are relatively greater than in other cities. Though Riverton is relatively affluent, large areas are economically and socially deprived and pockets of ethnic minorities with relatively low paid jobs dwell in large sections of the inner city (Home Office, 2006). Sharp contrasts exist between middle class and working class families, and regeneration projects are only just beginning to address the extent of this deprivation. Deep divisions amongst ethnic minority groups exist, particularly between Pakistani and Caribbean communities.

Against this backdrop, it is not difficult to see how poverty, lack of adequate support systems and a deficiency of positive social amenities affect vulnerable young people. Almost a third of dependent children in Riverton live with parent(s) who are not in employment (ONS, 2008). This is due in part to the high percentage of working class families headed by parents with low qualifications or long-term illnesses. Data (ONS, 2008) shows that almost a third of the young

people live in households where essential amenities are inadequate; including heating, good accommodation and nutrition. Children from ethnic minority communities are more likely to live with parents who cannot communicate in English and have restricted social networks. A significant number of vulnerable children have to care for or help care for parents who have long-term illnesses. The Council records are limited, but the Local Education Authority (Riverton, 2006) has noted this as a cause of stress for young pupils, often resulting in underachievement or dropouts. On dilapidated estates around the city, young people attempt to create forms of leisure which are often negative. Home Office statistics and Police reports (Home Office, 2006) show vulnerable young people in such circumstances account for the high percentages of young people classified as disaffected and involved in crime or antisocial behaviour (National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders [NACRO], 2006). Young people around Riverton readily form gangs on the basis of ethnicity, race, neighbourhood and friendships; gang rivalry and associated criminal activity is considerably high according to Home Office (2006) figures.

5.3. The Communities of the Vulnerable Young People

This section gives a more detailed account of the local communities in which the study took place, providing the contexts for the voluntary organisations and their work in developing the capabilities of vulnerable young people. Riverton's suburbs are varied in terms of affluence, development and population. The three organisations involved in the study are located in different wards. A brief description of these wards follows.

5.3.1 Ilkridge

Population Census records (ONS projections, 2008) show that almost twenty six thousand people live in Ilkridge. The area is densely populated – four thousand two hundred and thirty six people per kilometre square, compared with a Riverton average of three thousand six hundred and forty nine. 15.9% of the population consist of ethnic minorities compared with a 29.6% average across Riverton. Much of Ilkridge and its neighbourhood were developed from the late nineteenth century, mostly terraced small dwellings. In the last twenty to thirty years, these have become a hub of private housing for university and college students in the area. Historic buildings have been demolished in the last sixty years, leaving a degraded urban environment around the north side of the Ward (Riverton City council, Ilkridge Ward Constituency website, 2008). Significant regeneration of the area was confirmed three years ago, with major improvements to public transport, facilities and student amenities. Small investments have also been made in community projects and public grounds.

Some nine thousand people are employed by organisations in the Ilkridge area (Riverton City Business website, 2007), making it a busy economic hub. Ilkridge's youthful population (32% between twenty – twenty four) reflects the large student population made up of a mixture of international and home students. 52% of the population is economically inactive. More than a quarter of households are headed by single parents. 34% of households have no cars (Riverton City council, Ilkridge Ward Constituency website 2008). The young people who grow up in Ilkridge are some of the most poorly trained in the city. The local schools in the area are near the bottom of the league table and extracurricular activities for young people are sparse.

5.3.2 Funaley

Thirty one thousand five hundred people live in Funaley according to the Funaley Ward Constituency website (2008). The population density is four thousand nine hundred and ninety eight per kilometre square, one of the most densely populated areas of Riverton. Funaley was originally agricultural land close to the city's centre. Relics of the grandeur and affluence of old Funaley remain as dilapidated houses at the south side. The end of the 19th century however, saw a proliferation of high-density small terraced houses. 30% of the terraced houses occupied by white working class people were knocked down in the latter half of the 20th century and low house prices attracted immigrants from the West Indies, Africa and the Indian sub-continent (Riverton Council website, 2008). Today, more than 64% of its population are of Asian origin, 16% are White British; mixed race and Caribbean communities dominate the remainder. Funaley hosts the city's first mosque established in the mid 20th century; it still hosts a relatively large Muslim population. High rates of poverty, deprivation and ethnic intolerance led to unprecedented levels of violence, prostitution and unrest through most of the 1970's and 1980's; these have subsided over the last decade due to intensive community action. However, crime rates remain high and sporadic violence and mugging is common. Funaley is however renowned for intensive community efforts and civil action against the vices that once flooded the neighbourhood. Community action, police support and a local church charity helped reduce the rates of prostitution and violence, and also enhance ethnic tolerance. House prices are now similar to other inner-city areas while the crime rate is dropping (Riverton City council, Funaley Community Forum, 2008).

Forty one per cent of households own their own property; however, such houses are often in poor condition and lack modern facilities. 53% of households do not have a car and 27% are lone parents' households (Riverton City council/ Funaley Ward Constituency website, 2008). More than 52% of the residents are economically inactive. Local organisations employ only

about 2000 people in the area (Riverton City Business website, 2007). The Funaley neighbourhood has a strong community Forum which continues to address local issues in a bid to enhance development and cohesion. However, there are very few activities and spaces for young people to engage in positive activities. The young people in the area are prone to gang related activity (Riverton, LEA, 2006).

5.3.3 Heathtop

Heathtop is a mixed neighbourhood with over twenty-five thousand residents, 50% of whom are between twenty-five and sixty. Population density is relatively high at four thousand six hundred and eight per square kilometre. Until the mid 18th century this area was unoccupied wasteland with ancient woods and commons. (Riverton City council/ Heathtop Ward Constituency website, 2008). Today, Heathtop is the centre of declining retail activity in the north of the city. Secluded roads with Victorian villas lie hidden behind the high street chaos. These put housing demands on the local population who have been out priced as the area becomes increasingly gentrified. Good parks lie to the west as well; there are a number of detached and semi-detached houses from the 1930 era.

More than ten thousand people are employed by organisations around Heathtop. Almost 70% of the population is White British and 60% of households own their own homes. 72% of the population is economically active. Lone parents head a quarter of the households and more than 30% of households do not own a car. Heathtop has significant community projects and activities available for people of all ages run by local churches, local foundations, clubs and the leisure centres (Riverton City council, Heathtop Ward Constituency website, 2008).

5.4 Communities: Living in conditions of disadvantage

The description of the physical environment, social conditions and demography of the three wards reveal them as poor districts. The accommodation of the most vulnerable families in Riverton is far from acceptable; some of the participants actually live in squalid quarters and cramped houses shared by several families. The local housing authority has a waiting list of about 10,000 families, as such it is not uncommon to find complex living arrangements where young people are forced to live with extended family or feuding co-habiting couples. Some young people live with their single parents who have numerous partners and suspicious relationships with members of crime rings and possible drug peddlers. Plumbing, heating, kitchen and bathroom apparatus are basic in homes in these districts. The school buildings and public buildings - baths, libraries and halls - are in similar states. The dilapidation is being tackled by the local authority, church building projects and community projects; however, the communities are still a long way off from enjoying the kinds of amenities prevalent in other neighbourhoods. The families do not have the capabilities to upgrade the facilities in their homes or move to better dwellings. In general the level of interaction and civic activity in the three wards are relatively low, depicting the social isolation prevalent in these areas.

Heathtop enjoys some level of community cohesion because of its adjacent (more wealthy) neighbourhoods, where activities are sponsored by relatively affluent churches. It also has less to tackle in terms of ethnic rivalry and clashes. Funaley's community is held together by the tireless efforts of the development association, but there are not enough resources to complement their good will. The level of economic activity in the areas does not attract businesses which could fuel community activities like theme parks, bowling alleys or even pubs and restaurants. Many of Riverton's annual fairs and fireworks are held in areas where local residents can afford to pay for the shows. Since economic activity is very low, the

majority of the households depend on state welfare. Luxuries are scant and neighbourhood relationships are reportedly (Riverton Council, 2006) unstable due to jealousy, slander and crime. Police patrol the areas regularly and domestic dispute call-outs are common. Young people in these areas are more likely to be involved in petty crimes and substance abuse, mainly because of lack of positive activities and the prevalence of street gangs. In general these conditions affect the numbers of exclusions from schools in the vicinities. The rates of young people who have moved to supported living or those in foster homes are also significant in these districts, some ten percent points higher than other areas. The capacities of the young people to develop, to enjoy stable and loving family relationships, to learn and socialise in school and the community, and to participate in society are substantially depreciated. Furthermore, some of the young people troubled by their circumstances join local gangs and dysfunctional groups where freedoms are further restricted. The narratives will expand on this phenomenon.

SECTION II FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL

The section describes the socially relevant aspects of the vulnerable young people's lives and discusses how these present constraints on their potential develop their capabilities and freedoms.

5.5 Vulnerabilities: Excluded young people

These groups of individuals do not attend mainstream education for various reasons. Some stop attending because of perceived failure, threats or behavioural problems, others are

asked to leave schools because the institutions cannot educate them or manage their behaviour. A mother describes how her son stopped attending school:

“He didn’t like it there and one day he came home and said ‘mum, I am never going back there’, so I said ok.”(Sam’s mother)

For some young people family break up and relocation disrupts their education. The Educational Coordinator of a Care Home explained:

“When these guys come here, they often have not been to school for a while. They have not been able to attend school because of the circumstances you see.”(Travis)

Some young people in these circumstances leave the education system; others attend Pupil Referral Units (PRU) or Alternative Education Centres where they are provided with personalised curriculums.

5.5.1 Ilkridge: excluded young people

The parents of the young people attending the Ilkridge Centre were mostly White British women whose spouses had left the family for a considerable length of time. A single father, who was employed, headed one of the families. The families did not own cars and facilities and equipment in the homes were usually basic. Personal computers or luxury items were scarce in the homes and the families did not take holiday. A few of the parents had long-term illnesses consisting mostly of emotional and psychological problems. There seemed to be a lack of parental leadership in the homes, this meant that the children usually took charge. Sometimes the elder siblings quite reliably organised meals, budgets and leisure for the entire family on their own. Family relationships were neither cordial nor simple. Some parents had

numerous partners who strained already difficult domestic relationships. None of the parents interviewed within the Ilkridge area had much education. Though a few of them had trained as cleaners or builders, they did not appear to place a high emphasis on academic knowledge. The families as a whole did not give the impression that much thought was given to the future and the children's daily "happiness" and "contentment" seemed to take priority. One parent said, "I just want my children to be happy, they are not happy in school, they do not want to go." It was important to the parents like this one that the children were able to "do what they wanted." Jenny a youth worker explains how this kind of attitudes affects the young people:

"The parents have not helped the young people to respect boundaries, in some cases no boundaries were enforced at all. Many of the young people I work with really believe they have the right to do whatever they like. ... They are not prepared for school, where obviously... boundaries have to be respected and so they hmm, they struggle."

On average most of the clientele attending Ilkridge had been out of school for more than two years. One excluded male said, "I stopped going to school many years ago, I can't remember why." A number had not been in education for seven years or more. Chris a youth worker described one case:

"We really do not know how long (if ever) he's been in school, if ever. He can't seem to remember anything about his experience. So he has a seven year gap – with - just nothing."

Most of them were excluded for disruptive behaviour, which they linked to early offending practices. Alistair (excluded male) argued "even when you stop being unruly you still get blamed, so I just carried on anyway."

They all complained of unfair exclusions, citing the fact that many disruptive pupils are still in their old schools.

“They kicked me out because I was always fighting and the teacher said I was disruptive, but she never helped me when others were picking on me” (Pat, Ilkridge).

Many of the vulnerable young people had attended or at the time of this study were attending sessions at the Youth Offending Centre for various offences ranging from disruptive drunken behaviour to petty theft. One young person was arrested for arson: “My friends were saying I should do it, so I did.” Others had court orders and criminal records for grievous bodily harm, antisocial behavior and being offensive to police officers. The young people acknowledged that their bad behavior was linked to their relationships with friends in gangs and quasi gang-like groups commonly referred to as “crew.” The concept of crew refers to a group of people linked by loosely defined regional boundaries. Many “crews” are shaped by local post codes, by which they form intimate and sometimes violent relationships. Some crews are bound by their common trajectories:

“We hang out together every day because we are mates you know, both got kicked out of school by ‘err, so we do stuff together.” (Callum)

In general crews are renowned locally for their disruptive and offensive feats. Some of them even had names for their crew in the way gangs had.

The groups at Ilkridge seemed to enjoy the student oriented nightlife in the community. They spent most of their mornings in bed and were out on the streets from late afternoon till dawn. Heather’s story typifies the narratives of the vulnerable young people in Ilkridge.

Narrative 5.1 Heather: Excluded in year eight

Heather is a fifteen-year-old white British female. She lives with her single mother and elder brother. Her brother left school early, unable to sit GCSEs. Heather's mum has been out of work for over fourteen years struggling with what she describes as emotional ailments:

"I have health problems, can't really do much, so the doctors gave me these tablets and I try to rest."

She is supported by child benefits and a modest disability allowance.

"Heather she started having trouble in playgroup", her mother said. "She was about three, she wet herself regularly and the teachers she said she "was a little disruptive." She did have trouble with her potty training but only in school. She would go to school and wet herself but at home she will be fine."

Heather's mum says the playgroup was intolerant because she allowed her daughter to wear trousers, which they disapproved of. This, she claims, made Heather confused:

"She was happy in the trousers, but the school did not like them and in skirts and dresses she would wet herself. She never really got on well with them in the nursery."

Heather was excluded for a short period and she went on to primary school on the same site. Her mother said, "they let her back in when she got a place but she never really settled in." Heather was not sure why she found schooling difficult she was sure of one thing, "I do not like the teachers." She also may have had difficulty relating to her peers. When asked if she had any friends she just shook her head. Numerous disciplinary issues were raised. "They kept calling me in and writing letters which I could not really read", Heather's mum said.

“She was in and out of school, for fighting or being disruptive, at times they would just send her home because she wasn’t doing anything. They never really helped her there.”

Heather’s mother had a lot of negative things to say about the primary school, but Heather said “she did not remember” the things that happened. Heather’s mum defended her disruptive behaviour as reaction to unfair circumstances. She was of the view that Heather had some complex emotional problems though she had no diagnosis.

“They did not try to find out what was wrong; they just kept blaming it on her and saying they did not want her there.”

Heather and her mum were both unhappy with the support they received from the local school. They thought the headmaster was too strict and unwilling to take into account Heather’s early problems in school. Heather said with a smile, “I only liked my year three teacher.” Her mother corroborated that account, saying the teacher was kind and understanding. That year she was able to spend a considerable length of time in school, however, in all Heather had limited primary education. An old teacher at the school who worked in the community said:

“Heather was known to be very quiet; she was bullied, lacked confidence and labeled a slow learner.”

Heather was unable to start middle school along with her peers; she complained that no local school offered her a place. Her mother explained:

“She did not get a place, so she had to wait a year to go to the school.” She was offered other schools but Heather said “they were far away; I did not know how to get there, so I stopped at home until I could get a place at the local school.”

She also experienced a period of ill health which kept her out of school for even longer. According to her mother “she wasn’t very well, so she couldn’t go.”

The school which Heather and her mum were waiting to get a place at was, they claimed, notorious for bullying and bad behaviour. Heather did not like the school because of the “environment and the teachers.” As she puffed on her cigarette, she said in reply to a question about why she dropped out of school, “I did not know what to do, and it was too big and I did not like it. I did not like everything.”

Her mother felt the bad behaviour in the school did not help her daughter who at the time needed a lot of motivation and extra support. Though this help was offered, the provision was erratic. Heather’s mum said,

“I did not know the right numbers to call or who to get help from. I asked a few friends in the neighbourhood but they did not know the numbers to call and the school stopped sending the people.”

Since Heather did not really like the school, she did not want to go in. Heather stopped attending school at the beginning of year eight, though she struggled to read and write at the time. Her mum feels “the schools are not letting them “find their own way.” She was of the opinion that young people were being forced to do unnecessary things in school. Instead young people should be allowed to do the things they are able to do.

“Heather can do many things like what she does with Jenny at Ilkridge; you can see her folder in the corner. She can do all those things they do there.”

Heather does not have the education or life skills many of her classmates would have developed over the last ten years. She would be unable to pass her GCSEs next year. Heather’s mother hopes she can develop her interests in animal care into a career but she admits she does not know how or if this will happen. For her part Heather “hopes things work out” when she gets older.

Exclusion only compounded the vulnerability of the young people interviewed at Ilkridge.

Their potential capabilities were limited by inaccessibility to information, amenities and

support. Parents could not provide much help because they too lacked capabilities. Like Heather's mum the parents are either unaware of facilities or resources which could improve their children's access to learning opportunities and development. The families also are not equipped with the social and cultural material which engages the young people or motivates them to develop positively in public institutions. As a result Heather like many excluded youngsters in the neighbourhood, drifted into gangs.

Since numeracy and literacy were very poor the chances of returning to education or even training were limited. All the vulnerable young people interviewed had negative accounts of their contact with support services – behavioural support, Connexions, link workers and social services. Their claims were corroborated by their parents (similar conditions around the area of Ilkridge), and in a few cases the youth workers. This social disconnect created more emotional problems. The narrative represents the condition of many of the teenagers. Their poverty of economic, moral, social, ethical and psychosocial capabilities disrupted their chances of finding a pathway out of the vulnerable lifestyle. Relationships with peers and neighbours who were equally impoverished entrenched their stability in a negative and restricted lifeworld.

5.5.2 Funaley: Excluded young people

The Funaley Centre had special classes for pupils attending local independent schools. The schools catered for disaffected students who had been excluded from mainstream education, been bullied or been through difficult personal circumstances. The students themselves did not like mainstream education. Kareem explains:

"I do not think I can succeed out there, I mean in School, the teachers, they don't help you there."(Kareem)

Another student describes how other students kept bullying him:

“They would tease me and bully me every day, in the end I just won’t go in again, I like it here.” (John)

Yasmin, a youth worker, described another complex situation:

“He came to us – a self referral- but he did not even know how old he was, he wasn’t sure. It’s like he never really went to school. He could not say when he stopped going. He has been in the care system a long time.”

Most of clients at Funaley came from single parent families headed by mothers. The families were mostly mixed raced and working class families. They all used public transport because their families did not own cars. Family homes were furnished very modestly. A few had access to shared computing facilities. Their socioeconomic circumstances were indicative of the poverty and deprivation around Funaley. Though some of the clients did not live in the area they came from communities as deprived as Funaley. The mothers interviewed showed much more concern for their children’s exclusion. They expressed concern about a future without qualifications and desired to see their children live more affluent lives. The vulnerable young people seemed to have a high degree of respect for their mothers. At meetings where parents were present they did not interrupt or disrupt conversations. Funaley catered for young people in supported day and residential care as well. These clients had little or no contact with their families. They liked to appear “tough”, a youth worker reported, and boast of being capable of “living on my own” (young person) and “doing my own thing” (young person). In reality, however, there were practical difficulties with finances, good meals and relationships at the youth hostel and with family.

The vulnerable young people at Funaley had mixed views of school, teachers and education. They, like their peers in Ilkridge, complained that teachers were uncaring and strict. Some of them added that teachers were racist. Basic numeracy and literacy was poor but better than that of pupils at Ilkridge. Many young people had started or attempted GCSEs because parents had made them stay in school or attend referral units for as long as possible.

Gang membership was common for the young people at Funaley. The clients often spoke of their own gang affiliation, the pressure to arm themselves and eventually exclude themselves from school. Some spoke about self-exclusion with regret, implying that their personal circumstances meant they had very little chances of coping in a normal school environment. One gang member said,

“I was not doing well in school because I had problems with me mum, but they(staff in the school) did not listen, I can make my GCSE’s easy in school (if I had stayed).”

Another gang member reflects on the status afforded him in gangs: “I felt cool, and I was selling ‘err drugs and making money.” Rival gangs sometimes clashed at the Centre. During one observation session (FATH 7) a local gang threatened a client with a knife, while he was on his way to the Centre. The incident was reported to the police and the staff had to cancel the session to allow for time to counsel and calm the fear and anger of the shocked colleagues. Assaults of this nature are not uncommon in Funaley; Kiara and Jackie said they will begin to carry weapons for personal defence. However, weapons were not allowed at the Centre. The young people attending the Centre said they were mocked and verbally abused by gang members around the area constantly. In response to the gang activities the youth workers invited police officers and respected community members to sessions to talk about the effects of violence, drug peddling and usage and common juvenile offences. The parents

complained that young people joined gangs because: “There is nothing for their children to do in the area” (Funaley mother).

Recreational activities are lacking: the Funaley Centre is the only youth club available. Parents claimed this led to a higher rate of crime, truancy and school disruptions among young people than other parts of the city. The following narrative is about Dama, a young female with links to gangs and street crews in the Funaley area.

Narrative 5.2 Dama: Excluded in year nine

Dama comes from a Caribbean working class background. She grew up in the Funaley area living with her single mother and extended family. She was completing her third course at the Centre after her exclusion at the beginning of year ten. She says:

“I did not like school; because of the teachers ... they try and blame sxxt on me all the time.”

Growing up in a tough neighbourhood with mixed ethnicities she says she constantly had to assert herself to fit in. “Some of the teachers are racist man; they just hate me because I am black.” As such, Dama speaks a lot about having people “respect her”, she says,

“The youth workers have respect and that you get me; ... they don’t tell you what to do, they give you a chance and that.

Youth workers say Dama’s attitude this stems in many ways from an upbringing where informed decision-making was not encouraged.

“The parents create this atmosphere where the child never has to make decisions; they simply do what they want. She just does what she wants.”

Dama is very guarded about the information she is willing to share. She did not want to talk about her family or links with gangs in the area. She admits that some of the experiences in her past are painful but says she feels no shame for her actions.

Dama did not have any problems in junior school though her attitude led to a number of behavioural problems in secondary school. This behaviour has been classed as difficult and sometimes violent by school authorities. She blames the school: “the teachers are not respectful and have
When asked to explain she said,

“The teachers they are not nice to you, they do not help you. You know, they give you work and that and you say you can’t do it and they just don’t help you. Then they send you to detention.” They don’t treat you as individuals.”

She does not like the school environment and does not think PRUs are any better since they are still like “school.” She insists she is a good student who would have achieved her GCSEs if only the teachers did not “hate” her so much. Dama describes how teachers picked on her and “told her” to do things they would not make the rest of the class do.

“The teachers they shout at you and say ‘do your work and grrr’ and I think ‘who are you talking to like that?’; ‘don’t talk to me like that’ and I would just walk out, yeah you should talk to me nicely.”

Dama was excluded the second and final time after year nine. She was unwillingly to talk about the circumstances of her exclusion, which she describes as “being fair but unforgiving.” Dama admitted that she had to be punished by the law. “I was in probation for something else not from school, I am not saying what.” Dama does not believe her behaviour is irrational, as

she has to “stand up” for herself when she is “disrespected” even by a teacher. “I did not really like speaking then” she says. The youth workers think this is the reason why she often got into fights. She communicated with others by her actions and did not learn how to negotiate, because she did what the other gang members do. Another youth worker Ashley, speaks of how he advises Dama,

“This is what the young people do you know, they have their crew and all and I tell her you can still part of a community gang and so on and so forth and still survive in the real world. You can still have a sense of belonging whilst still running with your mates, I run with my lads all the time. You know what I mean and unfortunately, some of them didn’t set really good standards because they have been in prison for one crime or another – but you do not have to follow them when you know that something is going on and it is wrong – you do not have to do be in that.”

Dama admits that she may not be educated successfully in mainstream settings. She says she dislikes the rigidity and atmosphere of “college/school, whatever” though she wants to gain higher qualifications someday.

The exclusion issues in the Funaley area are not only linked to common juvenile problems at school or in the home but also intensified by the prevalence of gangs. Gang membership in the Funaley area limited the freedoms of the young people. Not all the vulnerable young people were actual gang members but the lifeworld permeated the environment and most people adapted or adjusted to it. The gangs could not provide the security and belonging people who joined them expected. In fact, involvement made individuals more vulnerable to attacks by other gangs and the possibility of trouble with the police and law enforcement authorities. It also translated into missed opportunities - low school attendance, no qualifications and skills and less interaction with the public. The poverty in this area is particularly stifling, resulting in

crammed living arrangements that often lead to strife. Young people therefore have to make choices about where to live when their families can no longer accommodate them.

Independent living requires a set of coping skills, support mechanisms and courage. These are capabilities the vulnerable young people have not developed.

5.5.3 Heathtop: Excluded young people

Heathtop is not particularly involved with excluded young people, other than the fact that they attend sessions at the Centre. There are no school time activities as such the excluded pupils are usually the first to turn up for after school drop-ins. The punctuality enables them an early start with the video games and activities. The excluded young people here come from more affluent backgrounds compared to those at Ilkridge and Funaley. They are aged between sixteen and nineteen and a few have requested that their attendance at the Centre make up for hours of community service on youth offending schemes. No reference is made to exclusion within the Centre other than liaising with police, youth offending teams and mentors on the team.

The clientele at Heathtop is diverse and spread in terms of people travelling from various locations around Riverton to attend sessions. The parents of the members of the Heathtop club were much more involved in the activities than any other organisation. Parents brought their children in and picked them up in their cars. Parents attended parties, awards and special occasions and some parents were also volunteers. Many of the young people went on holidays with their families but some of the working class families could not afford them. The members who were excluded were the most disruptive. They lived in or around Heathtop with mostly single mothers. The parents often were in employment. A few had long term limiting illnesses. Working class families in Heathtop were more affluent than the working class families in Ilkridge and Funaley. Family relationships were however strained by the exclusion,

lack of information, resources and support. Through their work colleagues and other contacts the families at Heathtop were better equipped to find support and information that could benefit their children. The excluded young people had better access to support services and could read and write better than their counterparts in the other areas. Still the excluded young people seemed to be able to have many hours of unsupervised time in the community and on the streets. The lack of recreational activities puts them at risk of getting involved in negative and unruly pastimes like petty theft and car smashing.

The disruptive behaviour this particular group of young people displayed at times within the Centre was again the main cause for their exclusion. The excluded clientele attend early to talk to the mentors and youth workers, or stay behind after the evening sessions; some of which lasted till nine o'clock in the evening. The discussions were often just opportunities to let out frustration or cling to these somewhat stable relationships, but often they brought up serious matters. They wanted advice – “Should I leave my mum’s house?” or “My girlfriend wants to have a baby?” or even discussions on self harm and suicide. They spent their time absorbed in normal teen interests such as football, music or keeping up with celebrity gossip. As one youth worker put it:

“The fact that they are here, in here with us is good, at least they are not out there smashing cars or shop lifting just for fun of it.”(Charles)

The major problem excluded young people face in Heathtop is related to social relationships. Dysfunctional families are central to this issue as their relations are characterised by instability, ambiguity and what appears to be general apathy. The young people have to work out themselves what to do with time, energy and emotional baggage that would have been expended at school. In addition to this boredom, common vices associated with degraded

neighbourhoods prevail in the area. For instance, gangs which incorporate burglary, defacement and anti social behaviour into their daily routine can either seduce vulnerable young people, or encourage them to engage in similar negative activities as a means of “hanging out or having a laugh”.

Summary Excluded young people

This section explored how exclusion, poverty and instability in families affected the lifestyles of vulnerable young people. These circumstances the narratives show actually diminish the capabilities of young people. The lifeworld of the participants is characterised by conflict, anger, disappointment and sometimes crime and violence as demonstrated in the cases above. Often family members are not able to provide support. On the other hand, institutional support systems have been construed as inadequate, though in some cases the professionals are misunderstood or misrepresented. The next section focuses on the vulnerabilities of young people in the care system.

5.6 Vulnerabilities: Looked After Children

In Riverton, 80% of children in State custody are in foster homes, the rest share 20 residential homes one of which one is a secure unit (Riverton LACES, 2006). Riverton’s services have seen a dramatic improvement in the last 5 years (Since 2002) with 58% of clients having up to date Personal Education plans (PEP) and above average percentages for health and well-being checks. Nevertheless, the council is struggling to meet government targets (SEU, 2003). More than 16% of children in care are placed in more than three provisions a year. Most looked after children (ONS, 2004) say that school or college is the most stable part of their lives. Young

people in care (DCFS, 2007a) also claim that leisure activities and home support for schoolwork are not readily available (Scottish Executive, 2004). Children in care fail to benefit from social, sex, and emotional education (Meltzer, 2002) because carers cannot teach these competencies or do not take responsibility for these aspects of well-being.

Most of the young people in the study were not able to speak about their family circumstances. One official from LACES explained:

“They are just children, really and when you think of what they have been through, it is sad. No one wants to be talking about such things.”

There were cases of sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect. In some cases young people were in foster care because their families were dysfunctional. “*My mum, she is ok; I just don’t get on with her*” (Tisha). Others were in care because their parents had divorced and it was not safe to be with either parent and/or their parents’ new partners. There are narratives below which elaborate on the vulnerabilities of young people from each of the three participating organisations.

5.6.1 Ilkridge: Looked After Children

Vulnerable young people at Green Heath Children’s home attended the Ilkridge Centre. This group had being in care for two or more years, most had contact with their families to varying extents, though these relationships seemed to be erratic. They lived in a good sized home with individual bedrooms. The relationships with staff and housemates were by and large cordial though there were occasional conflicts. The young people had access to basic necessities and even luxuries were available like gaming equipment and a shared computer. Staff were quite responsive to their needs; they provided domestic care and support in terms of visits to health professionals, contacts with schools and the like. Some of the young people

had emotional connections with the staff. Nevertheless, the young people struggled with the housing situation mainly because it was ‘unlike a real home’. They could not bring friends in without permission and CCTV and an intercom made the home a little unwelcoming. They guarded whatever aspects of their lives they had control over.

Travis, an experienced care worker argued that compared to dysfunctional homes:

“They are better off here, well better than where they have come from. Here they have Health plans and Educational plans, like what we spoke about before. So each person will go to the dentist and the doctor at the right time and they have us you know checking that all these things are done.”

Some of the young people had indeed escaped from abusive situations. Others have been involved in “violence, drugs or gang issues that kind of thing” (youth worker, Funaley); the LACES coordinator in Riverton accepted that most of the young people may have psychological and emotional problems due to the circumstances surrounding their time in care.

“ Some are scared, hopefully not for life, that is what the system is for and why we have these meetings and your research (smiles), but leaving home and living in a home is not the best, except when it is better than home.” (Youth Support Officer)

The young people did not like the way their lives were monitored and recorded. In all the homes, staff were required to keep records of activities, meals, friends who visited, times the young people came in and when they went out. During interviews in the staff office the Educational Coordinator pointed out numerous files where information was stored. Medical records, school reports, police records, support plans, etc; each tenant had four different plans and a synchronised care package which

helped the staff support them. The reporting was much more relaxed in foster homes and youth hostels where only regular team meetings with social workers, educational support staff and youth workers were mandatory.

During a visit to a home Andy expressed his frustration with reports to the researcher and Jenny the youth worker:

A: "What are you writing?"

R: Notes, I explained earlier, this is for my research...

A: Yeah, always writing, putting them in files and..."

J: interrupts- This is not going in any file here, it is for her research

R: I am not putting these in any file."

The young people like Andy were simply not pleased to have every single detail of their life monitored. They did however understand that the reports and notes, communication books and plans were necessary for legal and administrative purposes. One youth worker (Andrea) suggested all the files "may have felt like grassing" which is street language for gossip or talking behind someone's back.

The monitoring did not seem to have punitive effects on the young people's freedom, they were relatively free to leave the home as and when they chose often staying out till 6:00am. They were also able to make choices about what to do with spare time. However on the basis of their recorded activities, young people at the homes were assessed for different issues – how they were settling into the community, school or getting along with other house mates. Most unsettling was the threat of sudden moves. For instance one of the girls was moved for being "a negative influence" (home worker). They also had to worry about what will happen when they were no longer eligible to stay in the home.

The educational experience of young people in care is intertwined in many ways with their circumstances. Their life experiences had impacted upon their concentration and time at school. Though they had disciplinary issues only two of them had actually been excluded. Mostly they were out of school because of their difficult circumstances and varied residential placements. Some of them had been out of school for such long periods that alternative provision was the only suitable option. They opted to do qualifications in music, fashion and design. Andy, a male Caribbean resident, had produced his first album while in alternative provision. Only two residents attended school regularly, they were supported by staff and had access to taxi fares. The others did not like school and preferred not to attend but were enrolled on ASDANs at Ilkridge. They generally had poor literacy and numeracy skills.

“I can read and write a little, I learned with Jenny. Before, the school did not really teach me, well not a lot really.” (Phoebe)

The lack of academic competencies was mainly due to long spells of absence from school. The educational plans of the young people include non-academic educational experiences such as life skills seminars and workshops at weekends. These were put in place to enable them to gain practical knowledge around cooking, repairs and relationships usually Health and Safety guidelines made participation in daily routine tasks impossible for residents of State run homes. The home had a committed Education Coordinator who had little academic experience but encouraged the residents to get qualifications. The following narrative is the story of Tisha who lived in the Green Heath Home.

Narrative 5.3 Tisha: Lives in Children’s home

Tisha was at the Green Heath Children’s home at the beginning of this study. She is black British of Caribbean background. Tisha was unwillingly to discuss her family background with the researcher. She

discussed her unwillingness to share her story with the youth workers and educational coordinator before she agreed to attend the interviews. She had lived with her single mother in another part of town before coming into care due to misunderstanding with her family. Her mother lived with her partner and regular contact with extended family especially maternal grandparents was maintained. She had a functional relationship with her father but this was fairly minimal. While at the home, Tisha maintained regular contact with her mother and family and spent weekends at home.

R¹⁷: *“Do you enjoy going home?”*

T: *“It’s alright.”*

Pause

R: *Will you be happy to move back home?*

T: *“Oh no! Me and mum don’t get on. It is actually me and my mum’s boyfriend. Sometimes it’s alright, nah, I will rather stay here.”*

Tisha came across as a shy and reserved person. She was not loud or boisterous. However, the staff had a completely different perspective. Tisha had been transferred to a number of homes in the last year. The reason for her transfer was her “bad influence” on her fellow housemates. It was noted that when Tisha became a house member the young people skipped school more and engaged in all-night activities outside the home. Usually they would attend parties and not return home until the early hours of the morning. The Social workers wanted to move Tisha again.

The educational coordinator explained:

“It is not my decision, I have told her this. The team who also inspect us, they inspect our work and how we run the home, make these decisions based on what she has been doing.”

“She has to stick to the things agreed in her plans in her educational plan and care package.”

Tisha was not attending school, though there were different strategies to get her to get “her education” by the Team at the home. The LACES team at the Council level was also constantly monitoring her situation.

¹⁷ Researcher

T: "School was hard.

R: You could not achieve in school?

T: It was boring.

R: You did not go?

Tisha: shakes her head – no answer

T: Didn't like it at school, it reminds me of home and all that happens in that area (where her mum lives)".

Tisha had a particular interest in modelling and entertainment. She placed a lot of emphasis on her looks, diet and appearance. She said she was confident she would one day be a "star." This aspiration for stardom motivated her to work on various pet projects. She applied to modelling agencies; she tried to write lyrics for her own rap songs and she tried to keep up with the showbiz glamour. The educational coordinator at the home actually supported her:

"I think the modelling is good because it helps them with their feelings about themselves. When they see the pictures they can say they are important, beautiful and valuable. That is important for young people here. The love, they may not have being loved by family, but things can begin to change here."

Tisha also had financial worries. She asked for money from others fairly regularly, she spent a lot of her pocket money buying cigarettes and partying. She sometimes said she had to give her mother some money. This could not be independently confirmed. She therefore lacked the most basic things, such as money for the bus for example. There were concerns that she could sway her peers to "lend or give her money" as the staff were concerned that Tisha was very manipulative and could convince others to go do her bidding easily. As a result the staff always wanted to be sure Tisha was not borrowing money from others or motivating them to go to places or do things they did not want to.

Tisha used her ability to "talk others into things" quite well for example towards the end of the fieldwork Tisha was able to get herself and some other girls on a photo shoot in London through a

competition. She involved the staff at the care home and claimed she made a good impression at the photo shoot as well. She proudly displayed her model shots and hoped this was her big break. She seemed to be so distracted by the opportunity and promise that she did not make as much progress with her academic work as hoped.

Arrangements for a taxi service to get Tisha to school were made. The taxi was meant to be incentive for saving time on the bus and arriving in school on time. This did not have the desired effect. Perhaps because the school was in the same “area”; the area she did not like. Tisha also got into trouble for disobeying some rules. She was afforded a verbal warning after which she became sober and worried. She tried to attend school frequently and was even more quiet and reserved. The staff at the home and voluntary organisation admitted they felt empathy for her, as no one was sure if the accusations were actually true. In the end Tisha was moved yet again without much notice.

During the course of this research a number of contacts were made with young people between the ages of thirteen and sixteen years who had connived with their parents to orchestrate a family misunderstanding so as to obtain a place in supported living. The young people wanted to gain access to pocket money from the State and a room of their own - usually in hostels. However, the young people were sometimes offered Children’s home accommodation as a temporary measure. This growing problem had come to the attention of the authorities in Riverton and measures were being taken to address this. None of the young people would admit they had gone down such a route in an interview. It is not clear if this is true of Tisha’s situation.

A home that is constantly scrutinised and has rules that limit the ability of its residents to function is far from ideal. The young people may have gained freedom from abuse and neglect but are bound by administrative technicalities that limit their freedoms and functioning directly and indirectly. Some of them have also had irreversible psychological damage and

need the intervention of mental health services. Like other children in care they retain the risk of not gaining sufficient qualifications, adequate life skills to move into adult living and may interact with the wrong crowd.

5.6.2 Funaley: Looked After Children

Funaley had links with a number of residential units mainly because of the music courses offered at the Centre. Music training helped these clients channel their love for music into creative expression and improved opportunities for a career in entertainment. The courses at Funaley incorporated musical style and arrangement with theoretical aspects of marketing, plagiarism, organisation and management. As mentioned above Funaley offered an advanced post sixteen course for young people that had been excluded and were in supported living. Funaley also catered for a number of clients in foster care; they generally lived with working class White British families. All looked after children in foster care at Funaley were White British. The young people were appreciative of the safe environment, meals, pocket money and friendships they had whilst in care.

“I like the hostel, my family they don’t care about me.”

Pause

“They don’t care about me and I don’t care about them.” (Janine).

Another young male at the Funaley Centre explained:

“It’s like you are on your own, you can take care of yourself, no one bothering, you get me. Everyone in the group is my mate now; we hang out together after sessions here.”(Kareem)

The youth workers and care workers expressed mixed opinions about the young people's time in care. A youth worker spoke about how some go without food and need further assistance from the Centres

“Err whether it is the benefit system, money, housing whatever – we have young people come just to say they have not eaten for a week, so then we will go and find them food.

We just offer as much support as we can which is beneficial to that young people.”

The foster children were a lot happier to be in homes than in residential units. They had more freedom and could build better relationships with foster parents compared to a number of staff in a residential unit. They also had better choice and seemed relieved to be with parents who cared about them. Living in a home with no front door buzzer or visitors book was a “good experience.” The local community being very closely knit was aware of the foster children's status, this meant that parents, at least were more sympathetic to them. They also seemed to form good relationships with peers at the Centre. Two foster parents worked at a local school. One of them was a single woman (Tara) in her mid forties who had raised two children of her own and fourteen foster children. During the study she had two female and one male in her care. All three attended the youth club at Funaley and went to an independent school. They had specialist support integrating in school and with their foster mum's nursery assistant experience they settled relatively quickly. Most of the foster children were in homes where they were the only children at home, and their parents ‘fostered full time’.

Resources in the homes were at least above average. For example, Tara had a reasonably sized house with a small garden, where her son liked to camp out in the summer. The children had access to a computer and the Internet, though they still enjoyed using the computer with others at the Centre. The family did not own a car or take luxury holidays. This situation was more or less the same for young people in foster care around Funaley. Foster families in the

Funaley area were often lone parent and working class, but there were middle class parents as well.

The young people in foster care generally integrated well in school. Some of them had missed many years but were catching up. The independent school catered for many of them, especially those who had SEN statements. A few had their education disrupted by personal circumstances or because of change in foster families. The latter often had trouble getting back into mainstream education and attended alternative provision instead. In general they also had support from the Local Education Authority, particularly when their foster parents were well informed and educated. Ayesha's story is typical of the young people who lived in supported living accommodation. She and her colleagues had to live on a budget and had little or no family contact.

Narrative 5.4 Ayesha: Lives in hostel with support from social services

Ayesha is a seventeen year old who is in supported living accommodation. She is from a Caribbean background. Ayesha had completed her compulsory education with great difficulty.

“Before I came here I wasn't really doing anything, I just finished training, but I wasn't really doing anything. I was looking for a job but I wasn't working or doing anything. I needed some more qualifications.”

Ayesha was on the course because she was unsure of what she wanted to do after her GCSEs. She had not done too well and did not want to go on to college even if she could get in. She was referred to the Centre by her link worker from Connexions who wanted her to gain a better understanding of what career paths were available to her at present. She had been to two other organisations before attending Funaley, one of which was a popular national voluntary organisation. However, she complained that they did not put her needs first and made their sessions too much like a school environment focused on academic achievements alone.

“I didn’t want to go to college and I was looking for work, at least I can fill the time”

“The teachers in school, they were like – I can’t really say the word with this thing on.”

“They like just got on your case and that...”

She had ongoing problems at home and had to leave her family while she was still in school. She likes her independence and ability to control her own life. Ayesha is extremely reserved, quiet and diligent. She displays very little emotion. Ayesha explained she had difficulty with her family and would not even speak to them at present.

“I moved out of home when I was sixteen ... went into a hostel. Now I have my own place.”

“All the people in the group live on their own and I get on with them.”

She had three older siblings but did not maintain contact with them either. Ayesha simply said she thought she was the only person who could look after her own interests. It appeared as if she had felt betrayed or belittled by her family, as she constantly affirmed that she did not “trust others, even family, because they let you down”. She was not willing to talk about her family situation.

Ayesha was open about her problems with the gangs around Funaley.

“Had a couple of fights with gangs around this area”

“Couple of people in our group had fights with gangs in the area because we were not from the area. Some because they were of a different colour or something.”

She insists that she does not involve herself in gangs.

“I just walk past them, even when I came up for this (the interview) there were some of them (gangs) outside but I just want to complete this. I walk in and just ignore them.”

Ayesha was one of the most reliable members of her group. She did not appear to be consumed with discussions the other young people had about music, gadgets or relationships. She was always punctual

and inspired others by going by their hostels on her way to the Centre. Ayesha got on well with all the staff and her peers. She also showed genuine concern and empathy for others on the team. She would call them up if they did not come to sessions and was aware of their needs which she tried to meet as best as she could. Towards the end of the course however she acknowledged that some of the members of the group had let her down. She felt disappointed - “don’t talk to them no more, just do my own thing now, don’t need them.”

Ayesha came across as a very determined individual and though she did not have the guidance and support she needed to make good educational decisions in her early life she was trying to stay on track. The staff at Funaley said Ayesha’s was resilient, as she has overcome many obstacles. The youth workers were confident that Ayesha was capable of achieving her aim and moving on to advanced training. Her confidence and decision-making skills had greatly improved on the course and as such she was more likely to be able to integrate into college life. However, her financial needs were greater. She was supported by the Centre and the Youth Service. Funaley provided meals, food items, activities and advice for Post sixteen teens living in supported living. Ayesha hoped to become a graphic designer.

Foster homes and supported living arrangements constitute a more stable form of care for many young people. The interviewees seemed to be a lot happier with their social arrangements than those living in the residential home in Ilkridge. However, social and linguistic capabilities are still not properly developed in these circumstances. This is particularly true for the vulnerable young people in independent living. Though they have been removed from negative familial conditions, the resources and competencies to form good working relationships with friends and the local community are not readily provided. Unfortunately, the vulnerable young people find solace and comfort in peer-to-peer relationships. The disadvantage being that they are more apt to learn negative capabilities from each other within the space. Thus the chances of leaving the lifeworld are considerably slim.

5.6.3 Heathtop: Looked After Children

Heathtop did not cater for Looked after Children as such; however a strong relationship had developed with a few residential schools that catered specifically for young people with learning difficulties. Some of the children in these schools had similar circumstances with those who had been put in care, though this situation could not be generalised. A considerable number of the staff at Heathtop had been foster parents. Such circumstances they believed had enabled them to derive endearing attitudes towards disadvantaged young people. Some youth workers claimed they developed the skills, demeanour and competencies to work with vulnerable young people under such circumstances.

Summary: Looked After Children

Young people in care usually have had bad experiences and the circumstances surrounding their transitions to state funded services is often traumatic and truncated with a series of emotional and psychological wounds (Bebbington and Miles, 1989). Usually the disadvantages they have encountered are multiple and have long-term effects on their personal lives (Hayden, 2005) and their capacities to achieve functionality. Some of the issues encountered with reference to their development include:

1. Defragmented relationships: the concerns arising from this problem are lack of trust, lack of confidence, negative self image and poor understanding of how intimate social relations work and are sustained.
2. Stunted understanding of justice: depicted by the concepts of fairness, justice held by the participants.
3. Feelings of inadequacy and or neglect which manifest in odd variations. Some young people are ultimately dependent on others for long periods, never seemingly finding the courage to act independently. Others are cocooned in a

space were they claim independence but actually rely on dependence on friends, gangs or officials and agents in organisations.

In the interviews the young people expressed their distrust in people, mostly teachers, but also parents and officials. Some young people kept depicting teachers and police officers as people who perverted justice and a lot of the times they young people depended on staff at the Centres for money, advice or even food. A carer at a youth Centre described how these issues affect vulnerable young people in care:

B: "It is not really their fault, by the time I meet them they are 15, 16 or 15... And they have this feeling of entitlement, like everything should be done for them. And everything is done for them! I mean it's about this business of child poverty, the children may have food and clothes but they are extremely poor and they have nothing, they can't do anything by themselves. They have no friends and no family.

A: Poor skills

B: Yes, poor skills, no skills! And when they are sixteen we want to send them out into the world and they are scared. They can't survive and they know it. I believe the child is innocent, you can't really blame them, you never know what has been done to them. But then the children as they are facing leaving care, they kick off; they become pregnant, play the truant, get imprisoned. It is as if they do this so they can remain safe, cared for like they have always being."

The care system is definitely a positive step for those vulnerable young people who have had their childhood decapitated by abuse and neglect. The system however, has many disadvantages. It is difficult to replicate the love, affection, sense of belonging and social education that take place in a functional home. Corporate parenting is set up to work

effectively by monitoring, reviews, disciplinary procedures and accountability of paid staff. This structure has the potential to cause damage to a young person's awareness of the public world. Whereas reviews can monitor and access the immunisations record and dental checks of the young people, they cannot always capture the more psychosocial needs. Inevitably, young people leave care without basic competencies, without the support structure of families and social networks and sometimes without academic qualifications and career aspirations. The next section focuses on young people with learning difficulties.

5.7 Vulnerabilities: Young people with Learning Disabilities

Riverton has five residential Special Needs institutions and twenty-four non-residential schools. Data about the educational performance of Children with Special needs has only been collated since 2004. Pupils with special needs represent about 3% of the school population in England – two hundred and thirty six thousand seven hundred. Of these, one hundred and thirty nine thousand are in mainstream education (Riverton website, 2008). SEN statements are provided for students who have difficulty in learning and this could be any one of four categories. About 15% of the vulnerable young people in the participating organisations had learning disabilities. Most of them attended a mixed session at Heathtop. Some of the young people had very mild disabilities and were in mainstream education. Others had extreme cases of autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Downs syndrome, etc. They attended special schools or had specialist care and education. The services young people with a learning disability need are varied ranging from mobility and transport needs, safety from abuse and neglect, recognition, stimulation education and development to independence (Mansell, 1992). Service are provided by Social Services mainly and Supporting People; also specialist services are available for mental health needs. Other providers include Special Needs

Educational Services, Child Development Centers, Specialist Learning Difficulties Centres, Community Pediatric Services and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) etc.

“A learning disability is a *neurobiological disorder*; people with LD have brains that learn differently because of differences in brain structure and/or function” (Boyse, 2008). Some young people undoubtedly learn differently due to visual, hearing and physical handicaps; still yet mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or various environmental, cultural or economic disadvantages can negatively affect a person’s capability to learn. Though these constitute difficulties in learning they are not regarded as learning disability. Specific learning difficulties encountered in the study include:

- Spoken language—problems in listening and speaking (Speaking impairments, Aphraxia, stuttering, copying and repeating others)
- Reading—difficulties decoding or recognising words or understanding them (Dyslexia)
- Written language—problems with writing, spelling, organising ideas (Dysgrapia)
- Math—trouble doing arithmetic or understanding basic concepts (Dyscalculia)
- Reasoning—problems organising and putting together thoughts
- Memory—problems remembering facts and instructions
- Social behaviour—difficulties with social judgment, tolerating frustration and making friends (ADHD, Aspergers, Other Autistic tendencies)
- Physical coordination—problems with handwriting, manipulating small objects, running and jumping (Dyspraxia)
- Organisation—trouble with managing time and belongings, carrying out a plan (ADHD)

- Metacognition (thinking about thinking)—problems with knowing, using and monitoring the use of thinking and learning strategies, and learning from mistakes
- There are also various non specific learning difficulties which are more difficult to pinpoint.

(University of Michigan Health Systems, 2009)

Many of the young people with learning difficulties had multiple conditions and it is an intensive exercise for voluntary organisations to be involved in the care, education or support of young people with learning difficulties. This is due in part to the complexity of needs this clientele have and the amount of resources, staff and equipment needed to engage them. In the last ten years considerable funding has been made available for these groups of people in both public and private sectors. There is still some discrimination or lack of understanding about learning difficulties; most people do not interact with people who have learning difficulties. Parents of young people with learning difficulties are also apprehensive their children will be bullied or display aggressive, anti social or even violent behaviour. Yet many parents value the interaction the voluntary organisations provide for their children. The space provides the opportunity to learn from and with their peers outside of the “special” school environment.

Young people with learning difficulties according to the youth workers come to the Centre with various problems. Some of which are irresolvable and have no cure, others can be managed. A youth worker at Heathtop gave a general overview of some of the things they help young people with LD with:

- “Increasing their confidence, they have not done many things and some have been wrapped in cotton wool. Here we help them try new things.”

- “Learning automated skills that many of us take for granted, kicking a ball, talking to people, cooking etc, some of our guys have Aspergers and other LD that do not give them the chance to know how to do these things.” (LD sufferers may never really master some routine skills like riding a bike or shooting a hoop).
- “Helping them to complete tasks because it takes them longer and they need more motivation.”
- “Learning to organise things, get things out clear up afterwards, we don’t treat them special, well we do treat them special, but we do not say ‘you can’t do that just because they are LD’, you know they join us. So far it is safe.”
- “Learning to understand people, time and appointments that we take for granted. They learn with the others.”
- “Learning to follow simple instructions, respect boundaries and authority, we do that here and they can carry out instructions.”

The dialogue and interaction with the young people with learning difficulties is limited due in part to their conditions and the ethical agreements made with the Centres to engage with them only when staff are present. They also do not have much vocabulary to engage in long lengthy interviews, pictures and place mats were used; staff members also used sign language and makaton.

5.7.1 Ilkridge: Young people with Learning Difficulties

The social conditions and educational experiences of the young people in this group overlap with young people who have been excluded. Many of the young people in this category come from working class backgrounds, have parents with minimum education and do not have

access to luxurious gadgets. Though many of the vulnerable young people who used the Ilkridge Centre had behavioural difficulties, only a few of them had SEN statements. Hero's story is narrated below. He grew up in the Ilkridge area and was one of the young people with learning disabilities who benefited substantially from the Ilkridge organisation.

Narrative 5.6 Hero: Complex learning needs

Hero's mother provided much of the details of Hero's background and experience. She worked part time as a cleaner and spent the bulk of her time raising her five children. Hero's dad appeared to be a busy person, he worked long hours as a construction worker and sometimes worked as a lorry driver. The family owned a van which was used mainly by Hero's dad for work, but he ferried some members of the family to school or youth Centre when he was available. They could not fit into the van at once, so they took turns riding in the cab, most of the time they walked around the Ilkridge. Hero was often late for the activities at the Centre.

Hero was diagnosed in Year 5 (age 9) with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autism.

At the time his mother explains:

"They thought he had problems with his talking, they also said he wasn't developing properly and maybe was not hearing what the teachers said."

Though he struggled to cope in infant and junior school, the teachers' in his small school were extremely supportive. His mother expresses her appreciation of the mechanisms which supported Hero.

"The teachers there, they helped him. They spoke slowly. It was here in Ilkridge, they all knew him; they knew us and that helped him."

His minor problems exploded into major catastrophes in senior school, his mother said -“He just could not cope with the big school, strict culture and do this and do that.” It was then she realised Hero was lucky to attend a small local infant school. His mother insists that he was a “normal child”.

“... well he was a bit assertive and boisterous and some of his playmates were not comfortable with him.”

However the junior school was such one that tried to “cover” his mistakes and make him feel a sense of belonging. Though the teachers sensed something was ‘wrong’ with Hero. They never really labelled him. The school did its best to ‘help’ Hero. They helped him cope with his academic work in spite of his inability to interact, limited social skills and the array of other physical problems (speech, hearing ailments). Due to the size of the school Hero says he could “remember where everything was”, he was also able to handle the structure in class with the extra support the teachers lavished on him and fellow students did not make things unnecessarily difficult for Hero. “The teachers helped” he said, “I can’t really remember but it was cool.” The primary school did not have too many rules either.

“No rules about a particular side to stand when ascending/descending stairs, one teacher in class, just like that” Hero mother surmises.

Behavioural problems surfaced towards the end of junior school. Some fellow students had learnt that they could blame Hero for their mischief and get away with it.

“He always said he had to wait in line for something at school, when I asked for what he would say “because so and so did this” you know pulled his hair or took his book.”

He was getting increasingly frustrated, but did not discuss his fear with his parents. It also seemed that because Hero was having difficulty communicating and difficulties socialising a few of the students were becoming increasingly uncomfortable others were even “sometimes scared” of him. His mother goes on

“They would pick on him, call him names and take his things in order to agitate him and watch him get into trouble. Then he would (she gestures her hands up in the air) explode and get into more

trouble.” He would not tell us what was wrong he just became angry and would not let his younger brother in the room. Then I would get angry about that and there was a lot of ... tension around. All of us upset you know.”

Home was the safest place - his ‘space’ his mother says. He did not get along with his siblings. His mother said the psychologist reckoned he feels jealous of them especially when they get the attention he thinks he deserves. Hero refused to go to school after about two months in Year eight. His mother says he had little support and “things were bad.” The Local Education authority and Social Services made a joint decision to put Hero in alternative provision.

“It took a while they said to get things sorted and to get a place and then he started going” After a while he said he did not like it there anymore.”

The arrangement lasted two months as Hero found the unit over demanding. So Hero was offered home study and support, this never took place, as Hero was unwilling to cooperate with the teacher assigned.

“The teacher would come to the house and Hero did not like them.”

“He did not like teachers, he was nice and that, ok, but he did not like them he stayed in the room and would not come out.”

“The school took such a long time to assign other teachers every time, he still did not like them” according to Hero’s mother. Hero and his parents were looking to other arrangements. The LEA got involved again but Hero’s mother said she was not sure what was happening.

“They sent a behavior specialist and then all these people they said were experts and psychologists but they did not help”

“What did they do?”

“They just talked!”

“They came to your house?”

“Yes they came to the house or we had meetings, nothing helped”.

Hero made it clear to the LEA that he did not want teachers in his home. Hero was offered another PRU place but that had a long waiting list and it was too far to travel.

“It was up town you know the Centre, but it was rough and he did not like it at all, he did not even go there for lessons, just had a look and didn't go back”

Hero's younger brother also diagnosed with learning difficulties was equally being bullied at home and social services referred the entire family for counselling. Hero's mother had so many complaints about the way social services and the LEA handled the issue. She complained about the long waiting periods in between decisions and the erratic support offered by social services.

“They sent this one lady and she was jumbling papers and files and she said it was her first time, (she shakes her head); they just didn't know what they were doing, none of them did. And the people said I should call and report, but I did not know who to call. These people were from the social services.”

Hero his mother said was assigned several social workers, many of them were inexperienced or undergoing training and they never really stayed on the case long enough to support Hero practically. The family did not like the counselling experience though Hero's mother acknowledged the first two sessions were helpful in framing the issues and clearing the ground. The funding for counselling quickly ran out though.

“We all went to the place up by Elm, it didn't really help. They spoke to us about our language and attitude and stuff like that, that was ok, after a couple of sessions we just talked about stuff and we all didn't..., you know what was the point? Then they said the funding was finished.”

Hero's mother felt the education system let her son down. She was adamant that she would do all she can to help him get as much help as possible so he could get better education in a school or institution where he could learn.

Very complex issues led to Hero's self-exclusion; sadly such cases are not isolated. Literature suggests that there are no valid theoretical or empirical grounds for differentiating between conduct disorders and other behavioural and emotional disorders and that there are no reliable or socially validated instruments for making such a distinction. (Munn, et al, 2000). Hero lacked internal competencies and his family's inability to provide him with the support and networks he needed made his condition worse.

5.7.2 Funaley: Young people with Learning Difficulties

Funaley catered for a number of people with behavioural difficulties and a few complex needs. Nevertheless, only two vulnerable young people had SEN statements at the Centre at the time of this study. Neither could be interviewed extensively as they did not give consent. Their parents described conditions similar to the ones in the previous section. Damian and Ella liked music and attended one-to-one sessions at Funaley. Ella was accompanied by her father; he sat in during the classes to provide support. Damian had support from social care services as well as his family. The young people had better access to modern facilities including personal computers and music equipment. Their parents were less critical of the support they received from Social Services and the Local Education Authority, as they seemed to be in a better position to appreciate the services provided. Still the young people had limited opportunities to develop their life skills mainly because they did not have strong social connections.

5.7.3 Heathtop: Young People with Learning Difficulties

Heathtop was well known for its activities with vulnerable young people with learning difficulties. As part of its projects to implement the government's white paper *Every Child Matters*, it ran specific sessions and projects for the group. Heathtop catered for all kinds of learning difficulties and ran specialist training to help staff engage better with the vulnerable

young people with the conditions. Some of the vulnerable young people needed to have their carers with them at all times. The carers participated in the activities provided and supported the vulnerable young people engage with staff and colleagues. A few residential schools participated on a weekly basis with Heathtop staff being supported by the school's special needs staff and vice versa. Heathtop had one unique session that was run for both vulnerable young people with learning difficulties and young people in mainstream.

About 70% of vulnerable young people who came to the Centre were from white British middle class backgrounds. They came to Heathtop from all over the city mainly because "it was the only Centre that provided for children with special needs." The children were dropped off at the Centre by their parents or carers. The families were mainly two-parent families who owned one or more cars. The parents worked in professional jobs as nurses, teachers, administrators etc. Many of the vulnerable young people had access to their own personal computers and luxurious toys including games and other software. Some of them brought their accessories along to the Centre to share with others. They lived in modest houses with access to amenities and they all had their own bedrooms and sometimes specially adapted amenities like sensory rooms or specialist educational equipment and toys. Holidays were common among this group; during the summer many of the vulnerable young people with learning difficulties took foreign trips, which they talked about. Some of them also had short weekend breaks to Butlins or resort parks. Two female members with learning difficulties had female siblings in mainstream that regularly attended sessions with them.

There were a few vulnerable young people with learning difficulties who came from the local area and were from working class families. Two of them had parents who also had mild learning difficulties. Nevertheless, in general they had the support and affirmation of their families. They did not have as much equipment as the more affluent ones and were not always properly dressed. They lived in a more deprived area, though their families owned vans. They

did not have luxurious toys or go on holidays. All the vulnerable young people attended Special schools and had personalised education plans. At least five of them were working on ASDAN awards at the time of this study with support from Heathtop staff and volunteers. Jackson's story represents the narratives of many of the young people with learning difficulties attending residential schools and receiving support from their middle class families.

Narrative 5.6 Jackson: Severe learning difficulties

Jackson is of Caribbean background and he attends a residential school in Riverton. His mother is a professional with a strong personality. Jackson's middle class status enables him access to a range of opportunities and equipment. His family own a car and live in an affluent part of Riverton. Jackson goes on holidays with his family and is always well kept, properly dressed and clean. Jackson is known to respond better to discipline and instruction from a deep male voice though it is unclear why this is the case. Jackson has complex needs. He is autistic, has been diagnosed with ADHD, speech and hearing difficulties and Asperger's syndrome. His vocabulary consists of only a few words.

Jackson's family is supportive of his needs and are willing to trust him to take responsibility for his most basic needs. His mother says she will like "him to learn all he can." His mother's influence and discipline is evident as Jackson responds to instruction when he is cooking, baking or making drinks. He is one of the few people with severe learning difficulties who can use the kitchen with minimal support at Heathtop. Jackson would wash his hands without been told and tidy his environment after activities. Jackson displays a higher degree of discipline than young people with similar difficulties. He is not usually aggressive or violent but his frustration is evident when trying to communicate his needs. He points and squeals rigorously, sometimes he would rock.

He was introduced to the Centre via a school project run by his special needs residential school and the voluntary organisation. His mother brings him to the club during the holiday periods as well where he is able to join in the positive activities for young people along with all other young people. Jackson's speech is limited but his cognitive ability is moderate. He can spell and write his name and loves arts and crafts. Jackson also loves to cook and bake. He is one of the few young people with disabilities on the ASDAN course. The staff at Heathtop introduced him to new and varied activities as a means of

exploring his likes and strengths. Jackson's social skills are also limited; he does not trust other people and is easily frustrated. People are sometimes apprehensive when they are around him because it is difficult to understand him and he may throw things. He constantly needs supervision because "most people may be uncomfortable around him and he may react in an unpleasant way."

Though Jackson is a creative person, his teachers say he needs the right environment to be able to explore his talents. Jackson is often left on his own and unable to participate in everyday activities. He says it is "not nice" when he is on his own and he likes to be with other people. The isolation he is subjected to is as a result of his disabilities. Jackson likes learning and going out for day trips but he needs supervision, understanding people and extra support to be able to participate in normal everyday activities that people his age take for granted.

Summary: young people with learning difficulties

People with learning difficulties face many obstacles. They are unable to live independent lives because they do not have the capacity to develop skills for total independent living. Those who provide care and affection may also stifle what little opportunities of independence they explore by overprotecting them. Capability development involves entrusting individuals with tools and knowledge and providing opportunities for them to test their skills and develop them. The organisations gave young people these young people of opportunities. The space to interact supports both the young people with disabilities and those without. They learn about each other and their different lifestyles. The joint participation and learning environment enhances well-being and psychosocial competencies.

SECTION III LAYERS OF VULNERABILITY

This section briefly contextualises the data that has been presented above. Part IV presents a more analytical look at the layers of vulnerability and the lifeworld which the young vulnerable people live in.

The data depicts two interrelated layers of vulnerability. The first is the physical; circumstances that mean young people could lack basic amenities, proficiencies and opportunities. It could be absence of physical traits, material goods or socio-political aptitudes which translates into the things they own, places they can afford to visit for leisure and recreation and information and knowledge they possess etc. The second layer of vulnerability is the psychosocial layer – the young people lack the nurturing of loving and caring family environment and rich community ties (Leffert, et al, 1998). Strong families or significant adults can provide guidance, engage young minds in active development or even simple “having a laugh” activities which keep the young people occupied and feeling they belong.

These vulnerabilities in essence restrict the things the young people are able to “be” and “do.” Without basic capabilities vulnerable young people turn to people or structures that provide immediate emotive gratification. Gang membership is appealing because it portrays a lifeworld of value, confidence and esteem. The allure is a mirage hidden above a network of dependency, intimidation and violence. In reality the lifeworld feeds the fear and seclusion patterns formed by the vulnerability. The compulsion to remain within the lifeworld in spite of the destitution, hopelessness and risks involved is justified by the “gains” of belonging, not being “controlled by authority”, a false sense of pride and respect and sometimes illegal profits when burglary, theft or drug peddling is involved.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter describes the way vulnerable young people live. The lifestyles are characterised by multiple disadvantages which affect home, family, academic and social life. The conditions and circumstances that create vulnerability and social exclusion experienced beleaguer the youngsters in a multidimensional fashion. Psychologically, emotionally and socially they feel estranged from the public world even though they physically live within it. Vulnerable young people react to this in various ways but because they have not developed capabilities for living in the public world, they are often trapped in their lifeworlds. The lifestyles they lead in the vulnerable lifeworld keeps them further isolated from the public world. Voluntary organisations help vulnerable young people to find links and avenues to engage in public activities and with other people in the public world. The organisations act as learning communities where young people develop the capabilities to live successfully in the public world. The next chapter takes a closer look at these organisations.

CHAPTER 6.0 – THE VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the voluntary organisations involved in the study. Following from chapter five, it depicts their Riverton context, their historical achievements and objectives, and includes details of how youth workers perceive the vulnerability of the young people. The staff describes the purposes, activities and ethos of their organisations in the context of helping young people out of vulnerability by developing capabilities. Narratives from staff, young people, parents and data from the participatory observations are presented. There are narratives by youth workers which show their motivation for working with the vulnerable young people and their operational strategies. Secondary parameters such as funding, management, etc are only referred to where necessary. The first section introduces the voluntary organisations in the context of Riverton. Each organisation is then examined, presenting data on its staff, facilities and activities.

Most voluntary organisations in the United Kingdom are regulated by the Charities Commission and rely heavily on public funding. Consequently, although such establishments are constitutionally autonomous, their independence is restricted by varying degrees of financial dependencies, funding needs and donor priorities.

Organisations are obliged to show evidence that their outcomes are beneficial to the donor-specific target group and good value for money. Stable voluntary organisations have developed balanced relationships with donors who have similar aims and interests; others are cajoled into donor-favoured projects. Voluntary organisations that concentrate on supporting a targeted clientele and have strong community based links

and connections are more capable of pursuing their fundamental objectives successfully (NYA, 2004). The next section introduces the organisations involved in this study.

6.2 Voluntary organisations in Riverton

Funded projects are available to vulnerable young people in many areas in Riverton. In line with Government's New Start objectives (DCSF¹⁸, 2009b) six categories are targeted.

Young people:

- from minority ethnic communities
- with special needs (including those at risk of exclusion from education or training)
- with a history of substance abuse
- who are homeless
- in care / leaving care
- with a history of reoffending

Though most of the support mechanisms are statutory, voluntary organisations have become increasingly involved with such groups. The Government and local youth services are encouraging third way participation because voluntary organisations have good success rates (OFSTED, 2007). The benefits include (NYA, 2006a; 2007) links to local community action, long-term mentoring and voluntary participation. The NEET category – young people Not in Education, Employment or Training has also generated an increase in the number of independent organisations offering alternative education and support for disaffected young people. Increasingly, efforts have focused on the

¹⁸ Department for Children, Schools and Families: **UK** government department with responsibility for children's services, families, schools, 14-19 education, and the Respect Taskforce.

services available to young people who need extra support with reference to education, inclusion and care. This study focuses on voluntary organisations involved in three categories – young people with learning difficulties, those who have been excluded and children in care.

The three voluntary organisations involved in the study were operating in Ilkridge in the south of Riverton, Funaley in the inner city and Heathtop in the East. Ilkridge is a student-populated area; most of the young people in the area come from poor families. The voluntary organisation focused on supporting excluded young people and those in the local children's home. Funaley is a socially deprived neighbourhood with a history of gang violence. The organisation's clientele are mixed, but it focuses on disadvantaged youth, providing alternative facilities and after-school sessions. The third organisation in Heathtop focuses on after school sessions for young people. Particular emphasis is placed on inclusion for young people with learning disabilities. Heathtop is an affluent suburb, but the young people who attend come mainly from poor neighbouring wards and middle class families around Riverton. These organisations are described below starting with Ilkridge.

6.3 Voluntary Organisation: Ilkridge

A female youth worker (Jenny) with many years of teaching experience in and around inner city Riverton established the Centre at Ilkridge. Having been involved in youth related activities around Ilkridge, Jenny left her job to pursue her passion of helping disadvantaged children. Ilkridge had strong links with other smaller organisations in the area and a few more established voluntary organisations in Riverton, London and the

North West of England. It supported young people in the Green Heath Children’s home, one junior school and two senior schools and ran a well-established local youth club. The work in the schools focused on supporting young people at risk of exclusion. At the Centre, young people could gain qualifications, play and learn with others. The club is involved in community based projects and competitions that rewarded young people for talent and personal accomplishment

6.3.1 Ilkridge staff

Ilkridge is managed and run by its founder and relied on the assistance of other youth workers affiliated to the project and local community groups and Churches. There were about ten youth workers involved with the project. Most of them were trained teachers and mentors from varying backgrounds.

Table 6.1 Ilkridge Staff

	Total	Gender Male	Gender Female	Age Range	Ethnicity	Interview Sample
Full Time	1	0	1	30 - 35	White British	1
Volunteers	8	3	5	19 - 60	White British 1 Black Caribbean	2
Managerial role	1		1		White British	1
Degree Qualifications		3	5			
Other Qualifications			1			
Access to youth work via teaching			2			
Access to youth work on the job training		3	4			
Experience in youth work < 3yrs		3	5			
Experience in youth work > 3yrs			1			

The following narrative is of Jenny a youth worker and the founder of the Ilkridge Centre. She discusses her role and the vulnerability of the young people she works with.

Narrative 6.1 – Jenny: Teacher turned youth worker

Jenny became interested in youth work through her experience as a teacher in inner city schools. She engaged with vulnerable young people who were not achieving and often got excluded. She left her job so she could focus on supporting such people. Jenny explained that young people who are not supported by their families physically or emotionally are more likely to have academic problems:-

“They are disadvantaged in that authority, social skills and cause - effect realities have not being introduced at home. They are surprised when they are told to obey instructions; they are used to doing as they please.”

The young people seem to be ill-prepared for life in mainstream education. They are not prepared to accept the authority of teachers, the rigour of academic work – no matter how basic - and the discipline and structure of school life or any kind of life that did not involve just ‘hanging around’. After youth work training and a specialised course in mentoring, Jenny invited young people in the locality to her youth club activities. Young people on the streets that were not attending school were particularly sought and encouraged to attend. As the organisation grew, referrals were taken from other institutions.

The Centre delivers ASDAN¹⁹ courses via the **Chrysalis Club 2000** “U Choose”²⁰ programme. “U choose” was developed by another youth worker in the Riverton area with the support of the National Children’s Bureau and is approved both nationally and internationally for delivering basic personal and social skills in literacy writing, numeracy, teamwork and Information technology etc for children who need extra support in a personalised format.

¹⁹ Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network

²⁰ U choose is designed as a flexible revision of the traditional ASDAN courses to permit interagency

Good youth workers in Jenny's view need to be able to connect to their clients. She explains:

"Many of these young people do not trust or respect adults. Some of them have good reasons for doing so. They have never had to learn to respect others; they have few boundaries or no boundaries at home. Some of them are the parents in their homes and their parents are forced to respect their boundaries."

... Some of them have been let down by the system, the education system. They did not get the support they needed and when they did not achieve they were made to believe the "failure" (because that is how they feel) is their fault."

"Exclusion as an event", according to Jenny, "communicates a clear message of failure to young people." The significance of this she thinks the young people absorb very quickly even though they do not communicate this clearly. However, their behaviour betrays their feelings of rejection and frustration.

"Young people who are not achieving at school or at anything could be motivated (reprogrammed) to learn in a non-threatening environment where education is fun and relevant."

At the Centre the young people did not have to deal with the shame of acknowledging their inadequacies or the "disrespect" and judgement of teachers irritated by their lack of capabilities.

She also notes: –

"Children are quick to learn bad behaviour and because disengaged pupils can be powerful bullies they usually are able to learn without disrupting others in a personalised environment."

As the coordinator of the Centre, Jenny has a sturdy relationship with the parents of the young people. Jenny's unique understanding of family situations and conditions informed the work at Ilkridge to a large degree. She personally took the young people home or picked them up on

special trips or occasions. She liaised with the parents on disciplinary matters and sometimes she advised on academic options for the future. It is Jenny's personal opinion that sometimes parents are unwilling to empower the young people. This may not always be obvious to the parents involved, as they have become used to the conditions, attention, resources and excuses of living with young people excluded from mainstream education.

J: "Some of the parents do not have the resources to help the young people. Some of them just don't know what to do and ... well they may want to do something, but as long as things are ok now, they are fine. Many families have a lot of things they are sorting out and when they have one, two, three or more children getting excluded they get bogged down. Things just roll by as they are and things just continue that way as you have seen with the young people in the area.

R: "The parents do not care?"

J: "No, I think they do care, as much as they can. They just can't do a lot. Some of them can, see Tom and Frank, their parents helped them. Frank's mum she was a teacher and she supported him through all the twist and turns and made sure he had an education. Not all the parents have the resources she had."

Jenny devotes her time and energy to these vulnerable young people because she believes they need the support to be able to "catch up" on skills they need for surviving in the real world.

6.3.2 Ilkridge facilities

Ilkridge is housed in a small building consisting of three rooms, a hall, kitchen, three toilets and a garden. The facilities belong to a local Church but are leased by Ilkridge during the week. The Ilkridge site housed the youth clubs and drop-ins. Combined activities consisted of outdoor games in the local parks and the use of a community hall. ASDAN one-on-one sessions were held in the Centre's rooms. Cooking activities took

place in the Centre's kitchen. Sometimes, sessions are held at the Green Heath children's home for the tenants who state such preference. Green Heath children's home has an education room and the Green Heath staff support the young people and Ilkridge staff when sessions take place there.

6.3.3 Ilkridge activities

Ilkridge ran two kinds of sessions – consisting of drop-in sessions after school for male only and female only members. There was a joint activity evening once a week.

Secondly, personal one-to-one ASDAN related sessions for young people who wanted to gain qualifications were organised. The ASDAN sessions are run mainly for young people excluded from mainstream education, however, young people at risk of exclusion and in some cases young people who wanted to gain extra qualifications were equally involved.

The after school drop-in sessions consisted of games with educational themes. Usually a specific educational learning programme is organised using games and challenges that would motivate the young people to learn without necessarily relating the exercise to academic learning. The objective is to make the sessions as inviting as possible to the young people and eliminate academic stereo typical activities like writing long essays and non-interactive teaching. Instead, the youth workers joined in the sessions as participants and learners; they co-facilitated the sessions with the young people and only took on the role of coordinator in areas requiring disciplinary action. These sessions were interactive and involving. Similar sessions were organised in schools. The youth workers also planned residential trips to youth camps and adventure arenas over a weekend or a maximum of five days. Residentials were organised for male and female groups separately and were popular. The activities were free except for day trips and

Residential. However, the youth workers organise sponsored events in the community to raise money for activities which most of the clients cannot afford. The young people also participate in city wide competitions and are nominated for awards of excellence for overcoming their difficulties and developing capabilities for independent living and personal effectiveness.

The one-on-one sessions were tailored specifically to suit the individuals involved. A youth worker had an interview with the client to determine the kind of qualifications they would like to achieve. The youth worker then set the style and sequence for each challenge based on the particular interests and circumstances of the young person. The young person is responsible for choosing the challenge; the youth worker had to ascertain that the chosen task met “U choose” and ASDAN criteria. This meant that self-motivated individuals completed their tasks in relatively shorter periods than young people who relied on the cajoling of their youth worker. These sessions are designed to improve numeracy, literacy, team work, ICT and social skills but also delve into basic development of confidence, self esteem, emotional literacy and well-being. The Education Coordinator at the Green Heath Children’s home is keen to keep the Ilkridge relationship focused on mentoring and qualifications for the vulnerable young people. Ten young people at the home were involved in educational activities at Ilkridge at various times.

The “U Choose” package is used because it permits flexibility, choice and personalized short courses, which are rewarded with certificates that could form part of an ASDAN award. This is particularly helpful for young people in care, some of whom are moved at short notice. They can gain a number of qualifications relatively quickly, and continue their ASDAN award in another organisation if they are moved. This promotes motivation

and continuity, the young people “feel” they are making progress. A series of three certificates equate to two ASDAN credits, which equate to half a GCSE or higher depending on the level and module taken.

Ilkridge closed towards the end of this study. Jenny moved to a larger organisation in the North where she now manages six alternative education institutions across the country. The young people involved in the study have also moved to other areas of the city. The next organisation is called Funaley.

6.4 Voluntary Organisation: Funaley

The Funaley Development Trust consists of two aspects of youth work. First after school youth club which caters for young people’s social and educational development outside the school setting. It also has a Centre that organises academic activities leading towards Open College Network Certificates (OCN) and together they are known as the Funaley Project. Funaley Development Trust was established as part of the local community regeneration drive in the latter half of the last century. It is therefore extremely committed to the local community. It also runs a foundation school, farm, nursery and community services for young children, women and disengaged adults. Parents in the community view the project as community programme for the local children.

A youth worker with drama and music expertise originally developed the project eight years ago. Although the youth club had been running before that time the project success enabled expansion. The music and arts elements remain strong components of the programme as the initial staff member inducted all the current youth workers and

worked with them before leaving the post. A manager is responsible for development and training. The team also works closely with a Connexions officer onsite and the independent school staff. The Centre is privileged to have an OCN trained assessor who specialises in developing OCN courses for the team that can be delivered to suit the needs of the clientele.

6.4.1 Funaley staff

Funaley has four fulltime workers but is also staffed by youth workers from the other arms of the Development Trust. The workers from the Development Trust are employed by the Trust and as such are able to work at the project on a part time basis during school holidays and after school. Funaley also attracts many volunteers from within the local community and around Riverton. Some of the volunteers are students on placement from youth work courses. As a member of the International Voluntary Organisation Service a few international exchange volunteers have worked at the Centre. Two of such volunteers spent four months at the Centre during the course of this study. The following narrative depicts the experience of the lead youth worker – Sara.

Table 6.2 Funaley Staff

	Total	Gender Male	Gender Female	Age	Ethnicity	Interview Sample
Full Time	4	2	2	22 - 45	2 White British 1 Black Caribbean 1 Pakistani British	4
Volunteers	9	4	5	19 - 50	2 Overseas 4 White British 3 Black Caribbean	
Managerial role	3	2	1		White British	1
Degree Qualifications		2	2			
Other Qualifications		6	6			
Access to youth work via teaching		2	1			
Access to youth work on the job training		6	7			
Experience in youth work < 3yrs		2	4			
Experience in youth work > 3yrs		6	4			

Narrative 6.2: Sara: Trained as a youth and community worker

Sara started thinking of a role in youth work when she was a girl guide. She became more eager as she grew older and witnessed young people’s dilemmas. She holds a Bachelors degree in youth and community work; during the training she had placements in big inner city youth clubs in London. She worked in a youth offending team and with young people with challenging behaviour before employment at Funaley. Sara says:

“I love my job, other than the fact that the profession does not actually pay well (laughs) no one does this because they want to be rich. Also funding for the activities is limited because voluntary organisations are poorly funded.”

Sara is motivated by the possibility of transformation and a better lifestyle for young people in need.

“It is not like you are going to change the world and I always used to say if I can help just one young person and it does change their life and it does really help them and it does put them on the right path then surely a year’s worth of work with one young person is worth it if you put them back in the running.”

Sara spoke about how life is different for young people today, particularly the one is Funaley.

“The media always saying young people are rude, aggressive, lack respects and so on. Yes the young people are a rather aggressive and disrespectful but all that is really a cloak for their lack of knowledge and fear.”

“I do not think the education system caters for the majority of YP. I think they are obviously a handful of YP who do not want to do education but I think if it caters for... I think a lot of them (YP) feel that they can’t do it and that is what they see as the barrier. It is easier to say ‘I do not want to do’, than to say I struggle, rather than say ‘I can’t do it’ is easier you know just to (shrug) you know. But on the whole I think YP are energetic, they are enthusiastic, they have got so much to say and really I think you know that is what should be used more. I mean when we have got the older – slightly older ones out at the front and if anybody asks them ‘why do you hang around on the streets?’ – they would say ‘because we are bored’ – Ah right!”

The young people Sara says have “the most shocking” behaviour. They come to the Centres with the wrong values. Sara noted that

“Nothing really absolutely prepares you for working on the front line with people on the shop floor.” It is a challenge especially when “trying to deliver sessions to accommodate that behaviour.”

Sara thinks the young people need informal learning to help them stay positive, focussed and gain the capabilities to engage in the world.

“Yeah because it is a second option you know. When I did my study for Uni – it said that the education systems only caters for 50% of all YP so you know what happens to the other 50% you know. So it is got to be a second option – out there. And not everybody wants to go to

college not everybody wants to do internships, so it is good that there is an alternative provision like this one so people can attend where it is not as stressful maybe... sort of help them into things, ease them into things.”

Sara’s experience managing the Centre exposes her to communication with the young people’s parents. Some of the parents come to the Centre once in a while but contact is not as close compared to youth worker-parent relationships at Ilkridge or Heathtop.

“Some young people are surprised to hear that their parents call to make enquiries about their welfare. The parents call because they are concerned and anxious about having the young people out on their own, not knowing that their children try to act big and independent here.”

The parents are generally more interested in their wards than the young people think. Youth workers can help develop understanding and communication between parents and children, especially where the parties do not have the skills to communicate effectively.

The young people that come to the Centre have many difficulties. The Centre’s philosophy is to support the young people so they can leave with some skills and qualifications.

“... the area that we are in is classed as being of low-income families, single parent families, high unemployment rate and so forth – that sort of thing – and so to have something like this close to where they live... a lot of people do not like to leave the area, they do not like to go too far out of what they know.”

“We have many OCN qualifications that we develop ourselves to suit the individuals, so everyone who completes the course has a qualification. We organise ... lots of visits and trips to places of learning, err... there is sports again which helps them build up their confidence. Within music if they have not got a chance to sing or perform they get the chance to do that. The work that they produce, that goes towards a good feeling on their part you know.”

Sara acknowledges that working with vulnerable young people is difficult. Her clients do not have the “same types of opportunities that privileged young people have”, she wants to make a difference so all the young people she engages with can have a chance to gain confidence and learn skills.

6.4.2 Funaley facilities

Funaley has access to almost all the facilities of the Funaley Development Trust. Rooms, halls, a kitchen, playground and basketball courts in the school, and facilities in the schoolyard and community Centre are also accessible. However, the project has its own youth Centre, which consists of a large hall and two smaller rooms. These are furnished with pool tables, table tennis board, computers with internet, comfortable chairs, access to a small snack shop and a crafts and games store. The project also stocks a variety of games and educational materials as well as a music studio with recording facilities, speakers, computer software and mixing equipment. The local park and football grounds are also accessible. The alternative provision unit is housed in the Development Trust complex. There are two large sized classrooms equipped with computers which have internet connection, a music-recording studio and corresponding accessories, games, tables and comfortable chairs and craft material. The classrooms unlike school type arrangements are set in varying conference style and lounge style arrangements for more leisurely learning and facilitation. They have access to a large indoor sports hall and youth workers use two staff rooms. Other rooms and facilities within the Development Trust are accessible to the project on request. These include conference and training rooms that are used regularly for activities and workshops.

6.4.3 Funaley activities

The Centre has a youth club and drop-in sessions after school. The drop-in sessions are free and take place immediately after school. There are music drop-ins and sports drop-ins with youth workers serving as facilitators and mentors. The youth club starts in the evening; fifty pence tokens are required for admission. Games and competitions are the common features of the youth club. Young people also attend so they can use the music facilities and computers. Special sessions involve cooking, arts and crafts and OCN based challenges. The club sessions take place in two groups: eleven – sixteen year olds attend from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., afterwards sixteen – nineteen year olds are allowed in for about an hour. This arrangement was actually agreed during the course of this study to stem rival gang faction confrontations and bullying. Police patrol the area regularly, though the local community police have expressed confidence in the manner in which Funaley has dealt with youth related gang issues onsite. During holidays Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) sessions run (except for Christmas and Easter), the 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. sessions are free, though the Development Trust runs a fee paying youth club alongside these sessions. This gesture is aimed at the many deprived families in the area who rely on the youth Centre for activities for the young people. The activities include day trips for bowling, climbing and paint balling. They also visit museums, organise day trips to theme parks and weekend trips.

The youth club is a very important part of daily life for young people around Funaley. The games on offer are a big crowd puller. Young people have the chance to play in a number of pool competitions, football, rounders etc. The vulnerable young people are drawn in because they want to be a part of the competitions and play the area's known "top shots." Funaley has a very active youth worker's team who are very good at games and some of them are known locally as "unbeatable" champions. Another crowd puller

is the music activities because young people can record their own music. Funaley has a mini studio where so many young people do their recordings and use the computers to arrange and record their music as well as upload clips on “YouTube” the video sharing website. The Centre has a professional arts teacher who specialises in music and graphic design and young people come to the Centre to consult with him on a regular basis. These activities in effect draw young people and vulnerable young people who have been excluded to Funaley and some of them begin to attend the short courses and then move on to further education or training.

Funaley runs a series of qualifications – mainly National Open College Network qualifications (NOCN). The sessions are usually term-long equivalent of about twelve weeks and culminate in OCN Certificates awarded. An OCN is equivalent to half a GCSE at entry level and can be equivalent to A levels at Level three. Funaley is endorsed as a known innovative site where OCN are developed to suit the needs of the young people. The Open College Council has approved many of these because Funaley has them organised by an approved assessor who ensures the adapted courses fulfill OCN requirements. Some of these courses have now been used elsewhere. Funaley runs these sessions for excluded young people, young people in transition or Not in Education, Training or Employment (NEET), young people with learning and behavioural difficulties who have been referred to the Centre and groups of young people from the local schools who come in to register for OCN’s as part of their school work. Young people in the local schools are not necessarily resident in the area. Referrals also come from all across the city. Funaley deals with the most ethnically diverse group of students in the study. Popular OCN courses at Funaley include Music, Creative Arts, Teamwork and Sports. Funaley also ran OCN’s for personal development, life skills and independent

living. A special session is run for sixteen – twenty-five year olds who are in independent or supported accommodation.

Funaley is the most equipped Centre in the study. Its links with the community and local people is strong and beneficial. It is well placed and has a good national reputation having taken part in national programmes run by the NYA and National Children's Bureau. The next voluntary organisation is small in scale - Heathtop.

6.5 Voluntary Organisation: Heathtop

Heathtop originally started as a Church-based youth organisation in the 1970s. Gradually it evolved to become a community based youth project with specialist staff employed to run the sessions. Church members still work as volunteers at the Centre as they have done for three decades. They serve refreshments and get involved in games and discussion with the young people. The volunteers include the local vicar, members of the parish council, Church members as well as members from the community and often students on placement (usually from Riverton Colleges and Universities). The major feature of the provision is the youth club sessions which include young people with learning disabilities. Originally created to accommodate the need of Church members with young children with learning difficulties, it now welcomes participants across Riverton. It is the only provision in the area that engages young people with learning disabilities specifically. The Church is committed to community development and also runs a crèche, training for young mothers, pharmacy, nursery, women's group, community health education and citizenship classes.

The youth project focuses on the government's "Every Child Matters" agenda with particular reference to citizenship, participation and health matters. The Centre is

exploring alternative education projects for excluded young people who engage with the Centre at present it only opens outside school hours. The education offered at the Centre focuses on developing young people's skills and capabilities and encouraging them to be able to take informed and responsible choices as they transit to adulthood. There is a strong ethos of guidance and mentoring at Heathtop, involving training youth mentors as well as young people who become peer mentors. Heathtop is well known for its work with young people with disabilities; even residential schools bring students for the sessions from across Riverton. Heathtop works with the local community, Youth Offending Team (YOT), LEA and Police to tackle anti social behaviour in the area in particular. It offers opportunities for young people to do placements and work experience. Heathtop is also piloting a scheme which seeks to help young people in their transition from small junior schools to big secondary schools. Heathtop has very strong links with the local schools in the immediate vicinity as well as schools in the surrounding areas and this perhaps accounts for why young people come from many parts of Riverton.

6.5.1 Heathtop Staff

Heathtop has a strong volunteer base because of its origins in the Church as well as its widely known mentoring scheme. There are about sixty volunteers registered on the project's database. During the study up to ten students from Colleges and Universities were on placements at Heathtop. Claire, who manages Heathtop, has almost two decades of experience in youth work. She is responsible for management and funding although she participated in the cooking and music sessions. A male development officer assisted the manager, coordinating activities, mentoring sessions and assisting with the football sessions. A trainer mentor ran the mentoring sessions and matched mentees and mentors. A peer mentor trained youth mentors and helped them apply

their skills in sessions and in the local schools. Other staff worked as mentors and youth workers with specialist fields like arts and crafts, dance, sports, basketball and football.

Table 6.3 Heathtop staff

	Number	Gender Male	Gender Female	Age	Ethnicity	Interview Sample
Full Time	12	5	7	18 - 60	White British 2 Black Caribbean	1
Volunteers	40 - 50	8 - 10	32- 40	19 - 65	White British 1 Black Caribbean	1
Managerial role	2				White British Black Caribbean	2
Degree Qualifications		1	2			
Other Qualifications		4	7			
Access to youth work via teaching		-	2			
Access to youth work on the job training		5	7			
Experience in youth work < 3yrs		2	0			
Experience in youth work > 3yrs		3	9			

Narrative 6.3: James: Volunteer trained to become a youth worker

James has Caribbean heritage and has worked at Heathtop for two years. He always had a passion for computing, graphic design and media studies but was not sure how he would use this after he left school at seventeen. He became a youth worker by “accident”, when he had an opportunity to influence young peoples’ lives by teaching film production at a local youth club.

J: “Err; I got into it by accident. I was filming as in filming a project at a youth club; err not far from where I live. And, err I kind of started doing some volunteer work just for the simple fact that I was a bit older than the kids that were there and I used to come in and just help out as a volunteer and that led onto seeing this (opportunity for a) place and then I applied for it, though at that time I did not have any qualifications.

R: So did you subsequently start getting qualifications or did you need to..."

J: Once I got the job, err I was told and prompted to get a Introduction to Youth Work qualification and I got it, I can't remember now err, I applied for a level one in Youth Work, but I think the title has being changed now because I am actually going to Uni in September. I can't remember what the title of the course is called but I think it a foundation diploma in Youth Work and child play or something like that anyway."

James has done most of his on the job training around mentoring and supporting young people in vulnerable circumstances. As a youth worker James is concerned about the lack of positive activities and deprivation in the community.

"There is not much to do in the area; because young people these days have less positive social contact with each other outside of school, the youth club is a very significant social aspect of their lives. I mean because when I was growing up a youth club was just a youth club. I mean I did not care. I mean I could see my friends on the street. I could see my friends here, but for them, like if you tell them they are banned for a day, I mean they are still turning up in the morning and they are begging to come back in."

James also explains how the young people today need role models. He argues that they lacked knowledge and information with which to make important choices.

"... Young people are not completely aware of the choices that they have when they are facing significant decisions in their lives. Like for example, one of the kids today was talking about like his girlfriend wants to have a baby. And he does not really want a baby but he may as well and OK fair enough; but you need to be aware of the choices and also consequences and everything."

James has a particular interest in young people who are not attending education. He uses his role as a means to offer knowledge and guidance about the options that are available to them besides GCSEs and mainstream education.

“Because sometimes the school system is ... this can be debated about whether it is working or is not working. I personally don’t think it is a good system just the one straight system for every single young person in the world. It doesn’t make sense to me and basically if you fail this system you are kind of left, you know what I mean, you are left in the dark. They (young people) do not understand that there are other things they can do. It does not mean they have failed. It does not mean that you cannot do other things.”

He feels this type of guidance or mentoring should be available for all young people as they would get “more sense of identity – like they would like get their individuality back and a sense of belonging and self worth definitely.” The gangs and street groups lure the young people by making them “feel” they are part of the group. James believes this makes young people take decisions that they will not normally have chosen.

Another important aspect of youth work James mentions is good relationship with parents. He feels that these relationships are crucial as it helps the young people and parents share information that perhaps would not have been shared without the facilitation of the youth workers. Through the eyes of the youth workers some parents get to know other facets of their children’s lives. This is particularly true of the young people with learning disabilities. They do not have a lot of confidence before coming to the Centre because so much is done for them. At the Centre they begin to learn to do things themselves, they can choose the things they want. For many of them it is a steep learning curve. The way the experiences are communicated to the parents is important. James believes parents who get positive feedback in the right manner are more likely to become involved. Parents can become excited about their children’s progress depending on the way the youth worker relates with the parents. Appreciating, valuing and praising a young person’s efforts can support parents who find this difficult. Some parents have heard so many negative things about their children from the youth offending team, school or police. Positive reports encourage parents and may help them to value the positive things they observe in their children as well.

In the future James plans to go to University to study a course in youth work. He will like to use his qualifications and experience in media studies to deliver education and training for young people.

6.5.2 Heathtop facilities

Heathtop has an activities hall, a sports hall, kitchen and two small rooms on the Church premises. Sometimes during the week sessions are moved to a local park or the local leisure Centre when activities like swimming, sports and games are scheduled. Heathtop has a variety of games; the most popular are the video games. Arts and crafts are more popular among females and there is a lot of variety with the creativity of youth workers and arts facilitator. The sports hall is used for basketball, table tennis, badminton and pool. Some sessions are designed to teach young people how to play these games and improve their skills. There is a make shift football pitch at the back. Most of the young people who use the outdoor facilities are male, though a few females participate when they are encouraged.

The young people applied for computing and Internet facilities from a few sources and though they obtained a grant the equipment did not arrive before the end of the study. The young people are largely involved in deciding which facilities to use and how they want the equipment set up on any particular day. They are also involved in the design of the new multipurpose youth Centre, which is to be built in the next two to four years. Heathtop also has access to the Church hall or other community rooms on the Church site where necessary. Heathtop ethos makes sure the young people view the facilities as club property and not 'belonging' to the Church or community, young people as members of the club take ownership and responsibility for facilities. The participation

and involvement also means that unlike Funaley, young people from all over the city feel the same way about the club and its facilities even though some do not live locally.

6.5.3 Heathtop activities

Heathtop offers two drop in sessions a week as well as two evening sessions for social interaction with young people and young people with learning disabilities. The latter is called “Inclusion” because it involves young people with different abilities. There are specific afternoon sessions for cooking, dance, music, basketball and football once a week. There are workshops for girls only and others boys only. These workshops are run when funding is available for specific programmes; for instance young mothers, sex education or healthy eating. In addition to the youth club sessions Heathtop runs ASDAN qualifications and mentoring training for the young people interested in such certificates regardless of whether they were employed, in education or not.

Heathtop, like other organisations offers day trips and weekend residential, trips to Alton Towers, Laser Quest and bowling complexes are popular. All sessions are completely free of charge and the young people are involved in the budgeting and allocation of resources for sessions. Day trips and Residentials are different because sometimes they are organised for groups of young people who were “getting along” and making good progress in their relationships at the sessions. This is unique to Heathtop, small groups of friends were allowed to choose a destination, plan the trip and prepare the budget. They were able to invite other people who attended the Centre if they want to make the group larger. It is the only voluntary organisation to offer Residentials for young people with learning disabilities in this study. Young people are referred to Heathtop so they can engage in positive activities and learn new skills (Benson, 2009). Heathtop provides a successful service to the Youth Offending Team.

During the school holidays when Heathtop runs Positive Activities for Young People sessions, day trips were the most popular.

Heathtop's decision to have "inclusion sessions" has drawn a great number of young people with disabilities from across Riverton. The young people who attend Heathtop are therefore from diverse social backgrounds. Most of the young people with disabilities are brought in by their parents came from the middle class families, though a number of young people who attended were from working class families. Heathtop's proximity to a private school permits young people from more affluent backgrounds to attend as well.

The three organisations had good success rates and were able to stay funded all year round because they made a positive impression on their donors but also because they were the hub of activity for local young people.

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have described the voluntary organisations involved in the study, outlining their activities, facilities, staff capacity and strength. The Centres' focus on aspects of care the vulnerable clients are unable to obtain. The young people are vulnerable according to the youth workers because their attitudes and worldview are not suited to participating in the public world. They are firstly not prepared for life in the public world because they lack basic knowledge and understanding of how the systems operate. Sometimes, the youth workers place the blame for this on inability of parents to support the young people's development or circumstances preventing them from learning i.e. time in care. Secondly, the vulnerable lifeworld does not help the young

people engage properly with people, institutions or the society in general. In fact their vulnerability makes them angry, upset or frustrated further diminishing their capacities.

The voluntary organisations support their clients mainly by providing a participatory reflective space. The space is expected to encourage vulnerable young people develop their capabilities through the means of dialogue and mediation. Staff promote social, emotional and academic learning in real life contexts by facilitating learning through the use of a varying number of everyday activities. The next chapter investigates how the interventions of the voluntary organisations assist the vulnerable young people.

VOLUME 2

PART III CONTINUED

CHAPTER 7.0 – THE PRACTICES OF INTERVENTION AND HOW YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGE

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the different interventions of voluntary organisations with respect to vulnerable young people and describes how they respond with quotes and material from the observation log. The youth workers and parents also reflect on how these interventions support the young people make the journey from their vulnerable lifeworld towards capability. The chapter looks at three types of intervention: - material, relational and developmental. These three dimensions are fundamental human necessities which enable development and functionings according to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy, Nussbaum's (2001) basic capability list and Roger's (1961) work on the good life. The material interventions refer to the methods used to meet physiological needs of shelter, food, warmth, etc. Relational interventions are such that involve emotional and psychological experiences. Examples of which are intangible components such as teaching the young people to develop positive relationships, build confidence, learning to recognise and channel emotions in civil and socially accepted ways (Benson and Scales 2009). Finally, the developmental intervention refers to the broad spectrum of life skills that are taught in the Centres. The discussion will show the way youth workers use informal and extracurricular activities to achieve what schools do through the formal educational curriculum. The following sections will present in turn the approaches the Centres use.

7.2 Material intervention

Voluntary organisations often provide materially for their clients in order to improve their well-being. All three organisations provide some kind of sign posting service. Trained counsellors and advisors provide advice and information about housing, health, parenting and so on. They also refer their clients to other organisations. This service is aimed at meeting the physical needs of the vulnerable young people by making sure they have access to basic needs and services. Housing needs are often referred to the Local Council or Social Services based on the assessment of the staff. Funaley provides food, mainly staples, including bread, tinned food and sometimes beverages. These provisions made the young people feel like they were being cared for. One of the clients in a youth hostel explained “they care about you, all of you. You can tell they really care, ‘cos they will ask you the next day ‘how are things?’”.

Some of the young people were given money towards basic items like bus fares, lunch or leisure outings. The young people had to show that the money was used to support their participation at the Centre. Monetary contributions applied mostly to young people in care, particularly those in youth hostels. Sometimes the young people became so accustomed to the support they almost expected it. The staff at Ilkridge in particular displayed extraordinary loyalty to the young people at Green Heath home; they often gave the young people money when they asked for bus fares.

Incident ILQ 2

Tisha for instance, asked Jenny for her bus fare when she received an award from the National Children’s Bureau for “outstanding achievement” for making academic progress in spite of difficult circumstances. She had just spent the weekend at her mum’s. The group (Jenny and two volunteer staff from Ilkridge, a carer

from the children's home and young people met Tisha outside the Council house where the awards were taking place. She immediately pulled Jenny aside.

J: "You made it well done; I tried to call you..."

T: I had no credit, I was at my mum's, mad time, man!

T: Can I have a pound please? I don't have any money, had to help my mum..." sentence trailed off.

Jenny looks at the lit cigarette in her hand as Tisha gestures and shows an empty purse

T: "I knew I had to be here, I did not want to let you down, don't have any money for the bus back".

Jenny sighs.

T: "I swear I will give it back".

Jenny gives her the money with a warning in hushed tones to make sure she gives it back.

Tisha refers to this incident in one of her interviews and adds "Jenny is a star; she has changed my life, like I said if Jenny had not come into my life I would be dead, honest".

The money is usually only given in small amounts and for specific purposes so it can be used for the reason specified. The young people like Tisha, are usually very grateful for these small contributions as they meet their immediate needs. At times, some youth workers offered to take the young people to their destination, rather than give them money. The young people at Funaley get money if they attend sessions and one hundred pounds (£100) if they complete the twelve week module, a placement and start training or employment. These types of monies can be used at the young person's discretion. The young people who come from less affluent neighbourhoods also get some support towards paying for holidays or scheduled trips. At Ilkridge the youth workers organised a community fund raiser to support young people who could not afford the cost of a weekend trip.

Sometimes the young people want money but are referred to services which will meet their requirements. Towards the end of the study Tisha asked for money to rent her own

apartment. On this occasion the youth workers at Ilkridge arranged a meeting with the Care home and social workers regarding supported living accommodation.

The next section looks at another component of the interventions which involves developing relationships with the young people and supporting their development through these associations.

7.3 Relational intervention

Relational interventions can take many forms but it is essentially based on mentoring young people. The relationships formed between young people and youth workers can be used as a platform to support the vulnerable young people through difficult circumstances. It can also be used to challenge attitudes because the young people learn to trust and respect their youth workers.

Much of the support youth workers provide is through their personal relationships with the young people. In fact this bond can make an enormous difference in how the young people relate to and engage with others and the activities at the Centre. The youth workers become involved in the young peoples' lives sharing their thrills and falls. Sarah explains how this bond supports the vulnerable young people. Good youth workers can help the 50% of young people that Sara says are not supported by the educational system.

“Good youth workers need to be good listeners, patient and flexible as well as willing to be creative in the way they offer support and guidance to young people. They also need to be able to tolerate the emotional challenge of listening to young people’s problems, particularly when there is little the youth worker can do to

change the circumstances. It is very difficult not to go home and wonder how they (the vulnerable young person) are doing or thinking you know what you can do the next day perhaps to help a little bit more.” (Sara)

Most of the youth workers agreed that listening to young people and understanding the real needs their vulnerable clients sometimes find difficult to communicate is an essential skill. The vulnerable young people are actually quite distant from the public world because they are not sure they can engage in meaningful relationships. Dama and Heather’s narratives in chapter five showed how such problems can lead to aggression and violence. However, relational interventions support mentored relationships where youth workers are able to challenge attitudes and raise awareness about issues such as teenage smoking, alcohol and substance abuse or even how to forge good relational ties through reciprocity and communication. To help young people learn to communicate youth workers are willing to share their experiences and fears with young people.

“We just hang out sometimes and talk, I am open with them; I can tell them I have fears as well.” (Sara)

This helps to improve the relationships and can ultimately build trust, confidence and positive attitudes in the vulnerable young people. These can be transferred to other first of all to other relationships in the Centre and then be used more extensively by the young people. The way youth workers support young people in very personal ways as they talk about “deep and personal things” makes a significant difference in the lives of the young people on many fronts according to James. “Here in the organisation I can help the young people gain a sense of wholeness and self worth”. James also says the young people are able to gain skills and develop their social interaction competencies as

they meet and share with young people they do not know. However, necessary boundaries and professional conduct should always be maintained according to Peter, another youth worker who spoke of how young people can be sometimes overly demanding in their quest for attention.

Helping young people “belong” to the community and make their own individual decisions should be the primary goal of communities according to James (youth worker) at Heathtop. James is proud of the young people he has helped mentor since joining Heathtop some of whom still come back to see him after having moved on to college or employment. He believes that the youth work communication style, which sets youth workers on level ground with the young people, is a powerful and effective tool. Youth workers (replace gang members) as valued listeners and sounding boards when the young people want to make decisions, they seek advice from youth workers. He cites examples like encouraging a young person who self harmed to seek clinical attention. As a youth worker you would “go with the person” (to the psychiatrist) and they gain the confidence to seek support and live more functional lives. Young people also ask for advice on pregnancies and having a baby etc. James has helped them the people who come to him think about the options they have and how the decision they take now will affect their future.

Relational interventions also mean that youth workers become mentors and begin to give guidance to their clients on a wide range of issues.

“When they fall out with their friends, get into trouble with the police or have problems at home, the young people come to youth workers because they know they will be listened to and not judged. I believe the youth club is a valuable educational environment for the young people and youth workers alike. We do not

really employ a blatant education system, however, we do have our ways of informal learning and we would do that through residential, we would teach them independent living ... we deal with a lot of interpersonal skills – different things ... like sexual health, we put on different courses just to cover different things. So they do get a lot of education without them even knowing that they are partaking in education as such.” (James)

The young people actually like these relational methods of learning. Ayesha describes her experiences:-

A: “You want to come (to the Centre) because it’s like a family atmosphere ... The staff here stick out for you and you grow close. They let you chill out and are not like teachers or tutors or something. We can listen to music when we do our work and talk with them like real people.

R: So you like trust them?

A: Yeah, not with my life. (Laughter)

A: Yes, I trust them here, they helped me better... here they are not like tutors or anything, they are down to earth... friendly.”

Some of the youth workers have been in similar situations and circumstances as the young people. They understand the fear, uncertainty and peer pressure that seemed to force many young people in vulnerable family situations to join the gangs. Ashley a youth worker describes his background

“As a young person I was one of those - let us say one of the challenging children – so I understand their needs, their wants, their aspirations, their disappointments and so on and so forth. Eh, having been asked to leave home at 15 – so I have been on my own for a

long time, so I do understand eh the sense of belonging nowhere – except in their own gangs I should say. I was in a big one – I would not use the word gang, but it is been perceived that way – but the security that they thought they owned is err... false.”
(Ashley)

The youth workers used their own experiences to engage the young people when they facilitated sessions. So, Ashley spoke to the young people about not giving in to the aggression and anti social attitudes perpetuated through the gangs. The young people looked up to him because he was a respected snooker champion and they enjoyed playing with him and learning tips.

The following case is taken from the observation log and reflects the way the youth workers used their relational influence to support the young people’s social development and understanding of functioning in the public world. The incident is taken from the Funaley log involving young people in the ‘Beyond 16’ group who were on excursion to a local Museum.

Funaley Beyond 16 Museum Trip 2nd Term: Observation notes FFTU 16

The trip had to be rescheduled once because some group members did not attend the first session.

Yasmin and Martin (youth workers) debriefed the group

- Conduct in public. She sternly warned against swearing and anti social behaviour
- The group was to ignore any teasing by young people on the streets – many of these are local gang members who have incited troublesome incidents
- Stay with the group and observe class rules

Bus pass incident

Everyone was provided with money for their bus fare, but some of the young people declared they already had bus passes. Later I found out that the project gave them money for their bus fare at the end of the week, by using the money on this occasion, they will be forsaking their full transport allowance.

As we got on the bus, Keisha and Pamela discussed in hushed tones, one of them was scrambling through her bag. She had a load of bus passes

She picked one supposed a pass for two but was promptly stopped by the bus driver. The girls opted to wait for the next bus but Yasmin insisted that we all use one bus. We all stayed at the bus stop as Yasmin and Martin inspected the bus pass. It was a year old. The girls chuckled

K: "We have been using it for a year man!

Y: That is wrong; I thought we agreed to observe class rules on this trip

M: That is illegal, how could you have used that ticket for so long?"

K: Chuckling.

Yasmin disappointed and visibly upset asks if the girls ever use their transport allowance to pay for their bus fares.

The girls chuckle but then straighten up when Yasmin suggest she would report the incident to management and get their transport allowance stopped.

There is tension in the air as Martin and Yasmin insist that the girls apologise to the class.

She gives them money for their bus fare which they reluctantly accept.

Keisha brings out another ticket from her bag which Yasmin spots. She boasts that she has loads of them.

K: "Man, why should I pay for the bus, they make enough money as it is anyway.

M: You are paying for your place, why should others have to pay that for you?"

Pamela is quiet during the entire conversation

Yasmin and Martin and announce that the incident will be discussed in the class.

Yasmin and Martin try to defend their argument but the young people are not convinced paying their bus fares is simply the right thing to do.

They agree that on trips organised by the project they will hold valid bus passes.

This incident illustrates how the young people are able to interact with youth workers in the public world. These relational events give them opportunities to learn about positive social attitudes. The dilemma is that as clearly shown the process of attitudinal change is not an easy one but Yasmin and Martin are convinced that by showing the good example through these types of relationships and positive social engagement the young people are challenged and at least obliged to reflect on their behaviour. Tisha illustrates this when she explains that she is motivated to do her work to please Jenny the youth worker.

T: "Jenny helped me out, I do it for her...."

She (Jenny) comes to us and gives me the chance to do them (GCSEs), I know I can. ... I enjoy it".

Young people with learning difficulties also benefitted from their relations with youth workers. For instance in the course of this study Jackson (young person at Heathtop) progressed from needing full time observation to greater independence. He was able to work on his own most of the time with few corrections for inappropriate behaviour.

Many of the activities in the Centre may have contributed to his success, but his mother thinks the associations and relationships enabled her son perceive himself as "normal, like everyone else" thereby, increasing his abilities to be more independent.

Jackson's mother was "pleased that the Centre did not label" Jackson before he became a member. She believes this has helped Jackson integrate better in the community. She also explains that because: -

"The staff treat Jackson as normal he is able identify with normal behaviour and it has increased his confidence and capacity to try new things as well as meet new people."

With regards to the relationships with staff, Jackson has learned to do many things with them. He has been taught how to cook, make craft and design posters. Jackson now makes craft for the staff, they in turn put his paintings on show or wear the necklaces and bangles he has made to communicate their appreciation. This makes Jackson very excited. His integration with other young people is also increasing and the young people have learned that they can communicate with Jackson if they are patient. It also seems that his capabilities in arts and cooking have helped other young people realise that people with learning disabilities can be quite capable at some things.

Similarly, Hero at Ilkridge who also had learning difficulties was able to communicate how the youth workers supported his development through relational intervention: “I like Jenny, she talks to me yeah”. Hero explained that he has become more aware of his environment and is able to participate in activities in the Centre because Jenny let him engage with others and basically helped him through the process of learning and socialisation. For someone who was unable to form positive relationships in school this is a major turnaround. Hero’s mother is very particular about the changes that finally helped Hero and her family make some progress. “He loves it there” his mum says. He is a ‘different person’ in youth club. He can do the things they say, he is really learning.”

The capabilities developed are not only internal like the ones described above. Young people also learn to manage their emotions, develop and maintain relationships and learn about their role as citizens. Staff encourage the young people to reflect on their emotions when they were angry, frustrated, excited or sad. For example when young people are frustrated because they are being left out of a basketball game, should they lash out in anger or talk to their peers about their feelings and insist on club rules of taking turns? Through dialogue and mediation members were constantly learning that

managing emotions, recognising and articulating feelings are a vital component of their relationships and roles as citizens/ community members.

The relational interventions are used to build good and positive relationships between staff and young people and also used to develop social capabilities. The social skills described above such as managing emotions, maintaining good relationships, being polite and civil etc are also taught through the developmental intervention.

Developmental interventions are much more comprehensive in that they include many aspects of the learning process in the Centres. This is discussed in the next section.

7.4 Developmental intervention

Developmental intervention encapsulates a range of practices which take place through almost all activities in the Centres. The interventions are indeed designed to support alterations in the young people's behaviour, trajectories or attitudes *via* the development of skills, avoiding negative activities, as well as, exposure to and practice of living and interaction in the public world (Scales, et al, 2006, Benson, et al, 2006). Usually, Centres focus on the skills the young people lack because of their truncated education. However, they are general interventions included for all young people associated with the development life skills and opportunities to learn about living economically independent adult lives. This section will present a number of interventions which take place in the organisations involved in the study.

a. *Extra Support for Disadvantaged Groups*

Young People who are excluded from school are often the target of these types of interventions. They are often offered one- to – one support to help them “catch up” on parts of their education they have missed. The youth worker at Ilkridge describes her engagement with people in this category.

“I was surprised by the numbers of young people missing out on education in the area.... As a teacher I could not change the world but I could help change the world of one child by supporting them after exclusion. I knew, or from my experience in schools I have met a number of young people who were struggling were and unable to achieve because they had not learned basic reading or writing.” (Jenny)

“Many times when young people cannot read, write or attempt class work they disrupt the class so as to avoid facing the reality of not being able to achieve. Some actually want to be sent to detention, so they do not have to be asked to read or do class work which they cannot compete. Some are just bored... they are out of their depth.” (Jenny)

Jenny took on the task of teaching the young people in one-to one groups so they did not have to disclose their needs to their peers. The Ilkridge Centre catered for many sessions showing that the young people were more willing to learn if they could avoid “the shame” of admitting they could not do what many of their peers had learned in school. In addition to such one- to one support Centres offered Alternative Education Sessions.

b. *Alternative education: Using Informal Learning Techniques*

This kind of intervention is tailored teaching for young people who have difficulty in mainstream education. Funaley had extensive contact with young people in this category and offered a range of different short courses. Sara explained that the Centre's focus was to "encourage young people to take responsibility for their own learning, which a lot of them have not done in a long while." These sessions are specific to individuals and as such Funaley trains youth workers with different personalities to support young people with different personal issues:

"You have to have different people on the team, you might have somebody that is stricter, you might have somebody that is really soft, you might have somebody that is really loud and you might have somebody that is really quiet. But there is all sorts of young people that fit into those categories as well as. So if there is particularly loud young person they want to focus on the worker that is particularly loud. And those young people that are particularly shy, quiet and more retiring sort they might first go and speak to the quieter worker. Also you got loud workers that keep the discipline but then you also know that... you can have... I mean there are two particular youth workers that work here and they both impose the same rules – they both got exactly the same outcomes but their approach is so different. One shouts and screams and bores but gets listened to and gets respected; the other one is very softly spoken voice, never raises his voice, very very chilled – err... but again gets respected. So it works both ways you know. Pieces of a puzzle – yeah the whole thing is a puzzle."(Sara)

The youth workers also stressed how different their informal education differed from teaching in schools. Jenny explained how young people get distracted in the classroom

and instead of learning make disruption and the attending attention they gain the objective of their schooling.

“They have achieved their aim; it may be to stay out of class or be rude to someone. They suppose they are good at what they chose to do.”

Unfortunately, their behaviour may eventually be punished by exclusion, further limiting their chances of learning. What these young people lacked was the courage to admit their inadequacy and need or dependence on the teachers they resented. Jenny wanted to help them gain confidence in their ability to learn, but first she had to motivate them to start learning positive skills. Jenny thus believes that developing confidence and helping them establish boundaries should be a core objective of youth work with the vulnerable.

“When they realise they are able to achieve and relate to others positively, they begin to lose the desire to disrupt, be violent or avoid educational or indeed life challenges.”

Programme 4 FU Alternative Ed

Charles organised an entrepreneur programme based on the tendency of the young people to sell, exchange and buy new gadgets regularly. The young people were very excited about this project, they could do what they did normally with their mobile phones, i pods and mp3 players, make a profit and also gain a qualification. The Centre gave each participating member fifty pounds (£50). They were then required to buy exchange or sell their items with a view to making a profit. Members who succeeded were able to keep the profit. To gain the OCN qualification members had to record their business plan and strategies. It was one of the most popular projects which engaged the participants and encouraged creativity, some participants formed small teams, and others acknowledged that they began to find the numeracy and budgeting curriculum useful. Some

participants were very successful and proud of their achievements. It was a good example of learning using an informal approach.

Sara explains more ways in which the informal techniques differ from mainstream education.

S: “The school sometimes gives too many detentions, too many punishments; we don’t. We have a warning system but we do not have any punishment. So if there is no punishment there is nothing really to fight against and you put the responsibility back into their hands by saying ‘you are here on a voluntary basis you do not have to be here, if you do not want to be here you can leave’. And so if you turn it round and put the decision in their hands err most of the time they decide to stay – because they do not want to be left out actually – they do not want to be missing out on what everybody else is doing. If you defuse the situation there is nothing for them to fight against – if you say ‘fine, leave’ they are like err... They wanted an argument they did not get one.

R: So youth workers are not critical.

S: It gets them thinking and when you get them thinking – I mean that is the most important thing. And it allows them to be able to take responsibility for their own actions cause it is not you telling them what to do you are just saying ‘well you decide what you want to do then’ and that is a completely different thing altogether.”

Most alternative provision involves curricula that is adapted to one-to one sessions were young people could freely practice the most basic of reading and writing skills without judgement.

“The key is to get them to start learning to start achieving, once they learn that they can achieve by acknowledging that they do not know things get easier. Hopefully they can begin to learn to be as open with their friends (crew). There is no harm in ‘not knowing’.” (Jenny)

Although the youth workers all acknowledge that there are no quick fixes. The work is demanding and involves patience and time but Jenny notes that there are “the small changes you can see in the young people after many years (laugh)”.

Alternative provision is designed to support young people to get back into mainstream education. The youth workers seemed to agree that informal technique is a first step or a better pedagogy for helping the young people become interested in learning and education; eventually they need to learn to be able to use mainstream educational methods. One youth worker explains:

“... but I think they need the structure and discipline of school, or at least a framework. I encourage them to go back to school, to get qualifications and so on.” (Ashley)

The interventions ultimately work towards integrating the vulnerable young people who have lived in the subsystems of the crew world to be able to engage in the public world and “getting them into school” (Yasmin, youth worker) is a good attempt for the youngsters to practice their skills.

c. *Discipline and learning how rules and structure instil organisation, fairness and peace*

It is necessary that the voluntary organisation support the vulnerable young people by instilling organisation and discipline. The youth workers noted (see Chapters 5 and 6) that the young people were not used to rules and order. Some grew up in homes or neighbourhoods where it was not uncommon to despise authority or discipline, linking order and guidelines with “disrespect” or restrictions which limited their freedom to do what they liked with reckless abandon.

...Our desire to help is not enough; we hope the young people can persevere, when they come to us they flip easily, but with the structure and support they learn, perhaps also because we are good role models they will stay motivated and become role models in the community.” (Sara)

Sara also said the discipline the young people learn is reflected in the “feedback from parents and agencies, at least we are making a difference”. Yasmin explained how the police in Funaley trust the Centre to take care of the young people. Even when they are fights on the streets the police will drive past if the youth workers are present, they could not do that six years ago” (Dave, Funaley Manager). This kind of positive improvement the youth workers attribute to the ethos of ensuring that the young people keep to rules and are fair to each other.

Hero who had learning difficulties learned how to abide by simple rules at Ilkridge and his parents attest to the improvement in his ability and willingness to learn due to the structure and support he received at the Centre. In youth club Hero has achieved a many certificates of recognition and is able to get on with the other young people. Hero

progressed so well the LEA is hoping he can start alternative provision in a residential school in a different county. He explains:

“They are sending me to Greenville because it is open. They have farms and I cannot do all the things in school but I can do the work there.”

His mother explains that the LEA and Social Services are hoping Hero will still be able to organise himself and follow the schedule and structure if he is away from his home and the Ilkridge staff. The curriculum at the Residential school for people with learning difficulties is simple and he will be working with animals and flowers which is what Jenny and the others have been doing with him at the Centre.

d. Awards and qualifications

All the Centres offered awards and qualifications in recognition of the young people’s achievement. Jenny explained that it is difficult for those outside the field to understand the big strides the young people make when they begin to adhere to rules or even attend regularly. “We try to recognise their little achievements” (Sam), the young people get many certificates of achievement and they also study for qualifications that have value in larger academic circles. In particular, young people in care homes and those who were excluded from mainstream education were encouraged to be involved in various ASDAN projects. The Centres organised elaborate ceremonies to give them their awards so they could “celebrate their success”.

The youth workers however had to work extra hard and persevere through difficult times before the young people obtained their qualifications. I found that many sessions were cancelled repeatedly because the young people could not be bothered to get out of bed at 2:00pm in the afternoon, or because something that seemed more important

to the young people had come up. On one occasion a young person cancelled a one-to-one session so he could watch his mates play basketball. The youth workers worked round this by using activities the young people already enjoyed as a basis for their ASDAN modules. For example Tisha chose challenges that reflected her modelling aspiration. She therefore was able to do quite well in the practical aspects of her study because she did what she enjoyed. In fact Tisha used the opportunity to explore, she did makeovers as part of her course challenge, designed T-shirts and organised a fashion show. It was a little more difficult to get Tisha to do the theoretical part of her work as well as the writing. However, her folder was extremely neat, well arranged and creative.

“Tisha is a very good student; the progress she has made in the last year has been remarkable. It is mostly because she has an advantage over the others; she can read and write a lot better and is quicker and self motivating. She has finished the bronze and silver challenges and is actually moving on to the gold. So she proves that she can achieve GCSE’s.” (Jenny)

The effort and perseverance shown by the youth workers show that they believe in the young people’s ability to achieve, even when the young people do not believe in themselves.

e. Practical training: writing CVs, practicing interviews and budgeting

The young people are also taught very practical skills. Some of the activities are designed to be “just fun” (Sam, Heathtop), like cooking pancakes or organising a disco. However they young people learn to plan the meal, budget for the ingredients and learn practical skills. Some of these activities are also designed to help young people involved in the serious business of living alone. Ayesha lives in supported living accommodation and she is very grateful to the staff, they supported her as she journeyed towards capability.

A: “The staff help you, I mean living alone you have to learn a lot. So, I learn a lot of skills – how to plan, how to budget and stuff like that but they (staff) do help....

I wanted to be a graphic designer, but to do that you have to go to college and get a ‘B’ in Maths and.... stay at college basically. And I don’t want to stay at college.

R: Why don’t you want to stay at college?

A: College is basically like school.... Here, I have done Media studies and I can now find some route into graphic design”.

In addition young people like Ayesha on the Beyond 16 courses learn how to write Curriculum Vitae and attended mock interviews. Ayesha says she is grateful to Funaley and especially the staff for what she has learned “without them I won’t be working where I am now”, the Centre actually organised the placement and Ayesha is now gainfully employed. The staff helped her get a placement and she was retained after her studies on a part time basis. The Centre had a financial incentive for students who went on to employment and Ayesha was the first in her group to obtain hers.

People with learning difficulties have unique opportunities to develop life skills at the youth organisations. They participate in joint learning activities (cooking, budgeting, decorating the halls for a party) with other people, they are able to learn and “have a go” (youth worker, Heathtop) at things that they are not trusted with in mainstream education and at home. The Centres provide a supervised space for them to learn by interacting.

f. Residentials: These support relationships and trust between young people and staff

This is one of the most popular activities in the Centres. It gives the young people opportunity to spend some time away from home. They are often exciting and full of

activities the young people enjoy. Jackie explains why her favourite part of the curriculum is the Residentials because they were fun, challenging, educational and wonderful experience:

J: "We did like, well there were two groups and one group cooked breakfast and the other group cooked lunch. And we were all like playing games and doing the challenges and getting to know each other. It was fun.

R: So what did you learn?

J: It was like team work and independent living, dunno, it was just good."

At Heathtop even the young people with learning difficulties were involved in residentials.

Project: Youth Workers Ask Young People to Take Responsibility

At Heathtop the members with learning difficulties planned a weekend residential trip. Parents were nervous because the planning involved not only the usual logistical demands of transportation, accommodation, activity schedules but also things like medication regimes, unusual sleeping patterns and special health needs. With the support of the staff and peer mentors who did not have disabilities the young people managed to plan a successful trip. Members chose their destination, made schedules and budgets and distributed responsibilities. The young people with learning difficulties some of whom had limited speech and physical ability helped administer medication, made telephone calls for bookings and requests. Members had to draw up guidelines that helped maintain discipline and order.

Most of the young people have been classed as too vulnerable and therefore had limited responsibilities; not trusted with even basic tasks at home or in school. The activity boosted their morale, confidence and behaviour. They also developed capabilities to work with others, become

more independent, capable of leaving the comfort of their parents' protective care. The activity enabled the young people to take responsibility for their lives for an entire weekend.

During the residential, the young people were obliged to participate in relationship building. For the event to be successful they each had to make sure their chores were completed. Being that many of the participants had disabilities they had to pool their resources together, help one another achieve and enjoy their time together. No doubt there were difficulties because some people had poor communication and negotiation skills. However, because bullying and aggressive behaviour were not permitted at the hostel, the young people learned how to make decisions with others and articulate disagreements or worries. The young people succeeded in having a fun time together and developing closer bonds and shared understanding with each other.

After the trip, staff organised an evaluation session where the young people were asked to identify the successes of the trip. They also looked at how they could improve future residential and came up with suggestions and adjustments. The staff use this method of engaging young people in conversation to develop many socio-personal capabilities.

It seemed these residential are a crucial part of the relationship building and trust which was prevalent at the Centres.

g. Using opportunities for spontaneous learning

The voluntary organisations used different means to support the developmental needs of young people in the learning community. Most of the time the youth workers simply let the members participate in the day-to-day activities; they will then wait for opportunities to arise to have one-to-one discussions with young people. The use of discussion and negotiation (Wells, 2002c) is significant as it ultimately ensures that the

young people are responsible for taking the initiative for the progress and pace of their journey towards capability. The conversations focus on exploring the actions and behavior of the young people. This kind of probing helps the members of the learning community reflect on their behaviour. (I will discuss the significance of this idea of a learning community in chapter 9.)

Incident FE W22: Disciplinary action and moral education

A young person stole a youth worker's gloves during a session at Funaley. The staff member had a personal discussion with the culprit about values and the consequences of taking other people's things. Though the young person was accustomed to stealing, he was challenged to think about the way people feel when their personal items are taken away forcibly or by trickery. The member explained that he needed gloves and therefore was obliged to take the ones "available". He eventually admitted that he would have felt upset if someone else had taken his gloves simply because they needed them. However, he still considered the situation acceptable because he was of the view that people who take things they need were simply being smart. He was asked to replace the gloves and apologise to the staff member, neither of which the young person felt were necessary. He apologised, replaced the gloves and promised not to "take items which did not belong" to him from the Centre.

The opportunity for discussion and reflection helped the young person consider the possible repercussions of his actions, which included a ban from the club and a police report. He opted to stay at the club and refrain from taking other people's things without permission. The youth worker also had the opportunity to assure him that no one was allowed to take his personal belongings. This shocked him, having been in care homes and hostels all his life, he did not understand why stealing (taking things) was unacceptable. After the incident he stopped stealing, instead he asked the staff and

colleagues for items he needed. Sometimes they were able to provide for his needs. This disciplinary approach that motivates and challenges individuals to contemplate change that would lead to more acceptable behaviour is becoming a more popular behaviour management tool in youth circles.

Incident HE TH 7: Spontaneous learning using everyday tools

At Heathtop one evening a youth worker was working in the kitchen with a young person named Lee who has mild learning disabilities. They were serving refreshments and had just made a huge circular jug of squash. Another member of staff asked for drinks for the young people playing football in the courtyard at the back. She had brought along a rectangular butt, which appeared to be a lot smaller than the circular jug. Lee was asked to pour some of the squash into the water butt. He did so carefully expecting to have more than enough in the circular jug. It did not; Lee held the jug up in amazement and the staff member perceived Lee wanted to know why the circular jug contained as much liquid as the rectangular butt. A discussion on volumes and shapes commenced and very shortly they were joined by another young person who doubted the possibility of the water jug being of equal capacity to the rectangular water butt. Lee filled the water jug again and showed the young person it could. They filled the jug halfway comparing capacity in the different shapes and considered measurements. The staff member brought a piece of paper and helped them with the calculations. In a few brief minutes the staff member had facilitated a short mathematics lesson. She later joked about her dislike of mathematics but how she had to use any opportunity available to encourage everyday learning in the young people.

The staff were always on the alert, listening to conversation, participating in games and turning the simple matter into learning opportunities for the young people.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter depicts the interventions taking place in the Centres and shows how the young people are able to develop skills through activities and staff involvement. The practices are varied but all designed to capture the young people's desire to be involved. The opportunities are then structured to help them materially, relationally and developmentally. Each intervention supports some kind of capability development. The next chapter examines more closely how the interventions supported a gangster's transformation to capability and participation in the public world.

CHAPTER 8.0 FROM VULNERABLE WORLD TO PUBLIC WORLD:

DIEGO'S JOURNEY

8.1 Introduction

The voluntary organisations involved in the study are guided by clear objectives and values. They seek to support young people to develop capabilities for escaping from their vulnerable lifeworld and becoming participants in the public world. The histories and approaches of the organisations differed. Ilkridge was founded upon an individual's passion. Community action was the basis of Funaley's existence while religious service influenced the creation of Heathtop. The view that young people had "*a lot of talent and potential*" (Charles, Funaley) that could be channeled positively was common to all.

This chapter explores the intervention processes which enable vulnerable young people become functioning individuals. The narrative of a young man who had made the transition from a position of vulnerability to a more capable lifestyle first as a youth worker, then a teaching assistant at the Funaley Centre is detailed. The success story demonstrates the methods used by the organisations to spur and build capabilities in young people.

The narrative details Diego's vulnerability and the lifestyle he became accustomed to in the vulnerable lifeworld. It then portrays the interventions used by the voluntary organisation to empower Diego to leave the vulnerable lifeworld and finally the latter section of the narrative describes his current circumstances. The second half of the chapter investigates the journey by pointing out the major aspects of the intervention

which ultimately helped Diego transform his lifestyle. It concentrates on the work of the staff (i.e. mentoring and facilitation) and the use of activities for developing skills.

8.2 Diego's Story

Narrative 8.1 Diego – From Exclusion to Teaching Assistant Position

Diego is a young male recently appointed teaching assistant at one of the schools linked to Funaley. He was excluded from education at the beginning of senior school. But completed compulsory studies without gaining qualifications at the independent school in Funaley. He currently volunteers at Funaley Centre in the evenings and during school holidays. Diego said Funaley had been instrumental in developing the lifestyle and career he now had, though he was apprehensive about interviews for research. He was concerned about breaching confidentiality and potential animosity and rescheduled interviews many times. Eventually, he spoke to the researcher because he hopes the research “will support young people and get the guidance they need to live a normal life.”

Background

Diego's mother is a single parent who moved to Riverton when her son was a toddler. She was employed at the Funaley School as a nursery assistant for most of her adult life. A very active member of the Development Association and Area Forum, she is well known in the community. Some of the young people even call her 'mom'. Diego's mother now raises foster children on a “full time basis.” Diego did not engage in education as a teenager, even at the independent school where classes were small and teachers organised the curriculum flexibly to suit individual pupils. He explained he had given up on learning and education before his exclusion from mainstream school. Instead, Diego became involved in gang activities as a teenager. He recalls how as a young boy he wanted to connect to his friends in the community because his family had formed good relationships within the multicultural community. Diego was comfortable mixing with the young people on the streets as soon as he was able. His mother only became uncomfortable when his activities became nocturnal.

“Yeah well it is 99% Asian (neighbourhood), I mean majority and I couldn’t ask for better neighbours. I mean I put up with their animals you know. I put up with their curries and everything else they are serving and you know they come round with pots of curries for me – you know they are great. And we do get on, and they are quite brave; weekends can be a hard one because the thugs they come in to the grove but I love where I live” (Diego’s mother)

Diego lived a few yards from the Funaley Centre. He had an elder sister and his mother has fostered up to a dozen children over the last decade. During the period of the research she was raising three children – one male and two female who attended the school and used the Funaley youth club. She retired as a nursery assistant and now considered herself “a full time foster parent.” Diego’s mum had strong links with the staff at the Centre and school. She volunteered at the Centre because she felt it helps the young people.

“It (Funaley voluntary organisation) is good because of all the different ages, all the nationalities, different cultures are all mixed together which is nice and it keeps them keep off the streets... There is nothing for the lads to do in ... And I have had a really big struggle especially in the six-week holiday to get foster children to a club.”

Diego’s mum was committed to the development and survival of the Funaley community. Along with many key staff at the Funaley development organisation she has been involved in community projects aimed at fostering harmony between the different religions and minority groups. It was important to her that Funaley did not sink back into the misery and degeneration that characterised the area a few decades ago. Diego’s mother did not make any reference to Diego’s situation before joining the Funaley youth club. Instead, she was very forthright about her parenting skills. She made reference to how her children were doing well and the success she had with the foster children.

Diego had not done very well in mainstream education; he was at risk of exclusion but eventually completed his full time education at the independent school in Funaley without any qualifications

or GCSEs. At the independent school, the classes were small, there were no requirements to wear a uniform and teachers organised the curriculum in a flexible manner to enable the young people gain as much from the process as they could. Diego could not go on to college or employment after his GCSE's so he started attending the Funaley youth club on a regular basis.

In the Vulnerable Lifeworld

Diego described his unruly behaviour and mischief as a teenager, he began skipping school in senior school and before long he was hardly ever at school, spending his time developing his "rep" in the gang he joined.

"I was selling drugs, err, fighting, doing normal illegal stuff, carrying weapons, all that kind of stuff, obviously I did not know the importance of life when I was out there, until I started attending workshops."

Diego explained how the gang he was in was feared and revered far beyond Funaley and Riverton. He enjoyed the security of the gang as well. Diego was a prominent and respected member of the gang having done his own share of "duties" to earn the respect. Being in the gang 'was cool' and meant certain status, which Diego translated as respect. It was also his main source of income and at the time, he could not think of life without the gang members. They did everything together on the streets and formed strong and loyal bonds. They played fair "at least to members of the gang" and they made sure their community was respected as well. Diego describes how gang members stood up for the community members by making sure no one in the community got mobbed by other rival gangs or no one was ill-treated. Diego recalls how as a youngster he began to connect to his community and friends by "hanging out with and doing the things they did".

"We would go out at about 8:00am in the morning, attend school if we felt like it and then roam the streets all day, doing our thing till five or six o'clock the following morning. We did not really take studying seriously in those days."

Diego wanted to please his family and got pressured by his mother, community members, and staff at school to reform his ways but he found it difficult. The gang members attended the same school and the peer pressure was too great an influence. Besides, at the time he did not see the disadvantages of staying in the group. It is important to note that Diego said he felt affirmed, respected and gratified with the lifestyle he was leading. Diego describes the respect and recognition he felt in the gang.

“You felt that you were part of something, other people looked up to you and you were above everyone else. It made us look cool.”

“It was normal back then, but now I feel ashamed. I had this worthless feeling - this gut feeling and I was bored, empty, did the same thing, same routine everyday with the wrong people. I just wanted to be looked up to.”

I asked Diego to explain what he meant when he said the gang was respectable and fair.

“Respect is what we had shown to us O.K. We were looked up to. Fairness was a one-way thing. It was what we did.”

Diego said he wanted to remain “high up in society” and worked to keep the group. He described how because he looked up to gang members who were his neighbours and friends from school and the community any suggestion to leave the gang fell on deaf ears. In certain respects we were V.I.P’s (Very important People). The group was well known and no one would disrespect me because of the group’s high reputation.

Attending Funaley

When Diego joined the Funaley club he was in danger of getting into trouble and the gang was breaking up. Initially he was not necessarily motivated by his mother’s desire or educational prospects.

“I just thought it was going to get me off the streets and buy me some time. I did not realize it was going to take me forward and give me err... career paths... and that opened the light for me, I just thought it was going to get me out of the streets for them certain hours I was there.”

Two days a week Diego committed to attending sessions. He had different experiences to the ones he was used to at school and on the streets. He then began to question his lifestyle. “The gang was fading out and I began to think if it was for me. Also it was no more good for pay.” It appears the gang had run into trouble with law enforcement. They were constantly watched and as such the members had to prove they were involved in some kind of education or training. Diego took the opportunity and advice of youth workers and moved to his sister’s house in another part of town. He got away from the gang and the area with all its pressures. Some of the members also started attending the club as well. The gang eventually broke up as the area transformed gradually. Diego was able to move back into the area and live on his own renting a room with friends.

“Eh, when I was there my peers all come from the same place as me so it was difficult to separate from them to become a better person than them. Eh, I think there was about 12 of us and couple of us got out and done what’ve done, but a couple stayed the same. That is just their own mentality so obviously just choose not to follow them people and that.”

For Diego the most positive aspects of the experience at the voluntary organisation were the group activities, mentoring and opportunities to use skills. He explained how he got his first big boost when he got a qualification. That first qualification in team work Diego explained was an important watershed; it boosted his confidence, made him “feel high and capable” and he wanted more. He could finally see a means by which he could excel and possibly earn a wage? Diego was also trying to please his mum. He began to realise that his activities had caused his family pain rather than the high status he thought he was acquiring for himself, his family and the community. Diego began to work with careers advisor with a view to finding a suitable legal job.

"... well I started working voluntary... pause. Err, I started doing voluntary, so I started using their services and that changed me as a whole person to get off the streets and start living my life, as a normal person should be doing."

R: "If you look back what specific things do you think facilitated the change?"

D: It was the organisation of it and the participation that was allowed... the youth workers helped a bit as well; obviously you can say like the mentoring etc.

Pause

D: Yeah it was the activities as well; it was a lot broader.

R: Which particular activities?

D: Err... the ones where, like football where you get hands on and you become a better team player, err football, sports activities we played a lot of them and we done like team work OCN as well that helped quite a bit. Well I learned to become more determined and patient at the same time with things like... also I learned to participate with people I do not really like. So there is a lot of participation going on and I started to get a level of diplomacy as well from being with different people.

R: Did you know this (learning capabilities) at the time or is this what you have realised upon reflection?

D: No... I thought I was just buying time. The thing I enjoyed the most was seeing how I could change as a person and how I could learn to benefit other people - because I have been there and done it - in their own learning and all the team work activities I found a great help and quite enjoyable as well..."

Diego's mother speaks of her great admiration for the staff, especially those from the community. She kept making reference to their determination and skill.

Diego's mother: "But a lot of children they tend to make a lot of new friends and they can interact better with adults by being there (Funaley). I don't know whether you know Mike but for instance he is quite good with the kids."

Diego's mother: "Um the voluntary worker Mike wishes he could do more. He can't emphasize that enough to people and I have actually said well I will give you an hour or two a week of my time to help out, but he is limited because it is voluntary."

This was typical of the parents' experience. All the parents interviewed heaped praises on the staff and admired them for their hard work and determination.

Diego does not blame the school or environment for his inability to get on the career path earlier. He does not like the school environment because he says it does not enable learning for weak students. At the Funaley Centre he found that youth workers were more engaging.

"They was all on the same level as the children and err easy to understand, err very flexible with themselves and very easy to work with and err, if you ever had any problems they were happy to go through them with you and listen...

... I think youth workers obviously know a lot about kids that are in different situations, they probably bring themselves up that way... but I don't know, I think it is the way they are. They are on a certain level; they are not authoritative, but they can be authoritative - you know what I am saying- so like try and get along with you as a friend and not a worker. They take you as a whole person and not just a learner or something."

Diego's recalls how the activities the youth workers offered made meaning because they were relevant. They used everyday activities and everyday discussions and integrated them into the learning process. Diego says "it was practical stuff" he could use as soon as he walked out of the door. Diego appreciated the friendliness of the youth workers. Though most of them knew him personally, they still were friendly to him and "took me as wanting to sort myself out." The guidance and advice also boosted his confidence as he got his qualifications he felt even better.

“... Say for example with your team work you need it basically and that has helped me be a better team player and helped me get on with all sorts of different people. So yeah they targeted different attributes of life in its own way.”

When asked what the youth workers did in particular Diego described how they opened a whole new world to him. He called it ‘normal life’ by which he meant things like getting a girlfriend, planning a career, making friends in the community etc.

D: “It was more persuasion to determination.

R: So you think that mostly they try to persuade you?

D: Yeah persuade you and show you, well, make you aware of the possible paths you could take, and let you know just how much you can benefit... They put you in a hole and gave me a ladder. They put a lot of pressure on me constantly blasting advice and advice. There were constantly there...

They did not remember my street life or they did not bring it up – I think it was their own precaution anyway.”

The youth workers used the circumstances to help boost Diego’s self esteem and motivation. They praised him exceedingly for passing his first OCN qualification Diego says he had a “buzz” from the experience. It felt so good to achieve the qualification and be recognised for it. Diego previously did not like learning, but this method of supporting learning by working together and achieving together was “more effective.”

“Now, I don’t mind learning. Everyone worked for the group we did it together, there was constant communication and teamwork and I earned an OCN.”

Diego now had made new friends with his peers and the youth workers and he said talking to them and working with them made him change his values.

“I value working hard to get a reputation, I can still be recognised around Riverton and Central England perhaps for the work I am able to achieve and I do not have to get into new trouble.”

Diego describes what Funaley did for him:

“It changed my values. Showed me what the big wide world was about, helped me sort out my finances and gave me a fresh start for the future. I did not want to let my family down again, I realised how other people felt... for example my mum was only trying to help me. I also enjoyed it so much.”

A Job as a Youth Worker

Diego’s OCN qualifications at the Funaley Centre enabled him start youth work straight away. He started volunteering and then decided he wanted to do youth work and help young people.

“My motivation to become a youth worker was that I started on the streets and I have been there, done that had all the experiences of it and I basically just wanted to get people out of the boat that I was in. Eh, and that was not long ago. ... I can give my experiences to other people and say “this is how it should be and not how you want it to be.”

Diego had started work as a teaching assistant at one of the schools linked to Funaley during fieldwork. The placement at the Funaley Centre, his qualifications and a pledge to continue training and earning more qualifications earned him the job. Diego’s had built his career via the activities, mentoring and opportunities offered by the Funaley Centre. Diego now enjoys the job he is doing. He does not want to become a teacher because he thinks the curriculum and bureaucracy restrict teachers. Diego is keen to see young people in the Funaley area achieve and succeed.

“I have had a couple of people come up and thank me for the help I gave them. ... they probably have learned things from me but they haven’t realized it as such, because I picked up my skills and did not realise till I was much more mature learner that I picked them off certain people. And that is only because I can see them working now and still delivering them same skills that were delivered to me.”

As a teaching assistant in a school for disaffected young people he is able to work with young people where “they are at.” He thinks this is important, also He thinks because of his experience he can support the young people who are undergoing similar tensions and pressure.

“Like I said it is the level you are on and youth work is to your young person as a whole and not as a learner or someone to be taught and looked down at”

“Yeah I looked at it (the past) as if to say ‘was I really in that situation? And is this how I really was?’ “I am hoping that they (young people) are picking up the same skills and qualities as I did, err... to work as a team player and to also be an individual. Not to follow their peers if they are going the wrong way. This is exactly what I am trying to deliver to the YPs because I have been exactly through the stages, I have had the teaching and now I am the one that is teaching. So, basically, just to draw them out of where they are coming from. I have had a few successes but obviously you do not always get 100%.”

R: *“How do you feel about those?”*

D: *Oh yeah, I am quite proud of it just to look back now and see that they are all in work”.*

Diego says the skills young people need to survive are not restricted to only academic. They would need to “survive out there in the real world with all its pressures.” He points out some notable skills:

“Team work, self confidence, respect, self esteem, life skills, social skills – Yeah of course they learn to control emotions, and they learn how to deal with them and come over their own problems as well. I help them jump the fence from their own problems and get to the other side of the fence so they have a clean sheet. Skills like just interview skills as well – I will help you out with. I will help you out with anything that would help you out going into the future - talking - anything that would come in your path, I would try and span out so that you have an understanding or at least a bit of experience and that.”

Diego is hailed as one of the many success stories of the Funaley Centre by all the staff at the school and voluntary organisation for the 'remarkable transformation' (teaching staff at Funaley) that enabled him get off the streets and into a stable and comfortable career.

The narrative depicts the trajectory of the young man from the crew world to the public world. Diego's journey was aided significantly by the intervention of the Funaley Centre. He shows how the interventions enabled him to obtain the capabilities to start making good decisions and positively engaging in the public world as a capable individual. The next chapter investigates in more depth the processes that support vulnerable young people.

8.3 Conclusion

The effects of the interventions can sometimes be concrete and measurable as in the case of Diego. Sometimes soft outcomes which are not as definite can contribute to a young person's journey after they have left the organisation. The young people enjoy coming to the voluntary organisations for different reasons. Though a lot of the young people come for social interaction – "to meet my friends so we can have a chat and have a laugh, whatever" (young person Heathtop), others voluntary participation are as complex as Diego's initial reasons. In the end the activities set up by the staff are designed to meet social, emotional as well as academic needs. When the young people choose any of the activities they unwittingly engage in a process that is geared to develop some skill or capability. As always, engaging in the activity presupposes a certain inclination to learning (Theokas, 2005); as well as taking risk and use of knowledge the consequence of which could contribute to the development of capabilities.

The young people interviewed actually preferred spaces where there were clear boundaries and they could be respected and treated fairly. The youth workers rely on methods which enabled them to use discussion and negotiation to show that they are being fair and objective. The Sherbert Study (Shebert, 2007) found that discipline and punishment are a necessary and wanted part of young peoples' lives. As noted above these practices supported the young people to learn to take decisive action and improve their chances of making progress on the journey towards more capable lifestyles.

VOLUME 2

PART IV

PART IV: ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The final part of this thesis contains conceptual and theoretical analysis, conclusions and recommendations. It has five chapters which analyse three key aspects of the findings. The first discusses the vulnerability of the young people, the second analyses the interventions of the voluntary organisations. The third draws together the analysis of the kinds of capabilities achieved as a result of the interventions; the penultimate chapter expands the Capability Approach. The final chapter presents conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter nine is basically a summary of how vulnerable young people spiral into a cycle of dependency and states where they are unable to flourish. It lists the barriers that restrict vulnerable young people from becoming flourishing citizens in the public world. Chapter ten investigates the praxis and pedagogies of the learning communities which make capability development possible for young people; these individual and developmental processes have been truncated and marred by vulnerability and practices in a lifeworld dominated by the gang/crew mentality. Specific activities are unpacked in the examination, which depict how the practice and ethos of the voluntary organisations support communal learning and capabilities for living in the public world.

Chapter eleven examines how the capability approach can be used to interpret the restrictions the vulnerable lifeworld places on the capabilities and functionings of its members. The chapter examines how the strands of the approach developed by Sen and Nussbaum compare in terms of interpreting the capabilities and well-being of vulnerable young people. Drawing from the contribution of other theorists there is more appraisal of the Capability Approach's utility in analysing capabilities and capability development of vulnerable young people. Finally, chapter twelve presents new theoretical contributions to

the Capability Approach based on the means by which capabilities are actually formed, particularly within voluntary organisations.

CHAPTER 9.0 VULNERABLE LIFE-WORLDS: BARRIERS TO CAPABILITY

9.1 Introduction

This chapter integrates the evidence gathered in this study with respect to the vulnerability of young people. The findings are analysed with reference to the theoretical framework. First of all, the chapter explores what living in vulnerable circumstances does to young people. It explores how vulnerable young people are driven into a perilous lifeworld in search of security, friendships and safety. The discussion points out how the vulnerable lifeworld traps young people and diminishes their capabilities. I draw upon the specific vulnerabilities highlighted in this study and investigate how they collaborate to immobilise young people's ability to function. The chapter investigates the social relationship between poverty as discussed in chapter two and exclusion with respect to, access to resources, opportunities and freedoms. It also shows the way excluded young people not only "adapt" their lifestyles to their reality, but also how they develop tough but weak moral and social justification for the lifeworlds they create. The penultimate section discusses barriers which perpetuate the cycle of dependency and vulnerability and the final section depicts the risks and associated perils of young people in these vulnerable lifeworlds.

9.2 The lifeworld of vulnerable young people

In this section analysis of the vulnerable life world will touch on the layers, characteristics and effects of vulnerability as observed in this study. The discussion also investigates the way a vulnerable lifeworld is formed and the ethos and structure of groups distinguishing it from the

public lifeworld. Lastly, the section outlines the illusions that make the lifeworld of vulnerability seemingly appealing.

Susman, et al (1984) summarise vulnerability as “the degree to which different classes of society are differentially at risk” (p: 264). This definition summarises the background of the vulnerable young people identified in this study. They often were embedded in poor families and deprived communities. Some of them had difficulty meeting physiological needs; they lived in hostels or care homes on limited budgets. There were problematic family situations, particularly shown by parents who could provide little leadership, guidance or support in terms of community connections and skills for living in the public world. Some of the young people were also restricted from participating, contributing and learning from others because of a disability and traumas sustained *via* past neglect or abuse (Meltzer, 2002). All the vulnerable young people sought to meet their deficit needs (Maslow, 1943) and some of them strayed into the complex world of gangs and relationships with local crew for economic, safety and recognition purposes.

The vulnerable lifeworld is depicted by the young people as a chaotic, amoebic space.

Relationships are constantly strained and tensions run high because of the activities and values the groups adhere to. There is little consideration for the thoughts and feelings of others or even those of group members. Since only ephemeral pleasures are sought and esteemed the stability of the lifeworld seems to be constantly threatened.

The complexity of the vulnerable lifeworld is compounded by the socioeconomic deprivation evident in the lives of the vulnerable young people involved in the study, particularly, those in the Ilkridge and Funaley area. In many families, parents either worked long hours to make ends meet or relied entirely on State benefits, the former had difficulty meeting their children’s emotional and psychological needs which they in turn sought elsewhere. Parents who relied on

the welfare system seemed to model dependency to their young family members (E.g. Heather's mother). These types of vulnerability are commonly recognised in academic and policy discourse. The Social Exclusion Unit (1999, 2000, and 2004) found that 90% of young people who are despondent or disengaged have been brought up in disadvantaged circumstances, usually socially excluded families who live in poor neighbourhoods. Lloyd, et al (2001) also refer to the multidimensional impact of poor socioeconomic conditions, characterised by poor housing, insufficient nutrition, little or no amenities, leisure activities and inadequate education on lifestyles.

While the economic connections are more obvious, the social dimension is less so. The influence of social deprivation on general wellbeing and capabilities is made by Putnam (2000) showing linkages between economic and social capital. Putnam used the sociological concept of social capital to describe the thick but invisible connections between members of a community which in his view is a powerful resource. Social capital relates to social networks and shared values which bind people together and act as a source of support. Putnam shows how weak economic conditions have corrosive effects on social circumstances - personal motivation, voice, self esteem, confidence and even social networks. Such insecurities amplify the culture of dependency and despondency of the socially excluded. For instance, the lives of vulnerable young people in the study was characterised by intertwining insecurities. Those in independent living or in care had minimal economic and social capital; food, shelter, care and guardianship were unstable, while those with learning difficulties often lacked agency and independence. Their lives and sometimes choices were controlled by others. They displayed lower levels of motivation for education and weaker affectionate concerns than their peers. Another important feature of vulnerability suffered by the young people is a sense of loss or functionality. This type of insecurity (Philip and Rayhan, 1984) is often masked by emotional reactions, typically those of

anger, bullying and aggression which mask the uncertainties and lack of self confidence perpetrators have.

The interviewees blamed the deficiencies in their environment for the apathy and low motivation which led to disruptive and antisocial behaviour. “There is not much to do around here really,” Sam at Heathtop noted, arguing that young people need entertainment and attention. Diego’s mother complained about the “lack of male role models” in the Funaley area - “no one to take her son fishing”. Young people with learning disabilities display similar frustration or even anger because of their inability to be functional in communities. They question why they cannot take responsibility - “do it on my own”. These individuals expressed feelings of powerlessness, “things out of control” and “not knowing what to do”. Vulnerable young people desire to achieve functionings similar to the rest of the population and they want to gain recognition, but have difficulty finding meaningful means. In the interviews Heather described how she sought “respect”, while Diego was drawn to the “V.I.P” status of local gangs. This notion of craving for significance, appreciation, value and belonging reverberate throughout the interviews.

As a response to their predicament the interviewees displayed:

1. Lack of respect for others and little respect for authority – use of inappropriate and demeaning language; distrust of police, social workers and teachers.
2. Irrational decision making – Taking advice and guidance from peers and parents who actively encourage and pay for cigarettes and alcohol or shop keepers- who sell cigarettes to underage children.
3. Disrespect to their often weary communities – recognised as “bad” young people who wear ‘hoodies’.
4. Unhealthy habits regarded as normal - use of illegal drugs by family members.

5. Behaviour characterised by attacking and humiliating people who ‘disrespect them’.

The vulnerability of these young people is perpetuated, as shown above, by their circumstances. They are not fortunate to have role models who teach them to respect people and boundaries (Benson, 2007). Their parents and their local communities do not always dissuade them from substance abuse or disrespect for the law which damages their long term health and well being. The proliferation of gangs encourages them to join gangs so as to seek protection, revenge or just status.

The capabilities of young people who have been excluded from mainstream education are affected in three ways. Firstly, the conditions that brought about the exclusion. As stated above the young people were excluded mainly for disruptive behaviour, which behavioural support services linked to problems at home (Riverton, LEA, 2006; Hayden, 1996). As such conditions are not altered, their behaviour and attitudes continues to exclude them and impact on other freedoms of association. Secondly, the young people acknowledged that these excluding circumstances make them feel insignificant. They describe humiliating processes, which they believed were not designed to support them. The youth workers verified these accounts arguing that school exclusion, for example, often leaves the young people with minimal amounts of motivation, little or no confidence in their academic ability and low self-esteem (Blyth and Milner, 1993). Thirdly, the support services put in place to educate the young people or help them get back into school or public life often fail (Abdelnoor, 2007). The young people are, therefore, left without opportunities to learn basic life skills; instead by relying on negative peer pressure they may join gangs.

Sliding into the crew world

The confusion and uncertainty in the vulnerable lifeworlds appears to be projected as pessimism towards other people and life in general. Antagonism, resentment or even violence seems to be normal towards families and communities outside the space. There are perceptions that support agencies - social services, health professionals and schools - are responsible for a lot of the inadequacies in the communities; opposition to such agencies was expressed passionately in observation sessions. Often the vulnerable young people get into fights and arguments because they do not have the capabilities to manage their emotions or seek proper channels of redress when they feel they are being disrespected or abused. Unfortunately, their poor socio-political skills impede access to forms and structures of support. Other people who may want to offer them support shriek at the negative behaviour and irrational choices they seem to make. Vulnerable young people therefore are more likely to befriend their peers in similar circumstances, also estranged from the public world.

Crime seems to be widespread in the lifeworld of vulnerable people. The kinds of petty crime associated with most of the young people are shop lifting, drunken behaviour, neighbourhood disturbances, evading fares and fines etc. A number of them have been served Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOS) by the police and some were involved with Youth Offending Teams. A few are indeed involved with drugs lords and violent gangs. The high incidence of economic related crime within such groups is verified by Home Office statistics (Home Office, 2009). The stealing starts because they do not have access to desirable items; some are coached by family members or friends who are persistent offenders (Cullingford, 1999). Young people in these circumstances become at risk of becoming repeat offenders who exert a heavy burden on the criminal justice system (Cullingford, 1999) and the welfare system.

Education does not seem to be a priority for most families who are vulnerable to social exclusion; they are more prepared to defend their “happiness” and autonomy in the face of challenges at school. Most of the parents interviewed did not have confidence their wards had the capabilities to progress academically beyond senior school. 80% of the parents interviewed had limited education and training; they are in low paying jobs and have minimal assets. Their children would not have the academic advantage most of their peers in affluent communities have, such as parents and grandparents who read books and newspapers, watch documentaries, discuss political and social issues. Only one parent spoke of her aspirations for her child to go to university. She had struggled to raise her children alone as a teenage mother and did not want them to lose the opportunities provided by higher education. The parent has become a mature student at college because she wants to encourage her children to aspire and achieve all they could. Bynner (2005) describes this as a dearth of human, social and identity capital. Bynner argues that being associated with people in social circles influences the formation of identities and our worldview – what it means to be human. Once the gap between a person and the public world is created, the chasm keeps widening via socio-cultural processes of power which are replicated in educational institutions (Walker, 2007a). An estimated two million children left primary school without learning to read, write or do arithmetic in the UK in 2007 (DFES, 2008).

In addition to such deficiency, young people may grow up in homes where no parent(s) has a job. This is another socio-cultural capital resource which reinforces and inspires attitudes of creativity, participation and interdependence. Young people in care homes are particularly faced with such phenomena. What is at stake here is the education (both formal and non-formal) that is needed to integrate young people into economic life. Plans of participating in the labour market, household budgeting and savings for holidays, mortgages and retirement are non-existent. Young people in such circumstances will gain most of their civil education and

knowledge from friends on the streets. Consequently, their value systems, relationships and actions are formed by their skewed understanding. Parents and care workers are unable or cannot teach acceptable social norms about discipline, consequences for one's action, delayed gratification and empathy.

Active citizenship is a vague concept to people in this predicament. They are preoccupied with complex issues and problems, having no identity or function in public spaces. The effects of vulnerability result in a domino-like effect trapping its inmates in a vicious circle. The craving for basic requirements, security, acceptance and belonging are exaggerated by incapacities and learning opportunities. Unable to make confident autonomous choices young people find that they are drawn to alternative social formation with "mates" in the same circumstances and they form a substitute lifeworld in which they attempt to regain their independence, expand their choices to include illegal and unacceptable norms and set alternative standards for "justice and recognition".

In the vulnerable lifeworld some activities can be both legal and noble, for example street music, arts and entertainment. The competence to form and maintain these alternative groups where they feel loved, valued and respected is equally commendable. It should be said that not all the gangs are outright violent or anarchic. They could act as spaces for learning and sharing. However, the unruly nature of the groups and the lack of emotional capabilities members' exhibit usually mean the space is hostile, fragile, alienated and non-expansive. Such groups often do not last and collapse as a result of the injustices and lack of development prevalent within them.

The distinction between social networks in the public world and those in the vulnerable are marked. Young people naturally form networks of relationships with peers, as they grow more

independent from their families. This kind of bonding is absolutely normal and in fact desired according to psychologists (Hirschi, 1969). The relationships formed under these circumstances are normally socially interdependent, organically developing amongst peers with similar preferences. It is assumed that young people would test their social capabilities within these new relationships. The young people often refer to their social groups as loyal “mates” or “my crew” meaning people who they trust, depend on and support. However in the types of gangs vulnerable young people develop, the kinds of relationships formed are considerably different.

Attraction to gang culture is often based on similarity of circumstances. People become friends because they share a similar experience like being excluded, being in care or having a disability. This is understandable; the common ground establishes discussion, support and sharing. At times, these clusters or groups of young people would be required to attend the same type of institutions – Connexions, Youth Offending Centres, Special schools or Colleges, behavioural management units run by Social Services or similar facilities run by the LEA. The disadvantage here is obvious. As Williamson (2006) and Aldridge (2008) have noted, the members do not have many positive experiences or skills to bring to the group. The combined repertoire of their negative experiences and collective harmful emotions can be disastrous. So, though like other teenagers these groups may be forming loyal and reciprocal relationships, the ethos, judicial and operational structures are weak.

In some of the gangs, violence, criminal behaviour and illegal dealings are commonplace. Diego, for instance, joined a group that was known for evoking chaos, fear and selling illegal substances. Gang members solved conflicts using violence and intimidation. They used the resources available to them and would not have thought of dealing with conflict in a discursive or legal manner. People in these kinds of gangs do not trust the police, public governance structures or the judicial system. Gangs like this exclude members of the public world by their

actions. The public world equally is suspicious of the group. The growth of “job culture” in the United Kingdom is often linked to antisocial behaviour, delinquency and violent crime (Golden, et al, 2004). Unfortunately, many young people are classified as jobs and delinquent by the public and sometimes law enforcement agencies when they are not. The stereotyping does not help young people susceptible to such behaviour. The activities propagate a sense of achievement, feelings of power, value and self worth. The group finds a way to justify this behaviour as necessary to gain “value”, “respect” and “achievement”.

Where criminal behaviour is not the norm, gang members are known for bullying, fighting, wild partying and sometimes, petty theft. The more peaceful groups can hardly be characterised as gangs, nevertheless, indecent activities can be common amongst such groups with members deciding to make jest of a member by taking away his shoes or clothes in the winter for example. What these gangs presume to be harmless fun can border on the insane or outrageous in public life. These kinds of activities whether they be mild, moderate or extreme are undertaken mainly because the gang members fail to be reflective about the long term repercussions of their activities. There is little or no regard for the rule of law and justice. The rights and feelings of others and the general public are often ignored. The young people are so engrossed ‘in the moment’ and do not take any account of their future and how their actions and consequences would impact on long term objectives. Often they have no long term objectives.

The gangs and groups are not structured democratically and power relations are often transitory and authoritarian. The modes of communication are not diplomatic; shifting power structures determine the levels of performance and violence members have to attain to recognition. Injustice is rife as the notions of trust, responsibility and duty are skewed and haphazard. Members engage in practices without much thought or choice, as such very serious

crimes could be committed that are detrimental to the lives of both members and others – victims or strangers. The gang structure and ethos does not support the personal needs of its members. Members keep feeling obligated to perform duties towards the gang; however, the gang cannot provide the kind of development and sustenance its members need to live functional lives. Even inherent needs of satisfaction and belonging go unmet. Members have spoken of a deep seated feeling of “worthlessness and emptiness” which some have claimed come from doing routine inconsequential tasks (O’Connor and Lewis, 1999). Whilst friendships in the public world can last for long periods and are expansive, gang membership is exclusionist and insular. Gang members can hardly maintain meaningful relationships outside their circle of influence. Even inter-gang relationships are fractured and continuously reconstituted in ways that leave members disillusioned, they speak of being let down, put down or disrespected by peers in the gangs (Mahoney, et al, 2004). This relates to the focus on transient benefits – “feeling good”, egocentric attitudes and quick paths to success, wealth and fame (often criminal).

Though the vulnerable lifeworld is so ephemeral, false and shallow, vulnerable young people will often choose to remain in such a space because it is the only social space they belong to. They may be unable or unwilling to acknowledge or even perceive the fragility and futility of existence in this lifeworld. This occurs because the public world has become repulsive and repugnant to them. Society, the media, insensitive peer bullying, inequality and discrimination highlight their feelings of failure, incapacity and not belonging, this keeps them ensnared in the vulnerable life world. Political and social systems also buttress the misguided values aligned with materialism, fame, beauty and performance. The young people like to be accepted in the public world but have a false belief of the conditions that will make this possible. Like Dama some believe that a change in economic circumstances would amend their relationship with the public world, because economic wealth and status would force people to recognise and respect

them. The youngsters in the vulnerable lifeworld cannot understand that the capabilities they lack - empathy, diplomacy, negotiation, goal setting and emotional stability keep them from engaging positively in the public world. In the “real world” as one youth worker put it they will be expected to show reliability, consistency, and communication and collaboration skills. In reality vulnerable young people resent the public world because they do not have the know-how for dealing with it.

Young people with learning disabilities may not be violent and disruptive; when they are they often do so without knowledge of the consequences of their actions. They become members of the vulnerable lifeworld by default, as they are often not welcome, included or given functional roles in the public world. Like others members of the vulnerable lifeworld they lack capabilities for engaging in the public sphere and can be frustrated by the lack of recognition from the others. Since they cannot engage with the public world their limited capabilities are often diminished by the lack of freedoms and opportunities to learn and develop skills in the vulnerable lifeworld.

The public world’s attitude towards vulnerable young people can in effect reinforce their dislike of “normal life”. Without capabilities, entry into the public world - school or in the community – is exceptionally strange and difficult. Heather and Hero, for example, felt they were being discriminated against, while others describe feelings of not “fitting in”. Particular opposition to those who demand conformity may develop against teachers, legal officers, community leaders, sometimes peers who are achieving in the public world. A certain dislike of self may even be noticed as the young people describe feelings of disrespect, feeling unloved, undermined and devalued. This kind of misrecognition is identified by Honneth (2003) who argues that recognition is a fundamental human need; it is necessary for development and functioning.

Where people are not acknowledged they form gangs, which Judith Aldridge (2008) noted begin as mass social networks, haphazardly designed to foster cooperation, consolation, sympathy and support. According to Aldridge most youth gangs in the United Kingdom are not necessarily well organised. She notes that the ritual of “joining” a gang is not exactly discernible and clear. Young people drift into these social formations and their decisions to remain within the group are supported by their circumstances and needs, which in their view keep the vulnerable lifestyle within a gang appealing. The vulnerable lifeworld is the only space they have to “socialise”, be appreciated and “be respected”. They are with “friends” or their crew and it is a subculture they adapt to their perception of reality. The crew is their world. They are forced to make decisions based on the knowledge, resources and situations (existing capabilities – Sen, 2000) they have. In these groups (crew world) they meet people who feel the same way about society, institutions and the public world, that is people who agree that they are victims of “bad teachers”, “stupid social workers”, “insensitive police officer” or “unsympathetic head teacher”.

This section concentrated on the issues and concepts the study raised surrounding vulnerability. The discussion supports our understanding of how vulnerability leads to and perpetuates a lifestyle in young people which is ephemeral and fictitious. In the next segment the attention turns to the barriers to capability created by the vulnerable subculture, of gangs and groups or crew.

9.3 Vulnerability, dependency and recognition

The study revealed that vulnerable young people are detached from the public world by inabilities to engage with its members, processes and institutions. The research also shows that through the mechanisms of social exclusion, young people from deprived

backgrounds fail to learn and develop skills for socialisation, economic participation and civil engagement. Three specific barriers identified in the study are discussed below.

Rootlessness

The findings show that the vulnerable young people had difficulty establishing functioning and flourishing pathways of existence in their families and communities. This concept known as “rootlessness” is defined by Cedric Cullingford (1999) as a state of disconnectedness from the home, family and community. The causes of the disconnections are linked to the effects of poverty, weak social skills and disadvantages of a social and physical nature. Cullingford refers to other causes such as the lack of ontological security in homes and communities exasperated by the effects of modernism. The Children’s Society Report (2009) referred to in chapter two supports this assertion, stating how young people who feel they are not carefully nurtured, valued or recognised fail to develop basic capabilities. The youth workers clearly pinpoint how such circumstances combine to create the instability and despondency evident in the lives of vulnerable young people.

The young people in this study reported difficulties adjusting to school life and learning, problems with their immediate family and inability to form positive relationships. Since they were unable to develop the simplest and most basic capabilities in their developmental years, links with the public world as they grow older are invariably limited. Their link to public functioning via family and community life is almost as it were severed by the lack of capabilities. Essentially this context of “not been part” or having no roots in the public world epitomises their exclusion.

Normlessness

The second barrier is associated with Emile Durkheim's (1893/1933) anomie or the concept of "normlessness". It is a "condition in which there is an absence of any organised system of social norms or values that allow an individual to choose the most appropriate action in a given social situation" (Durkheim, 1983). Durkheim believed that human societies need the interdependence of shared labour, civil and political regulation and (religious) altruism to achieve this functioning. These social norms helped individuals establish their status and roles as well as "active and permanent feelings of mutual dependence" (Giddens, 1972). Without these, Durkheim postulated deviant behaviour, dissatisfaction with life and ultimately conflict and suicide would mar communities.

Brand and Ollerearshaw (2008) in their work also show crew world behaviour as normless and isolationist in line with the arguments of Durkheim, Giddens (1972) and Merton (1938). As exemplars they describe treacherous acts of deception, infidelity and theft that become accepted within these groups (cf chapter five). However, Brand and Ollerearshaw show that the echopraxic behaviour (somewhat involuntary imitation of the observed actions of another individual) observed within the crew world is reversible, because members can develop the capabilities to make better choices. This argument is proven by the case studies of Heather and Diego (chapters five and eight) who displayed such normlessness but changed environments and learning companions to overcome their vulnerability. They developed capabilities that enabled them to kick-start their socio-psycho functionings and thus maintain positive social networks, participate in social management/organisation and find meaning and happiness both emotionally and physically.

Despondency

Another barrier revealed in the study is associated with the discourse on delinquency and truancy (Abdeldnoor, 1999; Blair, 2001). Despondency is described as a range of feelings associated with inadequacy, hopelessness and displeasure with one's circumstances or the way one's environment has being shaped. It follows on from the first barrier of rootlessness, demonstrating that social bonds and connections with the public world are either missing or disjointed resulting in frustration. The manifestations of which are delinquent behaviour or retraction. There are two dimensions at play here. The first is the inadequacy experienced by individuals that led to despondency; this can be directly linked to lack of capabilities as discussed in chapter seven. On another level, despondent individuals lack the capabilities to cope with the situations they experience, they also do not have the ability to seek or gain support. They need both basic capabilities and specialised ones to contend with the resulting disorganisation that permeates their lives. Delinquent behaviour and delinquent subcultures emerge in response to special problems from which members of mainstream society are exempt according to subculture theorists Miller (1959), Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967). They show that the value system of some subcultures not only demands but also expects violence in certain social situations for example in the vulnerable life world. Other subculture theorists argue conversely that reaction to society's injustices and inequalities are to blame for non-utilitarian acts of violence and despondent behaviour by young gangs or subcultures (Matza, 1964; Cohen, 1972 and Cohen, 1955).

9.4 Lives of vulnerability and risk

It is obvious that vulnerable young people need support to overcome rootlessness, normlessness and despondency. The young people are often aware that they are in need and actively seek support systems where they can find some kind of “home” to establish roots, conform to norms, gain recognition, cheer in achieving and safety. In circumstances where the young people already live on the fringes of society, in excluded spaces and dysfunctional contexts, they are invariably drawn to gangs and groups which pretentiously offer the support mechanisms they seek. Gangs and groups offer a place in their community, safety from threats and bullies, deceitful economic gain and the somewhat simplistic sensation of feeling “respected” or like “V.I.P”.

The reasons vulnerable young people joined and stayed in the crew world were simple. The young people described their needs to be recognised, to feel safe and wanted, to have better control over their financial circumstances and to be able to assert authority or not have to take orders. They wanted recognition, power, safety and economic control. Diego and others describe the “V.I.P. status” they felt was pleasurable because they were feared and revered or because they did not “want to be told what to do”. Did they get what they wanted in the exclusionary spaces carved by gangs? Diego, who was the most involved, explains how his experiences were mistakenly construed as progressive. However, this was only an impression as he later discovered the high price he had to pay to remain revered by the gang. Indeed, the atmosphere was un-conducive for developing the real skills and capabilities he needed to become a functioning citizen.

The gang and groups described by the young people provide limited utility, for the price of memberships jeopardises the young people’s development and restricts their perspective

of the choices that are actually available. However, because the young people are in such dire straits and feel all the avenues of opportunity or choice have been exhausted in the public world they depend on the gangs and groups. The more dependent they become they more involved and entangled they become in the crew world; partaking in activities that put their health, freedom, wellbeing, safety and even life at risk. They also seem inclined to develop behaviour that is antisocial and somewhat irrational, though it must be noted that the young people in question have had limited opportunities to develop “normally”, they have been obliged to make choices from a limited set of alternatives and ultimately they lack critical voice. According to Blunden (2004:11) critical voice “is the capacity of a person living ‘inside’ a society to form views available from a position ‘outside’ that society”. Sen (2002a; 476 -477) describes this crucial capability as one which permits questions and evaluations of norms and activities within a community, he even argues that information from outside the group should be able to influence or inspire this kind of critical agency.

The vulnerable life world is a subculture that can be described as anti-utilitarian (Cohen, 1958). Its norms, values and belief systems raise many concerns about the isolation, dependency and diminution of young people trapped in it. Are the members flourishing and happy participants of society? Cohen (1958) suggests that life in the vulnerable life world is a pursuit of a mirror image of the good life. Members think and feel that they are achieving and functioning, although they are aware that their beings and doings are an inverted frame of those in the public world. Since subcultures exist within the larger society, not apart from it there are also questions about distribution, rights and justice. The groups of excluded young people described in Funaley, Ilkridge and Heathtop formed joined crews in search of identity and recognition because of the feelings of inferiority and isolation they experienced (wanting respect, V.I.P status, friendship). Some of them

expressed feelings of neglect by mainstream society. Collectively, the negative connotations, poor skills, poor links with the public world and unviable value system that characterise functioning in the crew world produce undesired consequences for its members and the larger society. Members of the crew world often engage in antisocial behaviour, they do not practice fair, just or ethical means of participating in daily life. The emotional and physical toil of their activities on the health, legal and educational services are significant.

Cullingford (1999), argues that egoism and isolation in vulnerable lifeworlds help to perpetuate the instability and despair of young people in the space (or crew). The dependency upon which the young people maintain their links within this subculture denies them freedom to become self-determining about the way their lives should develop. Gangs are not interested in the individual and his or her needs; rather they function by maintaining stranglehold allegiances which ensure conformity to the interests of the gang as expressed by its leaders. The regimes of power express violence towards dissenters or members who break the rules by exercising critical agency. This framework denies members the capacity to grow and develop their own identities and capabilities. The vicious circle of dependency and insecurity is does not provide security or stability; instead gangs diminish individual capability and exacerbate rootlessness, members are perpetually seeking safety and harnesses of support. In essence, members of the crew world are incapable of functioning or flourishing without the development of social capacities and the freedom that will enable these. The intervention of the voluntary organisations provides a turning point for vulnerable young people caught in the throes of the crew world; these will be discussed in the following chapter.

9.5 Conclusion

The lifeworld of vulnerability is markedly different to the public world. Without capabilities people are excluded by the governance systems, political structure, socio-economic arrangement and psychosocial language of the public world. Vulnerable young people operate in a world where judgements, values and meanings are embedded socially, culturally and to some extent historically, in their vulnerabilities. Norms are structured and constituted in the lifeworld of the vulnerable young people depending on factors relating to their collective vulnerability, as well as the interpretations they derive from these situations. Each person's situatedness within this world is context dependent. On this basis, subjective meaningful action (Lawy, 2006) is justified and taken. The superficiality of these actions is exposed by violence, illegality, fickleness and unpredictability in the vulnerable lifeworld. The structure of this lifeworld is actually damaging to the wellbeing and development of its members since it does not promote independence or enhance long-term opportunities.

CHAPTER 10.0 DEVELOPING CAPABILITIES THROUGH LEARNING COMMUNITIES

10.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the different pedagogic strategies voluntary organisations use to develop the capabilities of vulnerable young people. It focuses on two major aspects of education: how potentials are developed by improving the repertoire of skills vulnerable young people can access; and how the institutions expand the opportunities their clients have to negotiate and use their emerging capabilities with the help and support of the learning community. With these two broad dimensions voluntary organisations develop themselves as learning communities. Through these learning communities, the interventions are channelled to deal with the barriers that entrenched vulnerable young people in a lifeworld that denied them freedom. The chapter will also discuss specific aspects of the learning communities, first of all the membership framework that permits vulnerable young people to become involved in a culture so unlike their subculture. This section analyses the conditions of membership. Then the chapter turns to the learning facilitators – the staff in voluntary organisations and their practice as non-formal educators. Next, the chapter examines the pedagogies used in voluntary organisations. Finally an analysis of the bridge from vulnerability to capability is developed depicting the major capabilities young people develop during their transition and how these make their lifeworld, agency and practice significantly different.

10.2 Developing learning communities for capability

According to Kilpatrick et al (2004):

Learning communities are made up of people who share a common purpose. They collaborate to draw on individual strengths, respect a variety of perspectives, and actively promote learning opportunities. The outcomes are the creation of a vibrant, synergistic environment, enhanced potential for all members, and the possibility that new knowledge will be created.

The Centres organise themselves into communities specifically designed to dismantle the barriers that keep the young people from participating in the public world – rootlessness, normlessness and despondency. Therefore emphasis seems to be placed on “the embodied and social dimensions of learning” (Lawy, 2006), rather than cognitive functioning, actions of individuals or the peculiarity of how vulnerabilities undermine the young people’s capacities (Coffield et al., 2004).

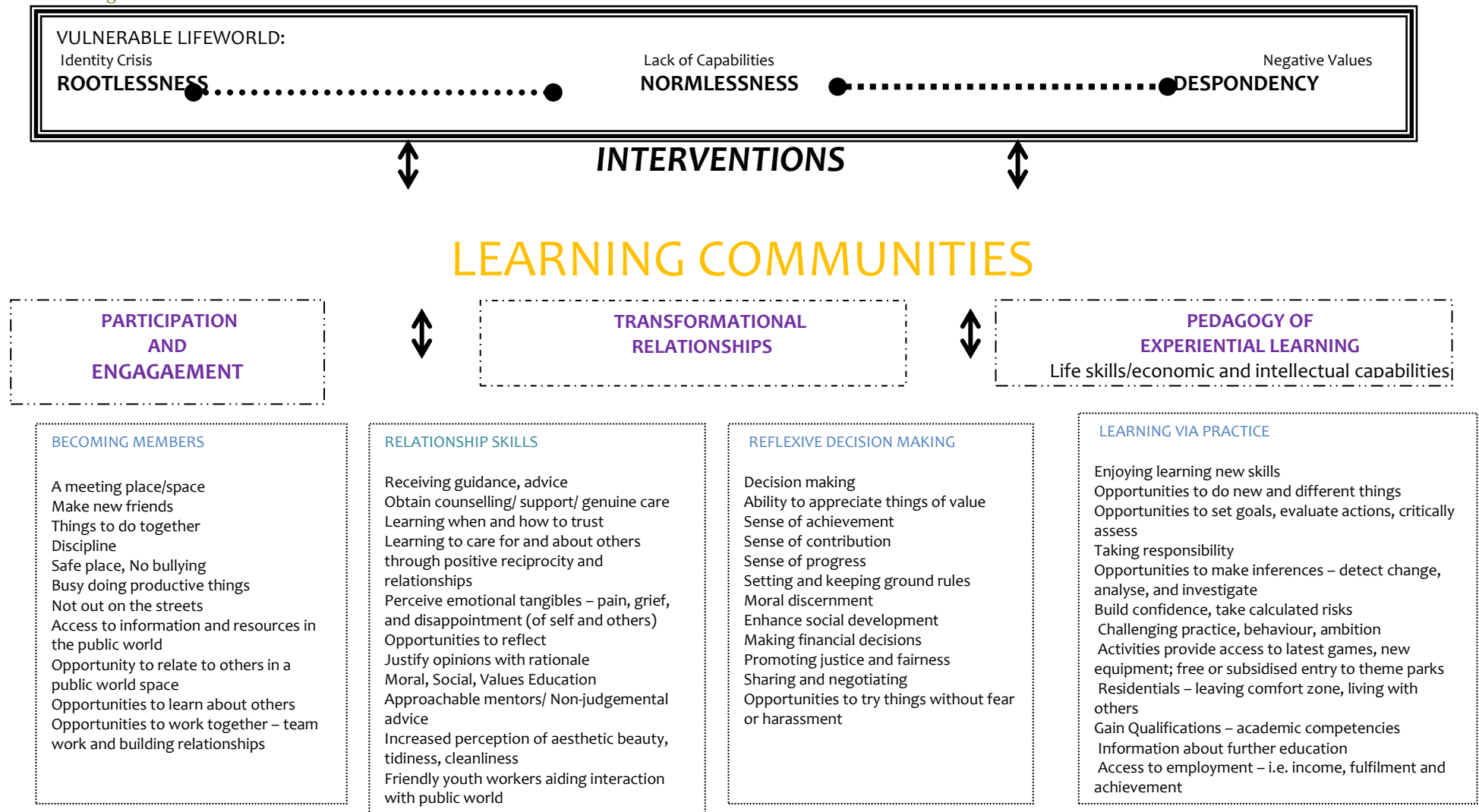
Learning communities welcome individuals and support their transition from vulnerability, a position of being isolated and dependent, towards capability, a position of confidently being able to be and do. A vulnerable young person can flourish by developing and harnessing capabilities and converting them resourcefully and purposively into valued functionings. The chapter will discuss various stages of the transition exercise in turn. The following section focuses on how individuals are able to seize the opportunities afforded by their membership of a learning community to begin a different trajectory away from their vulnerable lifeworld.

Figure 10.1 shows how learning communities deal with the barriers of rootlessness, normlessness and despondency using the tripod discussed above. They provide a space for participation and engagement, build transformational relationships and employ pedagogies or opportunities that empower the young people to be reflexive and experiential learners. The young people's perceptions of the tripod of intervention that characterise the learning space are classified into four divisions showing the capabilities they are gaining.

- ❖ The three dimensions form the tripod of transformation which learning communities design strategically to combat the corrosiveness of normlessness, rootlessness and despondency. The character of the vulnerable lifeworld i.e. occupied by members of a crew (group of friends) who have problems with their identity (self esteem, confidence, reputation, disposition to others and life, worldview etc), incapacities (powerlessness, perceived failure, inadequacies, hurt or damaged lives and bodies, etc) and negative values (distorted moral fibre, tendency to rebel and be aggressive, pursuing a dysfunctional "good life" as a means of justifying feelings of inadequacy.
- ❖ It shows the three broad functionings voluntary organisations aim to help vulnerable young people achieve in order to counter the rootlessness, normlessness and despondency which form the core of their vulnerability. For them to be capable and functioning citizens of the public world they need to participate, understand and responsibly endorse rules and governance systems and make reflexive, informed contributions
- ❖ The young people gain multiple capabilities in order to achieve these functionings. The voluntary organisations are the learning communities creating

the space and facilitation for these capabilities to be developed and combined appropriately.

Figure 10.1 How Interventions tackle the barriers of the crew world



10.3 The practices of engagement, relationship building and experiential learning

The interventions of voluntary organisations can be seen as a three-pronged strategy to deal with the three barriers of rootlessness, normlessness and despondency described above. The Centres form communities of learning by gathering groups of young people and engaging them in the pursuit of common interests. The goal of the community very simply is to “have fun” but underneath that thin objective, various layers of meaning can be unpacked. There are moral, socio-cultural and ideological dimensions which imply that flourishing young people who have fun together are drawn away from alternative communities where antisocial behaviour, theft or violence are practiced. The practices of the learning communities are supported activities that enable members of the community to participate, build transformational relationships, and to develop pedagogy of experiential learning. I will discuss the three dimensions used in learning communities in turn.

I Participation and engagement: becoming a member

The first phase for vulnerable young people who join learning communities is to become members. This involves a number of key dimensions which the young people have to adhere to without reservation. Then members develop relationships and meaning in the groups and start on transformational trajectories towards capability by engaging and participating. Members of the leaning community are obliged to

- Belong: making a commitment
- Subscribe to rules which they structure and develop for the common good
- Engage and participate in activities and programs

The Centres require that their clients have to make a commitment to be members. Members identify with the community, work for its interest and value the collective image and status of being “in the group”. They have to subscribe to a basic set of rules and regulations which necessitate respect for other people, involvement in activities, making contributions and supporting the community. As described in the previous part, the vulnerable young people may struggle with such regulations, boundaries and rules of engagement, as they are not used to tolerance, these forms of respect and governing structures or equal participation. Fortunately because the learning communities have items they desire in the form of games, access to day trips, access to music studios and the internet etc, vulnerable young people begin to engage. They have to learn the discipline and negotiation techniques the communities require.

These simple commitments support capability development in the learning communities – they mean vulnerable young people have to be proactive in understanding rules, ensuring they keep the rules and evaluating them. The evaluation exercise is a process through which all members are able to contribute to rules and regulations guiding the club by presenting arguments for rules which make the learning community a safe place where the goals can be achieved by all.

Participation designed to tackle rootlessness

The activities used to encourage participation are diverse means of positive social interaction which are mediated by the youth workers mentoring and dialogic approaches. They include providing a safe place to meet new friends, play, learn to keep rules of engagement, learning to take their membership commitment seriously by acts of reciprocity and care for the community. This intervention enables the young people to develop a sense of belonging in the public world and begin to gain the social capabilities

and interpersonal skills for becoming rooted in their communities and the society in general. In safe spaces of small teams there is guidance and a comfortable space for trial and error, so young people do not have to be ashamed of “not knowing” and protection from taunts as the youth workers facilitate games, interactive educational games and play groups. As participants the new members are empowered to learn to build and maintain relationships, negotiate action plans, evaluate behaviour and assess productivity. Good participants make further progress by learning more about how they can improve their competencies. They collaborate with youth workers who provide mentoring relationships, guidance and support, often on an individual basis. The space is also used to test skills and develop them into specialised capabilities that can be used outside the learning environment. Members of the learning community begin to develop capabilities which are nurtured by transformational relationships.

II Building transformational relationships

Members of a learning community are contributors and agents of change through a variety of activities which have multidimensional value. However, the youth workers believe that learning and development can only succeed when it is underpinned by relationships of trust and care which can then transform how vulnerable young people regard themselves and what they are capable of. This section focuses on the qualities of transformational relationships: recognition, relational skills, trust, and mentoring, counselling and guidance.

Recognition: valuing the young people

The ethos of the community is built on the key principles of recognition and respect. This means as workers, mentors or tutors the learning community facilitators are recognizing the worth,

dignity and value of their clients. Respect for all people regardless of their abilities and background. Voluntary organisations employ a variety of staff to run the centres supporting vulnerable young people. The staff all engage with young people, though they may have administrative, managerial or other support based roles. They give the young people their time, learn and play together, adhere to the same rules of engagement and so on. More importantly, the staff that work at the centres have a distinct passion for the clientele. This is true of volunteers as well as those on the pay roll; many of whom have chosen to work with young people so as to support teenage engagement with adulthood and public life.

Youth workers also encourage and model behaviour that empowers the young people to value each other, regardless of ability, background or resources. This is a powerful means of welcoming excluded people from the subculture of gangs who can be valued and recognised simply by their humanity, such dignity is not afforded them in the crew world.

The view that relational engagement with others precipitates a meaningful link with learning (Elias, 1983; UNESCO, 2003) is exemplified in many of the cases. The youth workers purposefully associate with the young peoples' life styles; engaging with things in contemporary youth culture such as music, fashion, TV programmes, cinema releases and games. They are also knowledgeable about football heroes, celebrities, youth icons and popular culture. The youth workers said "we learn these things" so that we can talk in the language of the young people. "I would not normally colour my hair because I like my natural colour, but the young people wanted to do a makeover challenge" (Jenny – youth worker). The youth workers make these sacrifices to demonstrate they value and appreciate the young people's worth and talent. It was also not uncommon to find youth workers with youthful tattoos and fashionable jewellery. Youth workers also had good working knowledge of street language and youth slang. Good youth workers are genuine seekers in the educational process; otherwise, the young people can

easily interpret the deceit as imposition. The young people described this as youth workers “being on our level” or “being on the same wavelength” and not looking down on them as if they were objects who needed amendment. Some centres trained the staff in this area just as much as they trained to communicate with deaf, blind or disabled young people.

Relational skills: connecting to transform

Youth workers need to have a specific skill set to be able to work effectively with young people, particularly vulnerable ones who are not interested in public life. Good youth workers are vigilant, sensitive, have empathy, discipline, make good judgements quickly, have good communication skills and are able to engage. Some of the staff have themselves overcome vulnerable lifestyles, thus their experience enables them to engage with the young people in a manner that is insightful and appreciated. The ability to connect with young people is indispensable (Jeffs and Smith, 2001) because this is the foundation upon which youth can relate to youth workers. Also, vulnerable young people are unwilling to associate with the public world because they have found little or no connection with it. Staff that have had similar experiences, especially staff who once struggled with exclusion, homelessness and time in care can become significant companions and mentors. Just as vulnerable young people form clusters with others with whom they share experiences, they begin to develop bonds with adults who are willing to share their own experiences about their vulnerable past.

Metcalfe and Game’s (2006) research on the learner-teacher relationship, has focussed on the ‘I and Thou’ analytical framework of Buber (1958). They state that learning is complemented by good relationships where the exercise is focussed on the “fullness of living” Metcalfe and Game (2007). This relational feature of learning with makes it possible for youth workers to model good behaviour. They show that it is possible to be “cool” and decent at the same time. Youth

workers facilitated the use of appropriate street language in the centres, empowering young people to choose to use “cool” but acceptable language.

Research by the National Youth Agency (2004, 2006a) underpinned the importance of behaviour modelling by significant adults, particularly youth workers. Relational skills enable the youth workers access into the lifeworlds of young people. They would hear, see and listen to things in a manner that is both sensitive and vigilant. Youth workers can thus pick up on cues long before the young person is able to articulate their own problems or issues. Good relational skills also enable young people to articulate experiences that previously they had preferred to remain silent about. Friendliness with the young people also helps them learn about relationships and respect in the public world. Youth workers model how personal boundaries and effective communication build good relationships. Their friendships with the young people should not hamper the smooth running of the centre or their ability to instil discipline and order.

Trust

The transformational relationships are developed on the basis of trust. It is important that youth workers earn the trust of their clients so that healthy relationships and engagement can flourish. Trust is developed over time by sharing stories, believing in young people and giving them opportunities to show meaningful engagement with others so that they can learn to trust. This is important because in the crew world and sometimes at home the young people do not and sometimes cannot trust others. Farrington (1996) notes “harsh and erratic parental discipline” can be linked to delinquent behaviour, common with parents who have emotional and social problems. The Dillon experiment (Dillon et al, 2009) shows that vulnerability in childhood might contribute to apathy, low motivation and reduced ability to experience pleasure in adulthood. Both difficulties Farrington (1996) suggest account for a number of young people’s lack of internal inhibitions. Young people with such inabilities for judgement and reservation need to be encouraged to think

more intelligently about consequences and the nature and effect of their actions. Effective youth workers know “it is important to be in control of your own emotions so that you can give clear and just instructions” (youth worker, Funaley). Young people like to know that they can depend on youth workers to be firm, fair and disciplined.

Effective youth work is also about communicating the right message to young people through words, actions and modelling. Yasmin, a youth worker at Funaley, spoke of the “role modelling” function of youth workers in and outside the centre. “You know that you are constantly been watched and scrutinised”, the young people would be quick to point a finger at the youth worker “you did this or that” to justify their actions, that is why youth workers need to be able to communicate their own reasoning, judgements, mistakes and ambitions. It supports the young people’s understanding of human fallibility, reasoning, empathy, decision making and delayed gratification. In addition to the core function of responding to the problems young people have via effective communication, youth workers also use these skills to manage and exert some control over the flow of information in centres (Blair, 1993). As one youth worker put it “saying the right thing in the right way” is important because ultimately youth workers want their words to be relevant, understood and listened to. Listening is as important as speaking in the communication cycle. Effective youth workers who manage the sessions with assertiveness and clarity, Gerard Blair (1993) points out, communicate, plan and manage competently. These relationships tools help build trust and healthy self image for the relationships in the learning communities.

Mentoring, counselling and guidance

On a general level youth workers may have good relational, disciplinary and communication skills but in order to influence an individual in special ways, certain one-to-one attitudes are obligatory. Engaging with young people can superficially be understood as connecting with their tastes, music, fashion and language. On a much deeper level when young people engage

with significant adults, they want to be able to share internal secrets and passions. Young people like Dama have said they feel they can share these types of intimacies “with people who understand”. “Understanding” can be interpreted in many ways. Sometimes it means someone who knows what it feels like, for example, youth workers like Yasmin and Mike who had trouble at school. Other times young people are able to develop such intimacies with youth workers who “show respect” for their situations without raising the kinds of judgements some people in the public world would. Youth workers, who support the vulnerable, also share their own experiences of overcoming vulnerability so the young people can learn from and relate to their struggles with vulnerability (NYA, 2004; Lloyd et al, 2001). This method is shown to support association, create bonds and develop trust.

Youth work professionals, are facilitators who “learn as much from the experiences” (youth worker) as the young people. Many of the tools of interest in the Centres (Wells, 2000; Engeström, 2004) are situated almost exclusively in the social and affective domain. For example, they learn about adhering to rules, team work, negotiation skills, emotional growth and competencies (particularly dealing with one’s emotions), handling disagreements and conflicts and managing one’s lifestyle. They use everyday tools to promote learning and enhance the quality of the learning community.

Youth workers pointed out that their tasks also involves giving counsel and “guidance not advice” (Charles, Funaley) by challenging assumptions. The mentoring relationship can thrive in the safety of the learning community, and good youth worker watch for opportunities to model appropriate behaviour. This approach is efficient because the organisations secure the commitment of the young people as functional members of the learning community. The activities are designed to induce thought (stir inherent capabilities) and deliberation but it is the duty of professionals to stimulate discussion, reflection, analysis and rationalisation.

Youth workers are able to act responsibly and benevolently so as to be firm and motivating but never overbearing. Youth workers would also be aware of concerns and problems, which would exempt some clients for a brief period from such actions. Some young people would come in to the centres to discuss their problems, while others are shy or unwillingly to ask for help.

Supporting the young person with their difficulties in terms of dealing with a relationship breakdown, the provision of food or shelter (priorities for the client) is as important as the task of developing capabilities. This support is sometimes the main educational need of some of the clients. The pre-session meetings and post-session meetings act as forums for discussing any specific situations with staff. Confidentiality and professionalism needs to be maintained to protect the young people and the relationships.

Youth workers also maintain a safe relationship with parents and wards of vulnerable young people. These connections are important, in this study for example the youth workers helped the young people communicate properly with their families. They guide clients to make phone calls to their parents or friends when they become aware they will be late and model behaviour like owning up to acknowledges personal mistakes and listening to the counsel of others. Youth workers, in effect, act as social mediators enabling communication between vulnerable young people and their parents, schools and local authorities (social services, behavioural offending units etc). Their involvement helps the young people firstly because they can communicate more effectively with agencies and family members via the youth workers. Secondly, they learn to communicate with people in the public world outside of the learning community. The intervention involves understanding the style and language that is most appropriate in different settings and accepting the norms and values of the public world.

Normlessness eroded by reflexive engagement

To tackle the issues of normlessness the learning communities, along with participatory engagement, encourage the vulnerable young people to be reflexive by engaging in relationships which will empower them to think, care for others, be more rational and learn to negotiate and trust. This particular approach basically supports the young people to become more aware and perceptive of the range of alternatives available to them. It also empowers clients by showing them how rational decision making is precipitated by information gathering, planning, evaluation, commitment to long term goals and tolerance of other people. This is the medium through which the value judgements and emotional thrills that characterise normlessness are challenged. The young people are supported to be purposive, become critical evaluators and validate their moral actions and behaviour. They develop capabilities for identifying their own emotional reactions, values and identities. They are also encouraged to become more active citizens, engaging in social, cultural, political and economic activities (Wells, 2000). The activities of the Centres help the vulnerable young people make connections between their activities and consequences of such on their own future, other people, the local community and global issues (e.g. sustainable development, the plight of non human animals or justice and equity around the world).

In this section, the influences of the transformational relationships are central to the process of supporting vulnerable young people. To fulfil their roles as “non-formal educators” these voluntary organisations are working to make sure they create a communal atmosphere where learning is enjoyed (Merton, et al, 2004). Youth workers in a way are the major prop supporting the transformation process as they act as bridge and mediators as vulnerable people journey from the lifestyle of vulnerability to the public world. The environment created allows for

educational activities to flourish. The instructional methods used by the staff are discussed in next.

III A Pedagogy of experiential and reflexive learning

This section examines the voluntary organisations' approach to learning and teaching. The analysis includes examining how in one sense all elements of the voluntary organisation are supporting educational goals directly or indirectly. The activities and ethos of the centres feeds into the pedagogy being created by youth workers. What is sought ultimately, is a vibrant learning community where latent learning potential is steered and capabilities are developed. The section depicts the effectiveness of the strategies of dialogue and mediation. It also looks at how the organisations work as learning communities.

The voluntary organisations are creating social spaces where young people are welcome to socialise. The essence of this physical space is important because it gives young people "something to do" and enables them the opportunity to "meet with friends". Beyond these casual relationships the space also creates the possibility for young people to try new things and increase their chances of learning new skills. The young people who engage with such organisations are choosing to enjoy these spaces rather than get involved in destructive or passive activities available in the vulnerable lifeworld. Once they make a commitment to become part of the community they have to engage actively in the participation process. This process involves activities that will entail critical thought, planning, decision-making, negotiation, teamwork etc. These kinds of skills facilitate improved wellbeing and capability development.

First of all, what are the learning communities' aims? They seek to

- a. Create a space - physical
- b. Create a conducive learning environment (Wenger, 2001a)

- c. Enable participation
- d. Facilitate peer to peer learning (Wells and Claxton, 2002)
- e. Development of skills and competencies
- f. Expand horizons – social and philosophical (Wilson and Myers, 2000)
- g. Challenge assumptions, worldview, values
- h. Deepen sense of belonging
- i. Belonging and involvement

The opportunity to try these activities in a safe space is central to the development of capabilities. Centres have defined guidelines, which permit equality and justice and allow for genuine participation and the pursuit of excellence. Participants are encouraged not to feel a “sense of shame” (youth worker, Funaley) or failure when they try activities because competence is not the criteria for membership and belonging. There are advantages to admitting one’s inability to throw good basketball hoops, sing to rap music or make good posters. Young people can obtain support and opportunities to learn from the staff and their peers. Learning “with” people who have an interest in your emotional and physical well being is not humiliating, dangerous or painful. The learner can teach others by sharing their experiences. The group achieve together, and the recognition and appreciation of the group as a learning community is immensely valued by the individuals. Their success is rewarded in kind but also by the sheer satisfaction, even emotional and psychological acknowledgement of attaining success. This is special for vulnerable young people who are accustomed to being labelled as underachievers and failures. As individuals, the members receive certified qualifications for their success; these reinforce and solidify personal achievements. Some of the certificates can be used to apply for college courses. This particular pathway leads people to strive for more qualifications, seemingly for both the recognition and appreciation (e.g. Jackson and Diego). Eventually, the pathway could lead to a career and an opportunity to manage one’s life and future more realistically and competently.

On an individual level the staff use a range of principles (Wells, 2004) to discuss social and philosophical concepts with the vulnerable young people. They learn about the vulnerable lifeworld which the young people belong to and challenge the assumptions and worldview which keeps the young people involved. Vulnerable young people are certainly not “unable” to learn. Exceptional circumstances relating to their incapacities may make their learning styles unusual or slower. As established earlier the major source of concern is disaffection and young people’s “unwillingness” to engage and learn. Once connectors are established with the public world this barrier is broken. However, depending on how long the young people have been out of the “realm” of public life, positive learning experiences and inclusion may be both awkward and frightening to the young people. That is why the youth workers reinforce constant participation and orientation. Supporting the young people’s learning may be difficult, in that the clients have to be able to take responsibility for much of their learning. However, enabling the learning by limiting the distractions so common in the vulnerable young people’s lives is necessary. The youth workers usually deal with problems with daily accommodation, feeding, leisure and relationships where possible. This allows the young person to concentrate on the learning opportunities at hand. As the young person makes progress more of these responsibilities may be relinquished to the young person as they acquire the skills and capabilities to manage and control situations in their own lives. The entire structure of the intervention is designed so that:

- Curiosity is ignited and engaged
- Reflexivity is promoted: cause and effect, consequences, making choices
- The capability to apply knowledge is improved

The key dimensions of this approach to learning are discussed below.

Learning agreement for engagement

First and foremost young people are encouraged to take control of their learning and participating via a “pre-learning” exercise. This process was described by Diego as “they give you a ladder”. It involves motivating the young person to make a decision to learn, to choose to learn and to apply the learning to one’s lifestyle in positive ways so that learning is reinforced, sharpens the intellect and deepens one’s enthusiasm for learning. This is simply imploring what is commonly known as the conative effect. It is basically the ability to effective effort to complete a task. In learning communities, practices and professionals empower the clients to take on the challenge and achieve a goal; they draw up learning agreements, which lay out what the young person would like to achieve.

Activity and experience

As non-formal educators youth workers participate in the learning process, undertaking activities with the young people, sharing experiences, working collaboratively in the centre. Learning alongside the young people is possible in this kind of environment because the process is not encumbered by pre-designed curriculum and market driven targets. Youth workers “watch out for experiential learning” opportunities (Theokas and Lerner, 2006). Sometimes these can be big projects like the entrepreneur course at Funaley where the young people were encouraged to sell their unwanted gadgets or exchange them responsibly, accounting for profit or loss. Small learning opportunities take place when “jug and volume” mysteries arise, paint is accidentally spilt or prejudice statements are made. Social and emotional learning experiences occur when arguments take place or disagreements have to be tackled.

Why do the young people view youth workers as co-learners? Why were they unable to view their trained teachers in the same way? When probed further what the young people seemed to detest about teachers and school teaching is the “superiority” of the teacher. Many researchers

have written about this problem and suggested that “learning with” (Wells, 2004) as demonstrated in the CHAT model (described in Chapter 2 and 3) not only enhances learning but also actually bolsters the learning process. Lindsey Crawford (1998) writes about these kinds of teaching practices as processes, which should inspire the learners to “teach themselves”. Teachers find it difficult to manipulate the classroom environment and the curriculum to achieve this goal. The youth work setting is structured and geared inherently towards such objectives. In the youth sessions the activities are always experiential. As Sara and Mike (youth workers) suggested the activities are practical and relevant for “everyday living”.

Dialogue and reflection

I have already mentioned the cordial and light-hearted process that induces the young people to start attending centres. These stimuli, Crimmens, et al (2004) have associated with non-formal learning. In the comfort and cosiness of this space young people begin to talk – talk freely, openly and honestly. Good youth workers are masters of steering this talk into a dialogue that “stirs critical thought” (Merton, 2004). Some youth workers use questions and “chunk” the discussion so that unwittingly the young person steps more deeply into a funnel of thought that analyses action and behaviour beyond the realm of the superficial. The questions and thoughts have the potential to stay engaged in the young person’s mind for a long time. Hopefully long enough to enable more “unlocking”, openness and reflection (Wilkeley, 2007). Questions can be unsuccessful with defensive individuals who block all forms of intrusion into their thought and cognitive domain. Some youth workers would use jokes and laughter to help the young people evaluate their values and actions.

Taking responsibility

Engaging young people where appropriate in decision making about the centre's maintenance and operations seemed to support the recognition and sense of belonging attached to membership. Young people as members of the community are encouraged to take responsibility for evidencing the work and competence of the voluntary organisations for funding purposes. In the same vein young people also take responsibility for their behaviour and the joint behaviour of centre members for two reasons. They can receive benefits from the centre – for example visiting a recreation park or taking a weekend trip. They also begin to enjoy the sense of achievement and the responsibility of taking action, planning and evaluating their success. These practices help young people to think about actions that are positive, reflect and evaluate their decision making and take steps to avoid unwanted consequences. This has been supported by research in youth clubs and centres (NYA, 2004; Furlong, et al, 1997) where results show that the positive and participatory atmosphere enables the young people to develop capabilities of management and reflexivity. Their involvement also educates the young people about making negotiations, business and accountability.

Modelling good behaviour and attitudes

Upon creating a tolerant and forbearing relationship, the youth workers establish a mix of rules and commitments that are familiar to the young people based on their vulnerable lifestyle. Two of the most important are principles of loyalty and reciprocity, which the young people generally ascribe to. Consequently the young people are challenged to take on more of the principles and attributes of public life. The staff support the young people to develop the competencies, emotional and social skills necessary for such living. On a personal basis, the staff are able to show the young people how they have learned to cope with the pressures of everyday life. They manage situations in the centres together, assessing, rationalising, negotiating and making decisions with the young people (Benson, 2007). They demonstrate

how they use their resources including social capital and competencies and how emotional problems are identified and managed.

The staff have to maintain a code of practice that exudes the care, trust and support needed to create a “safe, non-judgemental learning conducive atmosphere” (youth worker). Crimmens, et al (2004) have described these kinds of environments as spaces where “unconsciously” students can engage in learning. The management of the space remains the responsibility of the youth workers, as young people are “nurtured” and lured into new worlds (Davies, 2006). One of the top priorities is to increase confidence and self esteem of the clientele. They do this by tugging on the strings of potential and captivating “passion” (youth administrator) for learning and life inherent in all humans. This passion manifests itself in varying ways. Unlike the gangs, the space the youth workers create enhances development, positive learning, confidence building, reflexivity, team building etc. Youth workers have to be empathising, as they cannot deal with the individuals collectively. Each person is “listened to and treated on a one-to-one basis” (youth worker), workers can become intimate role models they get alongside an individual and act as pillars of support. By celebrating uniqueness individuals begin to feel value, belonging and a sense of well being. Such attributes foster the improvement of self perception as Diego explained engaging with “the young person as a whole” helps them appreciate their worth and dignity “as they are” (youth worker). Holistic interrelations permit discussion on a wide range of issues. Young people are able to talk about difficulties in relationships, family issues and sometimes gang related activities. The freedom of expression established between youth workers and young people disables the barriers that are organically placed between teacher- student type relations.

Opportunities to take responsibility: challenging feelings of despondency

In conjunction with the other pedagogies the voluntary organisations ensure that vulnerable young people can learn via practice. They use the activities as tools for learning and developing. The youth workers are central to this intervention because they are tackling issues concerning self image, achievement and recognition, youth workers express belief in the young people. They motivate them, inspire them, encourage them and culminate this by giving them opportunities to be responsible. They are given opportunities to be accountable for planning, governance, law and order, budgeting and ultimately responsibility for their own learning and future. These activities mean that the young people need to learn and practice the use of new skills and capabilities; most significantly they can demonstrate that they can be dependable. Being responsible is a different form of engagement for the vulnerable young people because they require specialised capabilities, specifically those which they can use in the public world – gain qualifications, live independently, etc. These pedagogies are used to aid the young people learn and develop their capabilities. Their effectiveness depends on the skill of the youth workers, the ethos and atmosphere that the learning community affords and the disposition of the individual members in the group. Time also plays an important role as the pedagogies and practices can have a positive effect on the vulnerable young people. “Time spent in youth programs was the developmental asset that appeared to have the most pervasive positive influence ... predicting... thriving outcomes... Good youth programs provide young people with access to caring adults and responsible peers, as well as skill building activities than can reinforce the values and skills that are associated with doing well in school and maintaining good physical health.” (Scales, et al, 2000: p 43).

The next section looks at the bridge which the learning communities provide for vulnerable young people making the transition from vulnerability to capability.

10.4 The bridge to capability offered by learning communities

The study identifies the features barring vulnerable young people from a functional life in the public world as the lack of specialised capabilities and conversion mechanisms for utilising freedoms and achieving functionings. The barriers of rootlessness, normlessness and despondency depict the integrated features that the vulnerable young people lack. What the learning communities offer vulnerable young people is an overlapping space where they can convert some of their existing capabilities to valuable forms of being and doing in the public world. Specific care is taken to empower the young people to use their acclaimed crew world skills in more positive ways – street dancing is organised into concerts, music studios enable the young people record demos, short courses and projects are tailor made to suit the high level interest of modelling, enterprise and sports.

Figure 10.3 Contrast between the vulnerable life world and the public world

VULNERABLE LIFE WORLD

Disconnected (Alienated)
 Disengaged/ Rebellious
 Small group of like-minded fearful people
 Socially excluded

Demand respect from others, violence
 Exert fear, destructive
 Aggressive, frustrated

Unfair guidelines and practices
 based on intimidation and manipulation
 Selfish, inconsiderate
 Immediate gratification
 Diminished capabilities
 Under-utilised abilities
 Unrecognised- not useful for long term functioning

Insecurity – physical/financial/emotional
 Need for “respect” – appreciation/belonging,
 Lack of freedom(s) under the control
 and influence of others
 Distrust in governance structures
 Bad experiences perceived as unfair
 process

Truncated
 Irrelevant
 Unsatisfying
 Frustrating and fearful
 Exasperating others

Capabilities and FUNCTIONINGS

Maintain positive relationships, treat others with respect,
 discipline, discernment, communication skills,
 interpersonal skills, emotional stability, social skills
 Knowledge of rules, respect for law and order

SOCIAL INTERCONNECTEDNES

Confidence, self esteem, honour, dignity, affirmation
 enjoy aesthetic beauty, appreciate arts and nature
 hard work and perseverance

HUMAN VALUES: towards self actualisation

Understanding of societal laws and practices
 respect for democratic principles and freedoms
 decision making, negotiating, setting goals,
 evaluating, analytical skills, access to support
 functioning institutions, good governance
 Towards self actualisation

SECURITY, FREEDOM and DEVELOPMENT

Adequate living conditions, adequate health,
 access to health care – mental, dental, physical
 political choice, rights and voice, familial love
 and positive role models, adequate nutrition

IMPROVED WELL-BEING

Access to information, training, good education
 social capital, interaction with tools and people
 educational opportunities and equipment,
 facilitation of learning by significant adults
 Qualifications and certificates that acknowledge
KNOWLEDGE, INTEREST AND LEARNING CAPACITY

PUBLIC WORLD

Associated
 Engaged/ Participating
 Communal/National/global

Making contributions,
 Recognition/ Earn respect,

Justice and the rule of Law
 virtue, moral considerations
 Empathy for others
 Consideration for long-term objectives
 Enhanced capabilities
 Admiration of the good

Stability/Security (control + hope)
 Ability to achieve (try) valued functionings
 Freedom(s)/ability to make independent +
 informed, choices, Trust in Law authorities
 understanding of judicial structure and
 public order

Achieving
 Relevant
 Fulfilling
 Purposeful
 Growth and admiration

The five major aspects of living represented in the diagram above show the combination of essential capabilities the young people were developing and the functionings they achieved while in the organisations. These represent the bridge which the learning communities offer to support young people's journey towards capability. Each functioning is discussed below in terms of why they are vital for human functioning and how the vulnerable young people were unable to achieve them because they lacked the capabilities identified in figure 10.2

(a) Social interconnectedness

We have already discussed how the vulnerable young people had difficult or few positive relationships. They did not have good relations with their teachers, social workers, psychologists or local shop keepers. These relationships were hampered by their lack of social interconnectedness; they communicated poorly, were violent and quarrelsome and had no regard for the feelings of others or the rule of law. The youth workers blame this dearth in interpersonal skills on the vulnerable young people's tendency to live non-social lives – excluded, unvalued and not participatory. Freedoms and capabilities invariably diminished due to crew world practices, further complicating their social interconnectedness with the public world and the sense of belonging they sought.

However, in communities of learning young people are given opportunities to engage in the public lifeworld; they learn to negotiate, be creatively dialogic about what they observe and learn, make and abide to rules and regulations they design to foster peaceful coexistence, etc. Young people who have these capabilities can develop positive and functional relationships, not only with friends, family members and neighbours, but also with people in the community. Communication, empathy and understanding of rules and social norms support their relationship with teachers, bus drivers and local shop keepers. As they

interact with the world and its citizens they continue to gain the skills to participate and connect with society.

(b) Human Values

Since the value systems of societies and communities are linked via a web of norms, traditions, perceptions, and experiences, it is important to note the change in value systems when vulnerable young people start their journey towards capability. David Istance (2003) describes subcultures of people who live in ghettos as aliens of the wider society; he argues that their conceptions of justice, the law and authority are skewed by the experiences and capabilities (or lack of) prevalent within the group. This is most notably observed in the way the vulnerable young people discuss their perception of others, specifically in Ilkridge. Pierson (2002) expands on this issue by linking the notion of social exclusion to citizenship and civic participation. Pierson's argument implies that vulnerable persons often do not have voice or agency because their values are so distinguished from the general group; they lose their right to participation by default.

Vulnerable people who “fail to take up or reject the role of citizens” in Terry Martin's (2005) view are those with low levels of emotional literacy like the participants. Drawing upon psychodynamic perspectives, Martin explains how childhood experiences influence behaviour, thoughts and feelings in adulthood. The capabilities we develop in developmental years also influence “the way in which each of us develops an interpretive stance on the world – a way of making sense of our reality” (Shapiro and Carr, 1991: 5). Consequently this capability has an impact on the way we treat others, our understanding and analysis of the events taking place in our environment and our disposition to reflect and learn new things about ourselves and the world. In learning communities, vulnerable young people are supported to justify their values. For personal values influence

capability sets and act as mechanisms which underlie an individual's worldview and thus their capacities to make judgements and choices.

(c) Security, Freedom and Development

This refers to a whole range of skill sets and abilities that enable continuous human flourishing. As discussed in the literature review, functional people strive to achieve self-actualisation. To do this they develop mechanisms for coping with life's challenges and they engage in lifelong learning and development. Capable people who have the capabilities for this functionings can make decisions, evaluate their circumstances and make inferences that are fairly accurate about the choices. In the crew world decision making capabilities are noticeably poor. For example attending school was not a popular activity for the young people at the Green heath children's home, but attending wild parties and disrespect for others were. William O'Connor and Jane Lewis (1999) suggest certain attitudinal barriers impede the development of capabilities and human flourishing. They identify a range of impediments, which they call "trap doors" that prevent people from developing capabilities. Crew world attitudes promoting violence, hostility and indifference for example inhibit the development of certain capabilities, like agency, taking responsibility and personal development. As such the learning communities ensure that their environments are safe, learning conducive spaces where members can freely develop by mutual interaction.

(d) Well-being

In just the same way as capabilities are the sum total of our skill set, human well-being is the sum total of our healthiness. This is much more than our physical condition. It includes our mental health, emotional state of being and how we feel about ourselves at present and what we hope for the future (Morrow, 2005; Hendricks and Hatch, 2006). In many respects

our present capabilities together with the capabilities we value and desire affect our well-being. Many of the vulnerable young people in Ilkridge and Funaley were from low income families; they desired to become wealthy and famous via the modelling or music industry. DeWall, et al (2010) experiments ²¹showed that high levels of despondency in vulnerable people were compounded by thoughts of alienation and rejection. Their research also claimed that emotional distress that develops because individuals cannot envision a future with hope or success led to more aggravated levels of loneliness and irrational behaviour. Accordingly, the researchers show that the need to belong is a “basic and fundamental human” condition.

Other features that enhanced the well being of the young people in the study were the provision of basic needs, genuine care by the youth workers and personal achievements. Ultimately, as Maslow put it fully enhanced well-being will lead to self actualisation. A state whereby fundamental and basic securities for physical, emotional and social functioning are so fully realised an individual’s personal incentive for fulfilment expands to others and ultimately all mankind.

²¹ “Based on social impact theory, the authors predicted that aggression would decrease as a power function of the number of people accepting the participant. In Experiment 1, participants included by 0, 1, 2, or 3 players in an online ball-tossing game could aggress against an innocent stranger by requiring him or her to eat very spicy hot sauce. In Experiment 2, participants socially accepted by 0, 1, 2, 3, or 4 other people could aggress against an innocent stranger by administering loud noise. In both experiments, aggression and unpleasant emotions decreased as a power function according to the number of people accepting the participants, with each additional acceptor having a decreasing incremental effect. Acceptance from others numbs the pain of social rejection, making rejected people less likely to lash out against innocent others “(DeWall, et al, 2010:168).

(e) Knowledge, Interest and Learning Capacity

These capabilities are simply enhanced in the learning communities by nurture, care and belief in the young people's ability to flourish in the right environments. These are capabilities which help a person apply and convert potential to functionings. Internal capabilities (physical, cognitive and emotional) play an important role determining a person's ability and level of effectiveness in learning communities. Engeström (2004) argues that external features can facilitate interest and motivation of objects and tools of interest within a learning environment. Learning and assimilation rates vary in terms of ability, interests, health etc. Different interests and motivations can be linked to social interconnectedness and value systems in various ways like the Vaughan (2007) diagram shows. Children raised by art-loving parents will generally tend to appreciate the arts, particularly if they are inclined to certain dispositions *apriori*. Our capabilities set will also determine the way we process information and the kinds of learning materials (tools) we are likely to have an interest in enhancing. Young people in the crew world did not enhance their team skills because their rejection of the public world implicitly meant such skills were unneeded. Contact with the public world via the voluntary organisation improved Diego's team skills appreciably, enabling capacity for engagement with the public world and the development of other capabilities.

Once knowledge and learning begin to take place, the vulnerable young people can make decisions. One of the first decisions they can make is to learn to learn – learn to live in the public world. They also decide to make the transition from their lifeworld of vulnerability to the public lifeworld. In the learning communities they have access to information, knowledge, support and guidance. They have the help of professional who can support them learn and negotiate communication and contact with teachers, judges, behavioural

therapists or family members. With good education individuals can become more capable and functional and live healthy, purposeful lives within a society.

10.5 Conclusion

The learning communities are very useful frameworks of collaboration which help vulnerable young people engage in the public world, learn new skills and capabilities and become more reflexive about their values, practices and behaviour. Participation in learning communities empowers young people. The activities, staff and pedagogies support learning and development and empower the young people to develop capabilities and achieve valued beings and doings. Young people can take advantage of these opportunities to develop or enhance the capabilities they lack. Young people become involved in problem solving, collaborative projects, and circumstances where negotiation, empathy and decision-making strategies are used. They can use the opportunities to practice their skills and develop new lifestyles. The interventions also seek to address economic and social needs, which support the lifestyle of vulnerability. The development of competencies, identities and substantial freedoms are the core objective of the intervention. These are like scaffolds which help the vulnerable young people journey towards a life of capability.

Chapter 11.0 Capabilities Achieved

11.1 Introduction

The chapter focuses on capabilities, their development and conversion factors which support enhancement of the same, in relation to the resultant functionings accruing from the targeted intervention discussed above. The first section analyses how capabilities are developed as the transition between the two worlds (crew world to public) progresses. Next, the chapter analyses how capability sets are formed and how constituent parts of an individual's capability set integrate. Particular attention is paid to determinant linkage effects which provide the machinery for capability sets to work coherently as combined capabilities. This analysis is carried out in relation to the contributions of Capability Approach theorists whose work have shaped the Approach's application in education. The final section focuses ways to enhance the development of capabilities in vulnerable lifeworlds; particularly in context of non-formal education and social interaction.

11.2 Liminality: the journey between lifeworlds

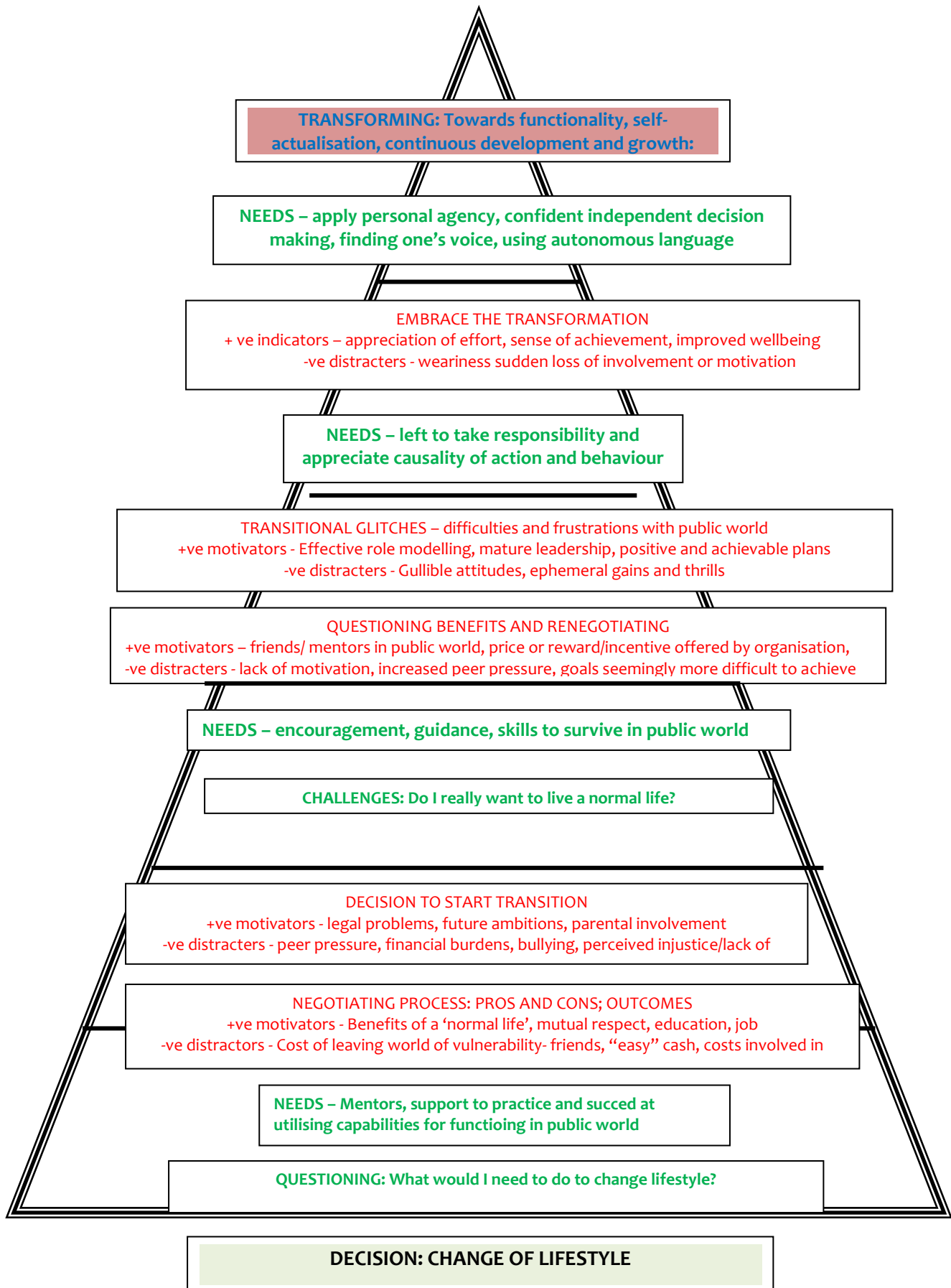
This study has focussed on examining the trajectories of vulnerable young people towards capability. Part III robustly appraised the lifeworld of vulnerability, demonstrating that its inhabitants are unable to exercise agency either as individuals or collectively as social agency (Walker, 2008b). Social agency (Denuelin, 2006) is exercised by functioning members of the public world as they participate and contribute to human development. Furthermore, it has been argued that the crew world limits access to choices and few opportunities for its members to develop or learn capabilities for being

and doing. The Thesis has also unpacked the proposed destination of vulnerable individuals as a space where they are autonomous, functioning citizens with the resources to convert their capabilities (combined) into functionings they value. The journey between the two lifeworlds is mediated by educational experiences; as education itself Walker (2008d) argues “involves a becoming” (p.157) which impacts on agency and our being (moral, social, cultural etc). We need to therefore underpin the processes used in the learning communities herewith in order to work out suitable capability pedagogies for education. Thus this section unpacks that liminal period between both worlds.

Liminality refers to a period of transition between two spaces. It is used extensively in political discourse in reference to immigrants and their new identity in adopted states and in health to describe recovery periods between illness and “wellness”. Here, I use it to refer to the transition period between vulnerability and capability. There are many layers of the liminal period where vulnerable young people in organisations are not entirely in the crew world any more, but still need to develop to become capable functioning citizens in the public world. The pyramid below captures various stages of the transition.

The first layer is dependent on the engagement and membership pedagogies. It shows how membership of a public world institution, facilitated by caring and nurturing public world citizens and governed by public world rules and regulations raises questions about lifestyles in the vulnerable life world.

Figure 11.1 Pyramid of transformation: The journey



Membership of a learning community opens up avenues for vulnerable young people to form new identities based on the benefits a normal life promises. There are some positive motivators for making a decision to start a journey towards capability. Youth workers use their transformational relationships and reflexive pedagogies to question assumptions, raise ethical questions and emphasise the requirements placed on members by law and moral conscience to promote values respected in the public world. They can demonstrate that the practices ensure equity, justice and respect in the learning communities. Moreover, the discipline, order and continuity that are established empower members to flourish rather than contend for “respect” and attention as is the norm in the crew world. Sometimes vulnerable young people are also challenged by other factors - impending legal punishment as in the case of Heather and Diego. The concern of “nagging” parents or the considerations for sensible future ambitions have also spurred young people to abandon the vulnerable lifeworld.

However, the young people will still face barriers and pressure stemming from the vulnerable lifeworld which could serve as ‘distractors’. Perseverance and support from the organisations and possibly others could enable the clients to stay focussed until they have developed and are able to use capabilities in the public world. Once the decision has been made to leave a vulnerable lifestyle, young people face a series of challenges. For most of them who live in deprived communities the challenges are more difficult. Some vulnerabilities are easier to overcome once a conducive-learning environment is created. Jackson, for example, with the support of his family made considerable developments in a few weeks. Others have to make pain-staking decisions that involve drastic changes. Diego abandoned the neighbourhood that linked him precariously with the world of vulnerability. For clients in the care system the few steps made towards change are sometimes eclipsed by drawbacks because of negative influences.

The young people make a decision to change their lifestyle and thus begin the challenge to journey to capable living amid the doubts and difficulties. The kind of difficulties encountered will differ depending on the circumstances of the voyager. At the beginning voluntary organisations offer much guidance and support, urging the young person to continue their journey. As the journey progresses the young person is weaned off the dependence of the organisation, and encouraged to use the capabilities she is developing. Vulnerable young people will make some mistakes and there may be false starts and discouragements but the process also involves learning from the journey and making better choices based on cause and effect. Young people ultimately want to be autonomous and confident of making good value judgements and decisions for their own personal development.

It is important that the young people make stronger commitment to their cause as transitional glitches occur. At this stage the interventions support the journey by supporting young people to take responsibility for their learning and their journey. They are able to weigh decisions and evaluate the consequences of their choices. Otherwise their journey is stalled because they will be unable to translate the skills they develop into functional capabilities. Practicing these skills in the learning communities empower the young people and help them to sometimes make drastic decisions that sever their entanglements to the vulnerable life world. Diego even chose to move so he could cut ties with peers in the gangs in his communities. Participants, like him who were motivated by their achievements and the recognition they received in the learning communities made good progress on their journey. Diego underpinned the importance of the group activities, his first qualification in the team work module, mentoring and opportunities to use skills. These made him “feel high and capable” and he wanted more. He could now appreciate other means by which he could excel and possibly earn a wage! He also began to

realise that his activities had caused his family pain rather than the high status he thought he was acquiring for himself, his relatives and the community.

Not many participants joined the organisations for the purpose of undertaking a transformation process. Those who did had already made the choice to start the transition. In one case a social worker had advised a pregnant teenager to gain qualifications so that she can get into college after the birth of her child. In other scenarios, Connexions workers, behavioural support officers or psychologists help the young people make the decision prior to their membership. These kinds of people come to the centres with an agenda and they are prepared to complete their assignments and gain qualifications because they have a goal in sight. The majority of participants join the organisation to have fun, catch up with friends or have access to amenities. These young people start from the bottom of the pyramid in figure 11.1 and some are able to work their way up to the very top. The pyramid shows various stages and needs of vulnerable young people in transition to capability. At each stage the support and guidance provided by the learning communities improve their chances of making sustained progress.

There are some positive elements of the journey that will motivate young people. The young people who have good mentors continually feel motivated to work towards their goals. Youth workers can help by pointing out other motivators, the prospect of a new lifestyle free from harassment by gang members or law enforcement. Some organisations offer financial rewards to motivate young people to continue to make improvements in their well-being and capabilities. Though it is difficult to stay focussed in the beginning, many interviewees say that embracing the process is easier towards the end when they can evaluate the many positive steps they have taken and enjoy their new life. The ultimate goal of flourishing and pursuing self actualisation is a continuous lifelong process.

Young people who have made the transition into the public world clearly pinpoint the key differences between the two worlds. Table 11.2 presents a summary of their observations. Whilst people in the public world can use well honed social competencies to maintain their relationships and justify the boundaries and values they are prepared to share with their acquaintances, vulnerable young people cannot. People in the vulnerable lifeworld cannot even choose their friends; instead they become friends with people in the neighbourhood or those with whom they share experiences almost by compulsion. The vulnerable lifeworld demands that its members prove their worth by engaging in high risk activities that can often be purposely demeaning. Unfortunately, there also exist an authoritarian pecking order that continues to stifle independence, creativity and development by imposing values, rules and instruction that are destructive.

Table 11.2 Young people's social groups

Contrast between groups of young people		
	PUBLIC WORLD	VULNERABLE LIFE WORLD
Formation	Mutual friendships	Common experience (mostly negative)
	Family networks	Exclusion
	School affiliations	Bullying
	Sports, social links	Poverty
Conditions of member	Loyalty	Performance
	Trust	"Respect"
	Inherent Value	Worth of "status" and "input"
	Human Dignity	
	Valued participation or contribution – various independent forms	Appropriation and status dependent on specific types of contribution – determined by group
	Universal	Bounded and limited to types of people and their ability to perform certain rituals
Structure	Democratic	Shifting power structures
	Rules of justice and fairness	
	Recognition of rights of members and those of others	Selfish
	Respect and tolerance	
Activities	Virtuous and Altruistic	Offensive
	Acknowledge consequences	Pleasure seeking thrills – can be illegal/ dangerous
	Respect the rights of others	Often Detrimental
	Reflexive	Transient
	Purposeful	Brusque/Of no use
Role of community and sustenance	Learn together and from each other, Develop new things together	Learn to be rude, use inappropriate and hurtful language, learn illegal acts and trades
	Sense of belonging	Compelled to assimilate
	Learn to take responsibility for each other, exchange gifts, look out for others, engage in duty of care	Selfish and thoughtless actions, do not support Each other, except due to commitments of reciprocity, feel no sense of duty of care

The table shows that in a way education and positive social competencies are indeed linked to academic dimensions (Bryne, 2003 and Hayden, 2007). See how young people in the public world formed positive relationships in school, learned how to respect boundaries and value others amongst other things. Deficiencies in non-formal and informal learning settings also impacts broadly on social, economic and societal acceptance (Williamson, 2006). Note that

more than 90% of the young people leaving compulsory education without GCSEs are from the poorest neighbourhoods in the United Kingdom (SEU, 2004). Statistics from OFSTED (2006a) and the DFES (2005) also show that most schools with significant disciplinary problems and those institutions excluding the most number of students are in economically deprived areas. In their research on discovering risk Bessant *et al* (2003) underpin the importance of social and community structures, which they claim can make or mar individuals' capabilities. Poor and weak communities have a tendency to breed negative social environments where depression and despondency are cultivated. Young people can therefore learn to become capable citizens by learning and developing capabilities in strong learning communities. The next section looks specifically at capabilities needed for functioning in the public world.

11.3 Capability sets for the public world

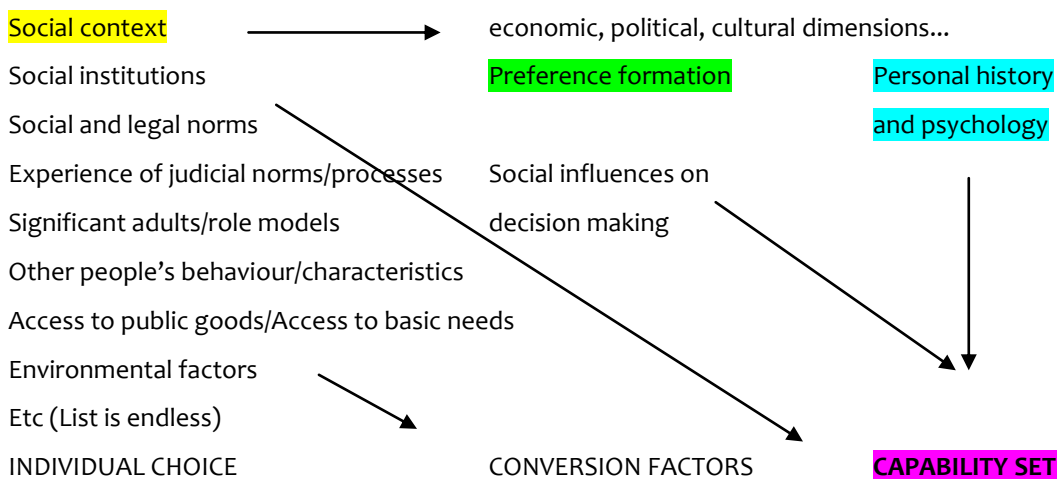
I now turn attention to the capabilities the young people develop in the organisations. In previous sections, many of these capabilities have already been noted; here we look at how the capabilities impact on the lives of young people. There are diverse dimensions of capability, some of which are unobserved variables (factors) such as self esteem, confidence, values etc. However, as the youth workers stated these can manifest themselves through measurable indicators. Diego's personal assessment of a "normal life" as opposed to his chaotic lifestyle in the vulnerable lifeworld, for example, clearly pinpoints a variety of measurable indicators which were discussed in earlier. The capabilities of confidence, relationship building, team work, academic qualification, emotional competence and discipline enable him to "have a girlfriend", "earn a decent living via legal means", "and be respected in the community" and so on. Sen and Nussbaum account for the interdependence of these capabilities differently. Nussbaum works on the proposition that internal and external capabilities integrate to become combined capabilities while Sen chooses to go with the more mathematical model that capabilities

combine n-tuple dimensions to create a series of possible functionings. Both point to a set of capabilities that form an individual’s repertoire for functioning.

Various scholars have investigated the interdependence of capabilities, their propensity to combine in multiple dimensions based on exogenous and endogenous factors

(Krishnakumar and Ballon, 2008) and the variety of capability sets that arise as a result of the variance. Rosie Vaughan (2007) for example examines the social, cultural, academic, political and economic factors that affect the development of individual capability sets (figure 11.2).

Figure 11.3 How capability sets are formed



(Vaughan, 2007) Based on Robeyns (2005) stylised non-dynamic representation of a person’s capability set

Rosie Vaughan (2007) identifies three major areas that influence a person’s capability set. They are the social context, preference formation mechanisms and personal history and psychological features. These peculiarities have a significant impact on an individual’s worldview and thus how one will respond to the world, circumstances and decision-making. Aristotle referred to this fabrication process as identity formation – “teleos”. He

thought the process(es) were important because experiences shape our attitudes to life (people, circumstances, events) and through them we find meaning and “purpose in life” or “our place in this world” (habitués- Bourdieu, 1977). Capability sets are not automated or programmed without prerequisite development experiences. As Robeyns (2005) notes certain experiences can enhance our capabilities and others can diminish them. These very important capabilities support a person’s control over their life and lifestyles. Capable individuals can choose to stay healthy, safe and achieve their lifelong goals; vulnerable individuals are trapped by their chaotic lifestyle choices which do not keep them safe or able to develop.

Jaya Krishnakumar (2007) introduces the idea of an econometric model which uses complex simultaneous equations to represent both endogenous and exogenous variables as well as latent endogenous and exogenous variables such as genetic factors, social traditions and political freedoms. She shows how these factors often have multiple dimensions²² and are usually affected by feedback mechanisms promoted by human development’s “causal factors”. In the study for example, Diego and a number of his peers were obliged to attend the Funaley centre or face legal consequences. Most of the gang members ended up in prison because they continued to “live as they did” (Diego) while some choose to make the positive journey to capability. The same causal factors combined with personal choices, parental involvement and achievements led to different outcomes. This is to say that individual capabilities cannot independently amount to functionings.

In this research we have noted how the activities and relationships within learning communities support the development of what can be termed foundational capabilities or those capabilities

²² Polychotomous - in the context of discrete choice econometric models, this means that the dependent variable has more than two possible values.

that are absolutely necessary for functioning in the public world. These bedrock capabilities form the buttress upon which values, confidence and skills for using other capabilities are formed. Bedrock capabilities identified herewith are summarised in figure 11.4.

Figure 11.4 Summary of Bedrock Capabilities



(Brown and Cole, 2002; Vizard and Burchardt, 2007)

These bedrock capabilities are similar indeed to Nussbaum's list, but these combinations express a bit more depth in terms of and portray how the capabilities integrate. Some of the capabilities are provided by communities and governments (e.g. access to health care, safety, peaceful association and the like).

It is also important to link at this stage the methods used by the learning communities to develop these bedrock capabilities to the way capability sets integrate. Negotiation techniques, social skills, life skills, the ability to work in a team, empathy, self-confidence, as well as the confidence to participate reflexively and responsibly in the community bolster not just individual agency and rational choice but also capabilities for relating to others.

The capabilities developed in voluntary organisations can be subdivided in a variety of ways. The list above shows the range of three broad categories of capabilities the young interviewees developed. The capabilities developed serve different specific purposes but combine to enable the young people achieve positive functionings which demonstrate that they are flourishing individuals in pursuit of self actualisation. The voluntary organisations provide some external capabilities like food, resources for learning and playing, access to information and loving support etc. Through the activities and interaction they help young people build a repertoire of internal capabilities. Most of these provide young people with ability "to" and strategies for dealing with everyday situations.

It is important to examine the interdependence of capabilities, as we now see that combined capabilities are pivotal in terms of the array of choice and access to skill/knowledge or information that determine how valued functionings are achieved. Diego identified important combined capabilities which he said were significant for his functioning in the public world as "learning to become team players". He referred to these particular capabilities (tolerance,

respect for varied opinions, acknowledging diverse abilities, confidence and negotiating skills) as significant because he learned to work with others by becoming more aware of his environment, the people in it and his self. Research shows that where youth clubs members are recognised as responsible associates of the management team discipline and order is more likely to be maintained (NYA 2006a). This practice enables young people to learn to take joint decisions, defend their decisions using practical reason when appropriate. The young people learn to take responsibility for problems because the consequence of not doing will mean their activity will be unsuccessful.

Bedrock capabilities can be sequenced and laced together so as to that enable vulnerable young people build viable capability sets for engaging in the public world. Another key aspect of this bedrock development is the civic engagement of members by means of associations and responsibilities in the community. The facilitators say these practices empower the young people *“to be able to survive in the community, become valued members of the community – regardless of what job you know they take on”* (Ashley, youth worker). These activities also give young people opportunities to learn about political engagement, how policies are deliberated and political communication/action.

By combining the information and resources available to them in the learning communities with the skills they develop and the advice and guidance of mentors, the members also learn to weigh options, to research, make relevant inquiries. As aforementioned the learning in the organisations leans heavily towards the affective, social and emotional, however the spectrum is broad and encompasses all other aspects as well – intellectual, physical, mental etc. The range of skills taught include decision making, problem solving, investigative analysis, collaboration and team work, deliberation, negotiation and communication as well as making choices, forfeiting short term gratification for long term benefits, cost benefit analysis, risk

assessment etc. Education about health – mental, sexual and nutritional is also common. In an environment that is so inclusive the young people develop both social and affective competencies. Such competencies, research suggest, are fundamental not only to the development of emotional aspects of young people's lives, they also lay the groundwork for supportive learning relationships which support other academic competencies in schools and educational institutions (Elton, 1989; Sharp, 2001; Maguire et al, 2003). Consequently, vulnerable young people would be learning the principles of academic learning, some may be able to return to schools or go on to college.

Using their developing capability sets young people learn to formulate new and personal ethos as their worldview is reconstituted and they test new assumptions. Now they are required to face up to legal responsibilities, their citizenship, long term ambitions, and issues of justice, fairness, dignity and respect. They may begin to realise that their decision making and actions have justified long term effects. The learning empowers the young people to establish new decision making regimes – objective, logical, purposeful, effective and fair. They also learn to contribute to their community's collective capability set.

The importance of learning with others cannot be overemphasized as the norms, traditions, skills of people groups are an equally important resource for human development as a whole. In the vulnerable lifeworld, capabilities cannot be combined as easily as there is a mismatch between negative capabilities. By developing positive capability sets, individuals retain agency and ownership of their valued functionings whilst developing collective social agency. They become independent, autonomous and active citizens who can use their capabilities sets on a personal level to develop internal capabilities and exploit external ones. They also learn interpersonal skills which help to improve their relationships with friends, family members and community members (including relations with law enforcement, schools and social services).

Alongside others they learn skills of economics, politics and governance so that they can participate as global citizens in the wider world. In the next section a closer look is taken at how capabilities are converted to valued functionings.

11.4 Conversion: from capability to functioning

It is important that voluntary organisations can identify and possibly even measure the capabilities being developed in their institutions. Sen and Nussbaum variances on the interpretation of capabilities have weaknesses and strengths in terms of analysing the how capabilities are transformed into valued functionings. Sen (2005) hardly discusses the centrality of education as a means of developing capability. Instead he is more concerned with the political, civil and cultural dynamics of policies that implicitly enhance educational freedoms and opportunities. Nevertheless, Sen's (1993) elaboration on the notion of conversion is important because it gives us a useful tool. Implicitly conversion factors are educational instruments – application of learned behaviour, use of technology or analytical processes which are underpinned by choice and agency. Capabilities of various kinds can be converted to valued functionings, because capabilities are in essence potential to achieve functioning. The study showed that skills developed in the crew world for example music, street dance or certain dexterity with video games can be channelled appropriately into functional capabilities in the public world. When combined with the communication skills and team work competencies being developed in the learning communities' young people can enjoy sharing and developing their talents and even translate their products into economic wares. For example the young people were able to record and market their own music.

Capabilities can also act as predictors, it is possible to forecast the possible functionings a person can achieve (Sen, 1999) given of course the multidimensional factors which can enhance substantial freedoms and opportunities that can be appropriated. A person with GCSE qualification, confidence, access to a college, transport facilities, healthy body and mind has the potential to succeed at A levels, while a person lacking some or all of these “predictors” does not have the capabilities to achieve such a functioning. The way Sen (1993, 1999) uses the terms freedoms and opportunities directly illustrates the restrictions lack of capabilities can place on individual flourishing. Sen acknowledges that because capabilities can combine in so many various permutations, they can be problematic predictors.

Nussbaum’s threshold (2000) of basic capabilities proves to be advantageous in terms of clearly delineating valued functionings. As such it is easier to depict the capabilities that need to be converted. Though it is true that basic capabilities can enable flourishing, it is equally true that by and large these capabilities are rarely efficient as independent variables. Also people conversion coefficients vary significantly. Indeed, though the same freedoms may exist in the capability set of many flourishing adults they usually lie dormant, or worse still, remain almost irrelevant. Take for example the educational opportunities available to all the participants in the study, because some had very weak conversion coefficients they were unable to achieve the valued functioning of getting an education. Unless people are able to convert their developed capabilities to relevant functionings they are still not able to flourish.

This shows that the emphasis placed on conversion by Sen is indeed relevant to the interpretation of capabilities. Nussbaum rightly advocates for capabilities to be nurtured by the freedoms and support of knowledge, instruction and empowerment. Young people

need to know how to convert their capabilities by expanding knowledge, agency and collaboration with others.

The practice of converting capabilities to positive functionings *via* the development of norms that are chosen individually but not objectionable to others is linked to both Aristotle's teleological ethics and Nussbaum's development of the same. Aristotle referred to the development of good praxis (*eupraxia*) *i.e.* - applying knowledge to one's action - as an activity of free men who sought *eudemonia* (the good life). Freire (1970) understood praxis to mean "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (p.6). It is important to note that for Freire (1970:52), functioning meant engaging in the "ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human". He even addresses how these functioning can be achieved, by advocating dialectical interchange, the same process Wenger (1997) and Wells (2000) argue improve learning and relational capabilities. Nussbaum builds her Capability Approach on Aristotle's teleological approach, though her concern for individual rights makes her less inclined to legislate what good praxis is. Instead she advocates a means of analysing what a good life should consist of by developing a list of basic capabilities.

Conversion is related to social education and is part and parcel of liberating education. It forms pillars upon which learners can analyse, create and discard information critically, without betraying the human capacity to respectfully and objectively consider the views of others. As Said (1995, 2004) and Rizvi (2008), suggest education for globalisation is about knowledge of self, others, one's situatedness, and broadening critical thinking. These are the bedrock capabilities I have argued are essential for the broad functionings discussed earlier, particularly because they are mechanic capabilities that enable conversion of capabilities to functionings. Rizvi writes:

“Cosmopolitan learning of the kind I have in mind, in contrast, encourages students to examine the political meaning of intercultural experiences, seeking to locate them within the transnational networks that have become so much part of the contemporary era of globalization. ... one of the major goals of cosmopolitan learning should be the development of a critical global imagination, based on a recognition that we all have ‘elaborate interests and capabilities in constructing world pictures whose very interaction affects global processes’ (Appadurai, 1996, p. 11).

The challenges of modern society, globalisation, accelerated technological development and the exacerbation of inequalities mean that twenty first century education is “centrally about the development of a mind to learn” (Wells and Claxton, 2002). Wells and Claxton reject the theory that the process of forming minds that can learn is through didactic instruction and intensive training. Instead, they believe that young people and their elders can both benefit from a procedural educational scheme that enables reflection and modification of society’s tools. Each individual in this pedagogic space has the freedom to appropriate the tools in unique ways via the process of interaction, their personal historical trajectories and the social historical context in which both are embedded. Education is a process of “simultaneous enculturation and transformation” (‘Cultural Historical Activity Theory’ CHAT - Wells and Claxton, 2002). This process also will improve an individual’s conversion coefficient because it empowers people to participate – be and do. Conversion is the means by which capable individuals use embodied qualities to make constructive value judgments, take responsible action, “act truly” (Aristotle, 1976) etc.

11.5 Conclusion

It will take vulnerable young people different timescales to develop capabilities which will disconnect them from their lifeworld. Having been so attached to an inverted subculture, which diminishes their capabilities, restricts their freedoms and ultimately dis-empowers them and their ability to flourish or function they need to gradually develop skills for public life in a transitional space.

The journey from vulnerability to capability is entirely the responsibility of the individual who needs to be exercising agency and increasingly utilising the freedoms and capabilities she gains as scaffolding for the journey. Vulnerable young people however need social guides that have the expertise to mediate between the two worlds. The social guides use CHAT principles to personalise the learning of the individual, making it adaptable and relevant to the capability requirements she has. The goal of the exercise is to rotate the direction of the vulnerable young people from the dysfunctional anti-utilitarian, inverted pursuit of the good life into a flourishing, functional life long process towards self actualisation.

CHAPTER 12.0 THE CAPABILITY APPROACH EXPANDED

12.1 Introduction

The Chapter further analyses the processes of developing capabilities for positive functioning within learning communities. Specifically, it looks at how non-formal educational settings can capture and operationalise educational policies which robustly reflect capability approach ideology. It contrasts these against some of the pitfalls mainstream education is straddled by, in terms of being better able to deliver educational services to young people, particularly young people reeling from vulnerability and complex-multiple learning problems. Theorizing these processes, the chapter examines how good practices can bring to bear the capability approach ethos in education institutions as well as in relation to social education and life as a whole. Aspects of the Capability approach are scrutinised and expanded.

12.2 Capability development in non-formal educational settings

It is important to begin by recognising the contexts which make mainstream education intolerable for vulnerable young people from the point of view of this study. They described their experiences of being dominated and manipulated and the ways this restricted their freedom and participation in learning processes. It is the type of educational environment which Bernstein (2001) and Wenger (1998) depict as traditionally “suffused with the exercise of power and control” (Walker, 2008e). Arguing that learning is best suited to spaces where social interaction, knowledge exchange and participatory processes are mediated, Walker (2008e), shows that educational settings should thus be

participatory environments. In particular, Walker (2008e,) also demonstrates how non-academic dimensions of the learning process impact on outcomes, the examples she gives are family status, support from government or organised civil society and access to guidance and information. In this study similarly such interplay is widely observed, see how Heather decided to stay at home when she was not offered the school of her choice. She lost two years waiting for a school place at a “nearby” institution which she and her mother acknowledged was renowned for bullying and lack of discipline; eventually she left the school for the very same reasons. The situation may have worked out differently if Heather had guidance and support from parents/tutors/professionals who could realistically demonstrate that Heather need a strong positive institution which could cater for her needs.

In order to create what Walker (2008e) has argued are more “realistic and genuine choices”, such non-academic elements need be more closely scrutinised by educational institutions and those responsible for delivering education services. In Heather’s circumstance, the alternatives available to her given her background, social arrangements and needs were not at all suitable for development. As such one might argue that she did not have the opportunity (freedoms) to choose a school which would meet her most essential requirements of proximity, safety and extended learning opportunities. Her mother justified Heather’s choice to stop attending school on the basis of lack of justice, care and inclusion. It is also important to note the extent to which the family lacked the resources, voice or power and know-how, i.e. capabilities to pursue their rights through the Local Education Authority. It is important that all students obtain bedrock capabilities, so that as Walker (2008e) argues the normalising features of current educational mechanisms do not simply permit a reproduction of “inequalities of origin and destinies (p. 160)”, in the same way that Heather’s family’s inadequacies were.

Unterhalter (2005) and Walker (2003 and 2007b) elaborate on the essential position education can play in the capability approach. They emphasize however that social contexts, cultural and political exogenous factors simultaneously influence educational opportunities and therefore the substantial freedoms of individuals. Take for instance Ayesha's constant rotation between care homes in Riverton and the effect this had (amongst others) on her education and stability. It is actually the contexts of unhelpful educational landscapes which Voluntary Organisations are shown to be altering in this study in favour of more participatory non-formal pedagogies which support learning for diverse learners, specifically those from vulnerable backgrounds. Learner identities are shaped by the environments and ethos of their learning settings. If the learners associate their educational settings with the exercise of arbitrary control (teacher bullying, racism or uninspiring teaching contexts as described by Dama, Ayesha and others), they often respond unfavourably. The youth workers linked incidents of violence and misbehaviour to the discontent with regulations felt by the vulnerable young people. In contrast, the voluntary organisations landscaped their learning environments with defined and agreed boundaries, an atmosphere of care and safety and frameworks for ensuring that issues of justice and fairness were dealt with equitably.

Promoting freedom and autonomy – genuine choice

Organised as communities of learning, voluntary organisations (using dialogic education and positive socialisation) seek to sever the seemingly inevitable association between growing up in a vulnerable environment and becoming involved in the crew world (Audit Commission, 2009). We should note that voluntary organisations do not insist that their clients achieve certain functionings based on what they presume to be the capabilities they require. However, by means of the pedagogies discussed in chapter ten – dialogue,

mediation, relationship building, mentoring etc – the young people are encouraged to develop a fully functioning life – “pursue the good life”, or as Diego put it, a “normal life”.

It is important at this point to show that the interventions by the voluntary organisations are supporting the young people’s autonomy, critical agency and development by encouraging capability development and not by compulsion. This dimension of choice, is an element of the capability approach which Sen (1984) in particular argues should not be compromised. Are the choices the young people make in voluntary organisations truly autonomous and rational? These young people have hitherto chosen to be destructive, violent and unethical by their involvement in the crew world, now, the change in trajectories might be construed as an attempt to “smuggle norms into the overt act of choice” (Neumann, 2007). There is compelling evidence to suggest that the vulnerable young people might indeed have chosen the “normal life” of making positive decisions, working legally, respecting others etc, if the range of alternatives available to them enabled them to make such choices in the first place. After all, we find that the young people joined the negative subculture of gangs and groups looking for “respect”, “V.I.P treatment”, “people who care about me”, “people who take me as a whole person”, “people who really help” and “people who can change my life”. These desires are clearly in line with the type of longings most people have – respect, recognition, care, a sense of belonging, achieving, etc (Maslow, 1943). It seems apparent therefore that the young people had limited or perhaps even no accurate informative descriptions about their preferences, neither did they grasp clearly the decision sensitive criterion for making subjective preferences or have an understanding of the causally consequential properties of their decision (Neumann, 2007).

Within the voluntary organisations, the capabilities the young people developed enabled them to become more active and prudent agents. First of all they are able accurately to define what their desires are and even more significantly describe these items with reference to their value. Consequently, for instance Dama can clearly identify her need for “qualifications” and describe the principles of preference upon which she is willing to acquire certifications of her own choosing. Secondly, the vulnerable young people learn to apply more consistently a decision rule which portrays their “new” choices as rational. Diego discussed his desire to become a teaching assistant so he could “help other people who are like how I was”. This for him was a different way of describing “respect” as he put it “I am proud of what they (young people he had supported) have done. Note how “out of context falsehoods” (Neumann, 2007) which were descriptions for respect are altered.

Though the Capability Approach (particularly with relation to Nussbaum) argues for capabilities which enable individuals to exercise their own agency it does not clearly state how in real life scenarios, where range of issues account for complex situations, we can judge which decisions are most appropriate. Our choices will constantly evolve as alternatives are expanded but how are we to assess whether people are choosing the right ones? As discussed in chapter two, the capability approach’s weakest point is its operationality, it is not convincing in presenting how and why given every individual’s capability set a particular choice or directions is best. In other words as Unterhalter and Brighouse (2003) note that there is very little guidance with respect to the capabilities which should be developed and those which should be repressed. This problem is exacerbated because capability approach’s scholars shy away from the utilitarian concept that all actions are driven by self interest. Sen (1977) argues that people do indeed make choices that are not in their self interest; for example, choosing to fast. Walker and Unterhalter (2007) also describe circumstances where students choose to indulge in

extracurricular activities (drama or sports) rather than mathematics which is required for their career development. However, the two concepts are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The person who chooses to abstain from food is actually making a commitment in self interest to become more spiritual (religious fasting) or raise awareness of a political issue (hunger striking political dissidents). It is possible that the wedge (Sen, 1977:329) between personal choice and personal welfare can be resolved by permitting evaluative mechanisms which depict choice more clearly.

This means that agency which keeps emerging as a major for evaluating freedoms and functioning needs to be nurtured in young people by education practitioners and indeed all those preparing young people for functioning positively in the public world. The choices vulnerable young people make in the corrosive lifeworld of gangs and crew are in my opinion not based on factual information, clear and rational logic or even personal preference. Unfortunately, their acceptance of non-factual information as norm results in perceptions that assume “respect” is equivalent to “V.I.P. treatment”. As a result young people decided to steal, fight or be aggressive and violent to earn respect and a sense of belonging. Within the crew world, counterfactual choices are made because there are no alternatives. These type of choices are made by vulnerable people in other circumstances when they “choose to fast” because they do not have food or when people chose not to express personal opinions because of fear of recrimination.

In reality choices that are counter factual are misnomers, people who make such choices are very likely to choose other alternatives if their resources and the information available to them are expanded. Also, learning communities are also not amoral institutions; pedagogies are designed to foster what are considered to be positive capabilities such as working with others using team work activities. The value-laden judgments made regard

some capabilities as positive and on the basis of evidence and rationality staff' values inflect on how these capabilities (confidence, respect, tolerance, fairness) are defined. Even though the organisations try to avoid normative assertions, the staff choices can be said to be semantic (Neumann, 2007). The youth worker does not simply check certain unconstructive capabilities like theft of gloves, deceiving bus drivers and demeaning peers because they do not conform to norms. Instead, the pedagogy is to expand the young person's capabilities to make meaning of their actions. The dialogic learning process encourages the clients to investigate their values and objectives. So if the young people like Diego choose to reverse their preferences it is solely on the basis of predicate utilitarian purposes – so he can escape police action; rather because his alternatives have increased, he can choose to leave the crew world and still pursue meaning and fulfilment (respect, money he needs, a girlfriend) in the public world. The space the voluntary organisations provide is an autonomous environment where young people can learn, practise and then use productive capabilities which will be valuable for putting together capability sets or skills for living in the public world.

Dialogue, mediation and reflexivity are used to expand the young people's abilities to analyse choices and also develop emotional capacities that are channelled through empathetic, controlled and analytical behaviour and action. The learning and the learning processes are supporting an individual's capacities to engage in critical thought and practical reason. These integrally human components are described by Sen (1984) as freedoms which enable us to act rationally. Sen places emphasis on autonomy in a way deontology and other approaches do not. The voluntary organisations' physical space and interaction supports the development of interpersonal and environmental competencies placing similar emphasis on autonomy; celebrated achievements are not about generalised output but individual recognition of growth and development. The young people can enjoy

the safety and luxury of engaging in a wide range of recreational activities. They are in effect learning to take control of their learning and take ownership for the maintenance and operation of the Centres' activities. More importantly, these capabilities expand other potentials and opportunities (Sen, 1999; Unterhalter, 2005) where choice and freedoms once latent in the vulnerable young people's habitués can be realised, establishing a pathway for human flourishing.

This study has shown that capability development can be stifled in vulnerable young people by homogenised educational provision designed for students who have already through their childhood developed the capabilities to achieve and flourish within such educational environments. Vulnerable young people disconnected from the socio-cultural advantages of living in secure environments and families, need educational systems that are responsive to their particular needs and with pedagogies that support development of all their capabilities (including the basic ones, such as self-control and language development, that have been neglected during their childhood). In order to appreciate the social, cultural and political situation of learners, youth workers reiterated (in chapter six) the relational features of learning “with” their clients. They framed the education experience as a social journey facilitated by guides who share the experiences of their own voyage. Certainly the journey is not confined to academic pursuits. The aim of the experience is to achieve more substantial freedoms; to be able to develop more avenues of doings and beings. It is a journey towards self actualisation or the good life – a fully functioning human being. The way in which education is delivered has effects on both learning experiences and the conversion capacities (ability to convert capabilities to functioning) of individuals. It is these elements that targeted educational material should address in order to support the expansion of freedoms and agency in the lives of young people in education institutions. Learning is appreciated as a personalised transformative

journey, by which different members of a learning community may obtain different capabilities but share the same experience. The next section reiterates the usefulness of using the capability approach as an evaluative framework.

12.3 Capability Approach a Purposeful Evaluative Framework

In many regards the capability approach addresses two important dimensions of the vulnerable young people's problems with regards to participating in the public world. The first is one at the heart of every educational framework – values. Education ought to illicit change, not just in what we know, but in addition to increased awareness of our environment, educational development is about how and why we use the knowledge we have acquired. The latter is important for expanding our capabilities (Saito, 2003). Education should enhance human flourishing by at least creating conditions which enable learners make positive choices.

Secondly, the capability approach attends to the notion of “the other”, though in a way which needs to be more inimitably asserted. It is important that vulnerable young people develop to take regard for the consequences of their action on the lives and livelihoods on other people in the community. Deneulin (2006) argues specifically for an approach which supports individual and socio-historical agency simultaneously. This is a major advantage of the capability approach over traditional resource based approaches which should be further strengthened. It is important that 21st century education incorporates into its citizenship curriculum “a practice of identification with public issues” (Biesta and Lawy, 2006:72). It is now no more taken for granted that human activities and actions have (sometimes far reaching) consequences on others; as such some of our choices,

concerning climate change, poverty and sustainable development for example are made for the common good (Deneulin and Townsend, 2006:2).

Working together and not just pursuing individual agency is itself an important freedom which Deneulin (2006) argues is often ignored in the capability approach in favour of the centrality of freedom for individuals. Deneulin suggests that social capabilities and other humane capabilities – friendship, compassion, etc are important for developing “structures of living together” which inflect on flourishing and agency of all. The choices we make in favour of the common good do necessarily limit personal choice or freedom. It can be argued that all our choices have links to other people – those who have gone before us who have contributed to the rich and diverse socio-cultural material from which we make our choices. Even, those who will come after us who will also be inspired, motivated or obliged to do things differently based on our contributions. It does not appear to be improper to take into account the needs and values of others when we make rational choices, as we already infer to a collective data base inadvertently. This does not stop one from making ethically sound and valued choices for personal reasons.

The capability approach reveals the marked differences between functioning in the public word and the insecurity of the vulnerable lifeworld. Inequality is reproduced in the lives of the vulnerable young people via their families and communities. The disadvantage is marked by deficiencies in resources, skills and cultural capital in the form of positive social guidance amongst others. Amartya Sen (1980) referred to these deficiencies in terms of capability and functionings (“beings” and “doings”) and argues for assessments which unpack the vulnerabilities of people in more concrete terms as opposed to simple class divisions or economic ranking. The capability approach is suitable as a framework for a number of reasons. , It focuses on potential (capability sets) (Robeyns, 2005), rather than

outcomes (results and achievements). Sen (1985, 2008) shows how evaluating individuals and governments this way serves a more functional purpose. Using the approach as an instrument for assessment helps pinpoint deficiencies. It does not simply show that outcomes have not been met but also why they have failed to occur. The capability approach also acknowledges provisional advantages in terms of resources and opportunities on a vertical level (Walker and Unterhalter, 2007) rather than horizontally. For instance, it acknowledges the advantages sighted people have over people who have partial sight because the latter have special requirements to achieve similar goals. This concept of converting capabilities to functioning is pertinent. It allows us to pinpoint areas of need.

Finally, the capability approach recognises the primacy of human agency and respects it. This allows for plurality, meaning the framework thus offers a viable alternative to utilitarian and welfare traditions that can suitably incorporate relativist concerns. The capability approach has been used in many disciplines to examine issues of social justice and investigate the role and duty of government, societies and people.

In essence this framework provides a means by which we can examine individuals' functioning with reference to the opportunities at their disposal in a way income based evaluations cannot. Furthermore, along the same lines Ingrid Robeyns (2005) view that the approach complements our evaluation of policies "according to their impact on people's capabilities" is also important. In this study for example, investigating the effect of the practices and pedagogies of the voluntary organisations on capability development is possible because the capabilities and functionings can be weighed in relation to the activities of voluntary organisations. Are these processes really subduing the barriers that facilitate vulnerability and if so how are they enabling freedoms and functionings? The next

section looks at how the capability approach, when applied, improves understanding of the functionings of members of the vulnerable life world.

12.4 Operationality of education based capability approach values

The study shows that there is a need theoretically to establish how capabilities are transformed into functionings. Also we need further to tackle the issue of operationalisation of the capability approach so that it is used as a framework in social settings as well as policy ones. Many major contributions have evolved with respect to operationalising the approach in different fields. The gender sensitive tones of Robeyns (2000; 2005) and Alkire (2003; 2008) for example have supported new designs for analytical measurements. Sudhir Anand (1997) helped develop the human poverty index alongside Sen; this is used for assessing education and economic policies. It is also used to formulate outcomes and assess different types of capability including “soft” outcomes. As mentioned in chapter two the philosophical criticisms of Gasper (1995), Clark (2005) and Pogge (2002) have permitted the capability approach to be formulated as a theory of social justice (Nussbaum 2006), this supports effective application of the framework in social and political life. For instance, Nussbaum (2006) defends the capability approach’s non-resourcist measurements and argues that people may need more resources than others to be able to convert their capabilities to functionings. This is how additional resources and support for the vulnerable young people in the study can be justified. Yet, the capability approach still lacks evaluation instruments particularly in the field of education.

It makes sense to evaluate human well-being and capability development by assessing functionings. The question is how can these be measured without cultural or economic

bias? Some people will value certain functionings over others, for example Diego chose to work with vulnerable young people, because he wanted to support people like himself. He earns a small wage which he supplements with a second and third job but has not chosen to change career paths, though he now has the capabilities to go on to higher education and earn a better wage as a teacher. To evaluate functionings it is very important to measure capabilities and functionings as well as the conversion factors that link the two. The assessment of conversion should account for the agency and choice individual's exercise.

The vulnerable young people in the study may have lacked capabilities when they joined the organisations but they were keen to maintain respect, dignity and a feeling of belonging with other humans. These socio-cultural aspects of living are examined by Severine Deneulin (2007) as key inadequacies of the capability approach as it does not properly account for "structures of living together" (Ricoeur, 1992). Notions of cultural and human capital should gain more priority in the capability approach because people belong to particular historical communities and as shown in these studies learn and develop their capabilities within these communities. Our communities influence many capabilities in some way, not least irreducible plural goods that Charles Taylor (1993) describes as somewhat collective. An individual's social historical context also bears links to the kind of resources, social and intellectual capital accessible, as well as opportunities and substantial freedoms. This is the bridge between cultural historic activities and capability development. Miriam Teschl and Laurent Derobert (2008) highlight this point further when they refer to the substantial role social identities play in influencing people's choices. These views substantiate Robeyns (2005) and Vaughan's (2007) examination of personal histories. Not only is the scale of diversity acknowledged as greatly enhanced across space; there is a temporal dimension at play as well. Personal agency and the

resulting ability to make choices within communities is a specialised capability (Leßmann, 2007) which people develop in the community ‘alongside’ (Farren, 2006) experienced community members. This a complex dimension because so many specific peculiarities – personage, preference, smaller units of community like the family – influence how individuals live in societies.

The study of the journey vulnerable young people make towards capability also underpins the importance of a temporal vector in the capability approach with respect to how functionings are evaluated. Nussbaum (2000; 2006) already establishes the need to understand capabilities as features that need to be developed by education. This presumes that such an exercise will take time. More importantly, the development process is affected by internal capabilities, existing capabilities as well as external factors. This means that temporal variations will take place in the development of capabilities on a continuous basis. It may take an individual two months to learn to ride a bike or two days.

Consequently, modifications and adjustments that acknowledge the temporal dimension should be part of the capability framework. These will in my view account for the personal struggles, trials and resilience features that make each capability set even more unique.

Notably, the capability approach does not dismiss the need for the appraisal of resources. However resources, as Sen and Nussbaum (1993) maintain, should not be treated as value objects. The valuable elements of the approach are capabilities that enable functionings. In his analysis of the capability approach G. Cohen (1993) makes a more obvious distinction between capabilities and functionings. He refers to the term “midfare” as “states of a person produced by goods, states in which utility levels take the values they do”. This notion for Cohen is midway between goods or resources and utility or achievements. Clearly such a position is useful because it emphasises the need to clarify the difference

between resources and capabilities. For example in the field of education, capability development can refer to knowledge, skills, experience or any combination of these. However, these require monetary and social resources which are important in terms of capability development and conversion. It is necessary to construct resources into capability features without associating them with the value-laden elements of the resourcist approaches.

In this study it has been shown that evaluating vulnerability can be indeed complicated and sometimes vague. Mozaffar Qizilbash (2005) defends the capability approach by making the point that though its measures may appear to be “fuzzy”; measures of vulnerability are in reality just as ‘fuzzy.’ Take for example the vulnerabilities described in this study – rootlessness, normlessness and despondency – these are indeed not easy to quantify. Some of the complex multidimensional features that make up these vulnerabilities can however be measured. Socio-economic disadvantages like poor housing and low incomes have varying estimations; other features like social capital, emotional and psychological disadvantages do not lend themselves to easy valuation. Methodological evaluation exercises in the capability framework still defer to utilitarian quantitative methods. Sen calls these approaches “supplementary” because they either directly or indirectly use utilitarian weights as ancillary valuation tools. The capability approach should be able to use these tools and instruments without the compromising the integrity of the framework. To do so it is important that assessment tools are used primarily for weighing capabilities and not ranking them.

Education for capability development

As an instrument for developing capabilities, education and knowledge building remain a central part of the capability approach. Education – learning in communities the capabilities and functionings of our socio-cultural societies is essential for functioning. Good education as a practice of freedom will not only support the development of an individual's valued functionings but also promote a person's information stockpile, ability to reflect, understand one's self and others and recognise and use these powers as a responsible agent (Freire, 1967; Flores - Crespo, 2007). As such, education from a capability standpoint is not to be commoditised in ways that make it either inaccessible or limited to certain choice functionings.

The way Walker and Unterhalter (2007) examine the capability approach with regards to young people and children who are incapable of making informed choices about the kind of educational outcomes they will value is valuable for vulnerable young people. In this regard they argue that basic education is useful because on the one hand it gives everyone an equal opportunity to learn about standard information and skills – literacy, numeracy, fundamental science, geography, social studies etc. On the other hand, it gives teachers (or facilitators) the capacity to know what types of functionings are being developed. Consequently, useful assessment, certificates and qualifications presumably help educational institutions meet the needs and standards of employers. However, more significantly, teachers have the opportunity to convey to students what they think their strong capabilities are. If the educational system were also to support a young person's reflexivity and assessment of their combined capabilities the result should be educated individuals who have the capacity develop the functionings they choose to value.

The study also brings to light the importance of rounded education that supports real freedoms for people. Education that is “relevant” and has value to people, as one youth

worker put it, supports their learning. What the young people valued in the learning communities was the opportunities to test their capabilities – by means of exercises, community events and residential. These kinds of pseudo – assessments help them analyse their own learning curves. They enjoyed their achievements and it enhanced their own reflexive freedoms. Pedro Flores Crespo's (2007) work on the capability approach and education relates to the type of "freedom" learners should enjoy from educational systems. His analysis of Locke's and Rousseau's ideas shows that education should enhance human dignity, agency and purpose. As such, education in the learning communities can also be used to realise personal autonomy as Locke's principles of self-control suggest and develop one's sense of morality and virtue. Crespo widens the scope of educational achievement by suggesting it can accomplish a variety of outcomes both as a functioning itself and as a means to or process to other functionings. He favours the liberal version of education in this regard because such seeks to promote autonomy and critical reasoning (Saito, 2003). Educational pursuits designed for specific accomplishments do have instrumental value but, as Walker, Unterhalter and Flores-Crespo (2007) have demonstrated, do not automatically translate to development or flourishing.

The non-formal education taking place in the voluntary organisations can be helpful for vulnerable young people, but sometimes because other factors are militating against capability development, the young people may not succeed on their journey towards capability. The education in the learning communities needs to be replicated in similar fashion in the other communities the young people learn in. Diego succeeded because he moved to his sister's house, where he could develop his capabilities and skills. Had he stayed in the crew world, he would not have had the educational opportunities or practice necessary to make the improvements he did. It is important that the cultural historic

activities principles used to develop capabilities in the learning communities are used in other settings.

In summary the capability approach suffers because it does not explicitly account for how capabilities are converted to functionings. This is a complex task as significant conversion instruments support the process – community and relationships (i.e. structures of living together, formal education institutions and their accompanying curricula, ethos, staff and so on), resources, personage, cultural histories etc. Can capabilities be redefined in such a way that depicts the value and means of achieving projected functionings?

12.5 Threefold capabilities: tools, mechanisms and expertise

I believe the capability approach needs to further address means by which capabilities are developed and expanded. Fundamentally, capabilities are concerned with the ability and freedom to make rational choices that will benefit the individual without impeding the capabilities of others to do the same. In fact, according to first Maslow's hierarchy and Nussbaum's list, a fully functioning individual will aspire to also expand the capabilities of others and make contributions to the global scientific, social, economic, technological and political resource base.

Given the broad range of capabilities and the diversity of combinations attainable there is a need to identify types of functionings people need to achieve to flourish. Using Nussbaum's list of basic capabilities I propose that every individual needs first of all the freedom to identify "her space" in the world. This identity is the continuous reproduction and reinterpretation of the pattern of values, symbols, memories, myths, and traditions that compose the distinctive human heritage. I speak of a sense of belonging that is both

personal and collective and can be forged regardless of temperamental, physical or mental differentials. This sense of identity is lacking in individuals who are restrained by the social barriers of race, gender, ethnicity or age. For others the barriers are economic, political and educational. Such obstacles have excluded and separated peoples and reinforced stigmas that keep social exclusion and the vulnerabilities identified in this study alive. Individuals should be able to combine the ten basic capabilities in a way that enables participation and recognition (Alkire, 2002b).

Secondly, individuals need to pursue some kind of purpose that links them with others – a sense of working with other humans for the greater good. This could be simple personal ambition or aspirations that directly affect other people, non-human animals, value systems and the planet. In my view, the capability approach corroborates the idea that all people are students of life. Human beings have the opportunity continuously to improve their capabilities and functionings by the actions they make and the decisions they take. This utilisation of agency shapes our lives, the lives of people around us, and those far away. Our agency also has influence on people not yet born and links us historically to those who have lived before us. Christien Pia (2008) notes “no one lives in the world in general”. However individualistic our lives, we are forced to confront the realities of our collective existence and how the interplay of our meddling lives affects and effects everyone and everything in different ways. Therefore, though pedagogically humans may be constructing meaning by means of tools and resources framed in a world that is uniquely ours, we have to educate ourselves about the “world” of others and the world we all share i.e. the public world. In this context, individuals can creatively envision for themselves an existence that they value and want to pursue without damaging the interests of others.

A third function which in my opinion ought to be attained by combining basic capabilities is that of care. Nussbaum (2006) refers to this as well as other emotions in development of the capability approach in reference to the Aristotelian cadence of virtue. However, it is Nixon (2008) who elaborates on “relationships of virtue” as a pedagogic and socio-cultural instrument of change. Living in the public world requires the ability to think of others as well as one’s self, we need capacities to negotiate, evaluate and dispense judgement wisely. Within communities and informal social networks unwritten rules and structures of justice exist enabling individuals make value judgements that reflect some form of empathy. The value system operating at the family level needs to intersect with that of the community, State and Global level. Functioning humans should be exercising care for themselves and others.

These three functionings – identity, positive envisioning and perceptive accountability require a combination of capabilities that include both the ten basic capabilities proposed by Nussbaum (1999) and the emphasis placed on conversion factors that Sen (1993) acknowledges. Having capabilities of critical thinking, analysis, decision making, strategic planning or evaluation is not sufficient for human flourishing. Using these capabilities to accomplish these specific functionings is essential.

Capabilities are like tools but just like screws and nails are in effect useless without the mechanisms of drills or hammers and the expertise of skilled workmen; capabilities are only a part of the requirements for functioning. The mechanisms and expertise I refer to have already being expressed in the capability approach as external (Nussbaum 1993), exogenous (Kumarkrishna, 2007) or midfare (Cohen 1993). These depictions still do not sufficiently articulate the degree to which some specialised capabilities can be manipulated and intensified by the agency of individuals or other latent exogenous features in the

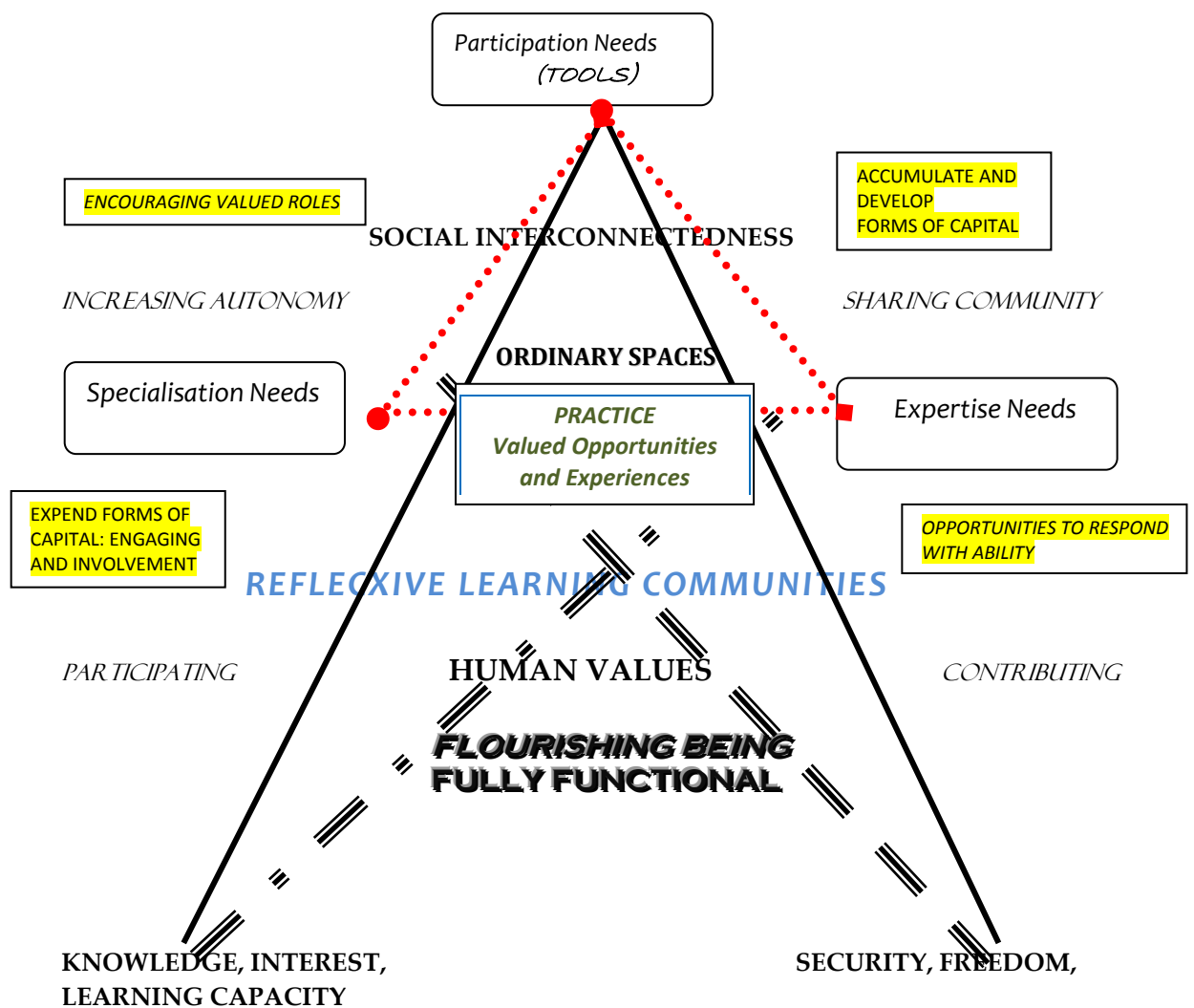
environment. Take for example, the social feature of confidence that is developed by the young people within voluntary organisations. This is an endogenous feature that defies measurement. What does it mean to say a young person has developed confidence? I believe the youth workers evaluate the increase in such factors as self esteem, performance, perhaps skills and passion associated with enjoying the task at hand etc. A person could develop confidence in one skill and still remain unconfident about other things. Confidence, as we very well know, can also be deflated by the jeers of a crowd, the enormity of a task or a change in circumstances. As a capability, confidence is a specialised mechanism used to reinforce other types of capability. Confidence gained in one area can duplicate itself in other aspects of living, in so far as the tools and expertise for those are acquired. Recent research by neuroscientists (Werner, 2005) suggests that positive accomplishments are in fact responsible for neurological activity which spurs further trial and eventually the development of skills. In other words, positive accomplishments reinforce learning.

There are in my view three different and distinctive kinds of capabilities, those which are like tools which can be acquired and possibly improved for enhanced achievements for example – physical features like legs, arms, ears etc. Also there are things like wheelchairs, ramps, hearing aids, government policies, institutions which have little value without other capabilities of mechanisation and expertise. Some capabilities are like mechanisms they use the tools to achieve functioning such as the use of legs, or wheelchairs to achieve the functioning of mobility. Finally with expertise a person can achieve higher degrees of mobility, for example long distance running or long distance flights in aeroplanes and space craft. These differentiations help to identify the capabilities some people lack in terms of genetic disposition, disability or cultural and historical inclinations.

Social capital generatively renewed via sharing and learning

Figure 12.1 shows the way in which the fore mentioned sub-capabilities combine with external freedoms and opportunity to produce functionings of value for the individual. A flourishing individual works alongside other flourishing individuals to create a thriving community with more opportunities to develop and expand freedoms and capabilities. The flourishing community ensures that its members have the access to capabilities – tools, mechanisms and expertise as well as the space to interact, learn with and share via means of valued roles, opportunities for participation and contribution.

Figure 12.1 Capabilities developed for functioning in the public sphere



(Adapted from John O'Brien 1989 & 1999)

It is important to underpin the significance of social and civil connections in the development of capabilities. Relational features which acknowledge the personage of students as citizens and contributors in the education process improve their participation and learning experience as well as those of other group members. The capability approach, implicitly at least, tasks education as the key instrument for developing these capabilities. Educational institutions can play a major part in this effort, but they cannot work in isolation. As mentioned in the literature review the work of developing these capabilities begins with the guardians of children. Value systems, relationship building, learning styles, empathy and ambition are moulded and developed not only by internal and personal specificities but also by the developmental process distinctly adapted to advance them. Naturally, people are expected to choose the tools available to them and the ones that they understand will advance their development, objectives and life aspirations. Giving children and young people the tools that will enable them to flourish in the public world and in relation to it is part of the socialisation process facilitated by parents, community members and leaders. The 21st century has other facilitators as well - the media, government and international machinery. Educational theory for the 21st century will most effectively include all the facilitators and resources needed for the pedagogical challenge of creating independent, responsible and critical agents.

The importance of social education and social participation has risen in the last few decades. There is a renewed emphasis on citizenship education; health education and sexual education have elements that deal with relationships and the management of emotions. Religious education has also incorporated features of ethics, morality, culture, pluralism and tolerance. The question is how prominent should these aspects be? Are they simply scaffolding for the construction of “real knowledge” or part of the structure?

12.6 Conclusion

The capability approach has been strengthened by the contribution of this investigation. First, it has reinforced and developed understanding that capabilities are diminished when young people are constrained to live their lives in conditions of disadvantage and vulnerability.

Second, the distinctive contribution of this thesis to the Capability Approach lies in its understanding of the role of pedagogy, of the practices of non-formal learning in developing capabilities and converting them into functioning lives. There is more clarity in terms of relating the processes which inform how the drive for social recognition and economic and symbolic capital is translated from illegal and unconventional methods to legitimate and transparently conformed traditions. By dialogue, mentoring, practice and responsibility taking individuals learn to integrate their own individual capability sets connect with societal capability sets. The other dimensions on the achieving functioning platform – time, space, structure (construction and reconstruction of social world) come into play as well and the insignia of exclusion is switched for one of inclusion, respect and tolerance. We do not see just cognitive reorientation; rather there is a deep seated realignment taking place which allows the vulnerable young people to function in the public world with dignity and self respect. The interventions develop durability of the capabilities so that young people can be confident agents with the skills to choose how and when to appropriate their capabilities and determine the functionings they value.

Last, the Thesis buttresses the more expansive definition of capabilities articulated by Sen which shows how micro level processes of friendships and communal support combine with macro level policies and institutional practices to encourage and enable capability formation. The capability approach is very difficult to operationalise in education because it

appears to be stiff. It places so much emphasis on individual freedoms which invariably stifles its ability to empower social agency and capabilities for developing structures of living together. It also needs to develop better clarity with regards the ways capabilities integrate to form valued functionings in all aspects of life.

CHAPTER 13.0 - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter reviews the argument of the thesis and presents the general inferences and conclusions. Recommendations and further areas of research that will develop the line of inquiry of this research are made in the last section, following a discussion of the limitations of the study.

13.2 Overview

In Chapter four, the research questions stated that the study will examine how capabilities are developed in vulnerable young people who attend voluntary organisations. The investigation concentrated on the journey of the participants from vulnerable lifeworlds towards capability and functioning in the public world. Examining the vulnerability of the participants within their lifeworld, the capability approach was used to assess the capabilities they possess and the functionings (beings and doings) they are able to achieve. Part III shows the major bottlenecks that the vulnerable lifeworld places on functioning and development. Vulnerable young people are restricted because of a lack of some generic capabilities due to structural and individual disadvantages such as poverty, disability, instability etc. The vulnerability that is perpetuated also means young people cannot develop generic capabilities for manipulating tools or the mechanisms for appropriating (through evaluated preferences and objective decision making) valued functionings. Examples are life skills for care of physical or emotional well-being, abilities to be literate and numerate or social skills for interacting with dignity and tolerance. Their

peers develop these through straight forward social networks in their families and communities. This major disadvantage combines with other external constraints, which relentlessly turn out to be negative for people trapped in the vulnerability cycle to create barriers that prohibit them from functioning in the public sphere. Excluded from the public world, vulnerable young people have few opportunities of developing the requisite skills needed to participate in it.

Using the capability approach to appraise levels of functioning in the public world, the study showed that people who are fully functioning and advancing towards Maslow's concept of self actualisation are able to combine both internal and external capabilities to create a very unique skill set. The capability set of each individual differs because of variations in background, opportunities and external circumstances. However, utilising the capabilities as tools, mechanisms and expertise individuals can convert their own repertoire of n-tuple capabilities to desired functionings.

Vulnerable people need to learn how to develop and manoeuvre their capability sets appropriately. Voluntary organisations provide the space, facilitation, facilitators and practice for vulnerable young people to do both. The vulnerable young people have a range of opportunities to develop capabilities as tools, mechanisms and expertise in the centres. The skilled youth workers mentor young people using the cultural historic activity instruments of dialogue and mediation among others to guide vulnerable young people through the journey towards capability. The process is neither easy nor smooth; the transition involves making difficult decisions and taking risks. There are perilous "distracters" on the journey's route, obliging the young people to utilise their newly developed skills of decision making, analysis, negotiation etc. Having practiced and acquired the use of specialised capabilities within the voluntary organisations, clients have

a good chance of successfully using the same skills in their families, communities and as citizens.

Voluntary organisations provide a reflexive space that is not accommodated in mainstream schools because these institutions expect to welcome students who have the social, emotional, symbolic and cultural experiences that the institutionalised learning environment requires. Schools are not necessarily geared towards responding to individual needs or students who have not developed the capabilities to submit to the environment. In the learning communities created by voluntary organisations an environment is developed where vulnerable young people can appreciate and learn the capabilities required for living in the public world. They create a bridge between the two worlds, mediating for and empowering vulnerable young people in ways that challenge them to undertake the transformative journey towards capability.

Capability is not necessarily rewarded with formal awards such as GCSE's or university degrees. The journey towards capability is not linear, capabilities can be gained randomly, since they could also diminish and in fact need upgrading. Basic tools will need to give way to advanced ones, mechanisms will need enhancements and the improvement of expertise has no bounds. Capability has emotional breadth in that it is a feeling of being related to a larger whole. Capable citizens recognise that our lives have meaning and functionality as we participate in economic activities, social connections and political engagements. Young people and other marginalised groups should not be disconnected from these processes, even when they do not yet, or cannot make economic contributions or participate formally in the democratic process. They should be involved in the processes that enable them to learn with others how they can enrol successfully as

functioning adults. The learning processes of the 21st century should support individuals to develop their knowledge, interests, capabilities and social connectedness with the world.

The security of a capable person relates to a series of multifarious states. It is not only concerned with being safe or free from harm. It involves “a knowing” that to some degree one is in control of one’s life. It is awareness that we can exercise this control by our participation in social, economic and political life. Secure individuals are uninhibited by the boundaries of negative circumstances because they have the internal and external capabilities (coping mechanisms) to survive upheavals and disasters. This security is developed over time by the accumulation of a range of capabilities, opportunities and freedoms present in our lifeworlds. Thus we can confidently pursue personal development and collective enhancement. Capable, flourishing citizens are able to evaluate their values, relationships and actions in consonance with their trajectories towards self actualisation. They are thus able to make independent, rational, long-term and realistic choices. They are able to plan and make adjustments to their preferences as new opportunities or challenges appear.

Communities have a responsibility to teach their young members the social norms and praxis that influence their way of life and development. Education via learning and socialisation improves the capabilities of both learners and facilitators. It is a task not only for parents, teachers or public workers but also that of every skilled member of the community. The next section provides a few recommendations based on the study.

13.3 Recommendations

This section discusses recommendations that reflect how the capability approach can be used to help assess the learning of young people. It also expands methods by which cultural historical principles can be used to assist young people's development of capabilities in communities.

Learning communities and Cultural Historic principles can be used in other settings

I have made many references to the way Cultural historic principles used in the voluntary organisation help the young people scaffold their learning and help them become able to use materials of learning not only as academic elements (for work or training) but also as features of everyday scholarship. When learning is understood as a continuous lifelong function, participants can develop their capabilities within various learning communities. Indeed Gordon Wells' work developed by showing how the principles of dialogue and learning with others are used for language formation in familial context. Therefore, these principles can be used by any other significant adult in informal and formal settings. Wells and Engeström amongst others show how activity based learning is used and developed in classroom activities. There is a need to develop this into other areas where learning and capability development is taking place.

Firstly, it follows that young people who are familiar with these learning concepts in the voluntary organisations will use them in their leisure groups and anywhere they gather with friends with whom they can apply these principles. Some young children will be privileged to learn in similar fashion at home, in school or with apprentices. Parents who do not use cultural historical principles can be taught how to use them, particularly in the current climate where families are being supported as a group in the intervention

programmes aimed at vulnerable young people. The dialogue and mediation techniques will also be useful when young people are facing disciplinary issues at school, in juvenile courts and at career training. Young people should be able to learn formatively from their life experiences to reinforce their capability development at all levels and all times.

All society can become a huge web of integrated learning communities subdivided by interests, age, spatial community or even virtual ones. The educational systems will build a reflexive society where people learn together on the bus, with the shop keeper and on the football pitch.

Assessments that constructively inform and motivate learners

Assessment in school needs to reflect the journey of the individual in particular as well as the developmental changes being made to his repertoire of tools, mechanisms and expertise. This means those standardised tests which reflect very little of an individual's potential, need to be upgraded in a more personalised way. The education system needs to inform and encourage the learning process rather than act as a punitive instrument. Capability assessment regimes in my view should involve the learner, teacher and parents. Together they assess the tools the learner possesses, the mechanisms she he has in her repository for coupling the tools and using them and finally the expertise that is being accumulated as a result of practice and utilisation. Educational assessments should expand to include socio-political and interpersonal evaluations which help the young members of society calculate the measure of their life and social skills being converted into substantial freedoms.

Teachers and facilitators can demonstrate to the young people how external capabilities are assessed via the means and channels of substantial freedoms and range of n-tuple

capabilities available to citizens. They can also help the young people appraise their own level of progress in terms of combining their internal and external capabilities to valuable combined capabilities. Young people can also make predictions based on projections of their future combined capabilities showing how much control they will have over their lives and their level of participation and contribution to their community and the wider society.

Mainstream schools can look to develop collaborative links with voluntary organisations, particularly with reference to the extended schools programme being rolled out as part of the Every Child Matters Agenda (2009). Activities and practices that empower young people develop their interpersonal and life skills and provide avenues for practicing their three fold capabilities can equally take place in schools. Voluntary workers can contribute to learning in schools in much the same way they do at the centres, especially if the volunteers have long term links to the community and can provide mentoring and guidance to young people and help facilitate activities that develop capabilities. The practices and pedagogies of voluntary organisations can be included in mainstream education since cultural historical principles can be adapted to suit creatively formed learning communities within classrooms.

[Boundaries and responsibilities that support development in the public lifeworld](#)

In the community, social workers, officers of the judiciary and law enforcement workers can also use the capability framework to support young people make assessments of their freedoms. Correctional facilities should aim to assess young people's needs and functionings and take steps to support them to appreciate their rights and responsibilities so that they have the opportunity to make transformative journeys towards capability. Parents and families need to learn together and in collaboration with others in their

communities the structures and channels of justice. This social process should be aimed at de-escalating feelings of injustice and other misunderstandings in subcultures or socially excluded groups. Young people will therefore be able to learn about appropriate boundaries and freedoms within the home as well as outside it. The mechanisms that support appreciation of boundary setting in inter-personal and person-institution are within functional communities; in this sense a neighbourhood can also be a reflexive learning community. The use of social capacities practiced and upgraded by adult community members in association with its younger members is an ongoing educational experience. This ought to be encouraged to take place informally everyday in neighbourhood perspectives with postmen, shop keepers, bus drivers, etc. Young people should be involved and valued members of communities, learning collaboratively with other members.

13.4 Limitations of the study

The research for a doctorate is naturally not equipped with the person power or resources to cover extensive data. The time limit placed on research for one is a key factor.

Participants in the study were in contact with the researcher for less than one and a half years. In some cases contact was lost because of movement from children's homes and other personal circumstances. Ideally, a longitudinal study which traces the trajectories of vulnerable young people through the most part of their transformative journey will capture better the nuances and turning points of the process. A larger sample base may reveal more variety in terms of the structure and pace of the journey from vulnerability to capability. This was not possible in this case due to the limitations of a lone researcher.

The sample group is also a difficult unit to associate with or even keep track of. Due to the nature of vulnerability, many participants were not included in the interview process because of ethical considerations and time constraints. The interviews excluded young people who did not want to discuss personal issues and those who were in the process of moving foster homes/children's homes. It also did not involve participants who became ill, were involved in court proceedings or undergoing other traumatic experiences. Even the voluntary organisations which are poorly funded did not have the records or resources to provide more robust data for the study.

13.5 Further research possibilities

There is extensive scope for further research.

1. The study was limited to voluntary organisations which create the atmosphere and structure of a reflexive learning community which is often local and accessible to the clientele. Other organisations can create and possibly are creating similar conditions for nurturing vulnerable young people on their transformative journey towards capability. Some schools are beginning to create onsite centres similar to voluntary organisations in this study. Youth Offending Teams also have some centres which have the potential to become reflexive learning communities. Children's homes can easily also create the conditions of a learning community. Non-spatial spaces can also become communities of reflexive learning facilitated by members of the local community who act as mentors – police officers, bus drivers, health workers, etc. It will be interesting to examine the trajectories of vulnerable young people who have been through a reflexive community en-route to a life of capability – did they encounter reflexive communities? How were their capabilities developed in these communities? Did they develop similar tools,

mechanisms, expertise based on the cultural historical principles or similar learning theories?

2. A longitudinal study which follows young people through many of the processes discussed here as they happen will reveal a lot more in terms of the major breakthroughs and turning points of individual's journeys.
3. There is more room for researching the influence of (a) the facilitators of this journey, in this case it consists of youth workers. Many of other facilitators have great influence on the development of capabilities in vulnerable young people – parents, carers, support workers, social workers, counsellors etc. Also (b) the facilitation process in this case the cultural historical activity learning theory and its use in non conventional “learning” environments can be examined in further detail.
4. Though this study examined vulnerable young people in general there is case to show that trajectories differ because of the nature of vulnerability and the social contexts of the young people. Studies can show more detailed nuances if they concentrate on specific units of vulnerable young people – for example young people from poor backgrounds excluded from mainstream education, young people who have been involved in gangs, young people who are in the care system for more than 3 years or young people from deprived backgrounds with mild learning difficulties.

There are more research possibilities that will enhance the field of learning and development for vulnerable young people in terms of the interventions that can make them become capable citizens.

13.6 Conclusion

The basis of people's lives with one another is twofold, and it is one--the wish of each person to be confirmed as what each person is, even as what that person can become; and the innate capacity in each person to confirm others in this way. That this capacity lies so immeasurably fallow constitutes the real weakness and questionableness of the human race; actual humanity exists only where this capacity unfolds.

-Martin Buber in the Life of Dialogue by Maurice S. Friedman 1960:p.81

Educational institutions are reinventing and repositioning themselves in order to meet the challenges of preparing young citizens for life and living in the 21st century. One of the major challenges for the Department for Children, Schools and Families (in 2009) is to support vulnerable young people who are not engaging with the educational systems and institutions. In the school year 2006-07, sixty five thousand, three hundred and ninety pupils were excluded from mainstream education, mostly on a temporary basis.

Preparation for adult life for this cohort of young people is complex and unsteady marred by a range of features which cause normlessness, rootlessness and despondency. These young people simply do not have the means to develop their citizen or life skills. Some young people cannot be educated in a manner or structure similar to that of their peers because they have disabilities (physical, behavioural and cognitive) which impair their learning and development. Others are debarred from education and schools because they protest and rebel against the establishments and structures of learning, often via violent and antisocial behaviour. Young people who appear to be uninterested in education and learning do not have the capabilities –emotionally, psychologically, basic relationship skills to make positive choices which actually improve their functionality and well-being.

If young people are not prepared for adult life and responsible citizenship, they invariably become dependent on the State for their sustenance and livelihood. Such people do not have the competencies or capacity to perform the function of citizens or even take responsibility for their own well-being. A tenth of students entitled to free school meals currently leave school without requisite capabilities for functioning in 21st century life. Young people who fit the same profile perhaps are equally linked to petty crime and anti-social behaviour – muggings, burglaries and stabbings. Research (Brand and Ollerearnshaw, 2008) shows that almost all children involved in gangs have been excluded from mainstream schooling.

In order to change their circumstances, these vulnerable people need to develop the capacities for living. This study examined the means by which voluntary organisations improve the capabilities and well-being of vulnerable young people. It focused on three major vulnerable groups: young people who have been excluded from mainstream education, those in State care (Looked after Children resident in children homes or foster care) and young people with learning difficulties.

Young people, who make the transition from vulnerability to capability, do so because they are given opportunities to learn and develop “with others”. This underlying and fundamental communal activity provides young people who have been isolated in the vulnerable lifeworld with the occasion to live in a functional environment and achieve valued beings and doings. The value of the learning community goes beyond academic or social elements. It is in this atmosphere that vulnerable young people develop the features for social interconnectedness, appreciation of human values, sense of security, freedom and development, an improved well being and the ability for learning and application of knowledge. Simply put they develop capabilities and discover freedoms which they can integrate and convert to desired functionings. The process is not

haphazard, since these young people utilise specialised capabilities in terms of tools, mechanisms and expertise that ensure that they convert the same to the functionings they need for flourishing. Therefore, young people can combine their newly acquired decision making skills with information about funded training courses and earned qualifications to forge careers in respectable ways.

Reflective learning communities provide the space, facilitation, facilitators and practice sessions for young people to learn and develop capabilities for basic human flourishing. They give the young people opportunities to value themselves and others, thereby building their confidence, empathy and psycho-social skills. The environment empowers its members with skills for living as well and opportunities to practice and enhance their roles as independent, participatory and functioning 21st century citizens.

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²³ * Pseudonyms used in the study cannot be altered for confidentiality purposes

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APPENDICES

Appendix 4.1 Sampling Procedure

- Use of matrix: - See below
- Access issues: - Approval, consent and confidentiality matters, use of equipment
- Consultation with youth workers/management: - Advice and guidance on well-being of participants

Selection Matrix

VYP Meets Criteria/ Suitable VO				Vulnerability – In Care, School Refuser/ Excluded, LD			General Status – Family income - low, middle, high) Family support (weak, strong)			Needs of Clients Positive activities Qualifications Skills Socialisation			Well being: Any issues - physical mental, social or emotional		
Voluntary Organisation: Target Clientele: VYP, General YP, YP with specific disadvantages															
Geographical Location : North, South, East, West, City Centre															
Type – A - E															
Size – Small, Large, Very Large															
Staff – Diversity, Training (internal/External) and Qualification - GCSE/ Further/ Degree															
Comment															

Appendix 4.2 Data Collection via Interview and Questionnaire

INTERVIEWS conducted with Vulnerable young People								
Participant	Recommendations and request	No. of no shows	Possible explanations for no show	Alternatives considered	Actual engagement	Incentives considered	Participant never had interview	Participant had interview but was not fully engaged
ILKRIDGE								
Callum, his 3 brothers, 1 sister (Pat) and two friends	Recommended by the youth workers as a good case study	3 joint – objected to separate interviews	They forgot!	Questionnaire administered by youth workers	Interviewed at home. In-depth discussions at the centre. Limited information on gang activity.	Conditions negotiated by youth workers		Distracted by peers, video games, general lack of interest.
Tisha	Recommended by the youth workers	5	Personal problems	-	Interviews in office. Abstained from discussing difficulty family relationships.			Short sessions. Always in a hurry to leave.
Phoebe	Recommended by the youth workers	3	No explanation		Discussions during observation		Moved abruptly to another home	
Andy	Recommended by the youth workers	-	-		Interviewed in care home – appeared guarded/ non-responsive.			Short session – distracted by notes and games console
Heather + P	Recommended by the youth workers as a good case study.	5	She apologised but gave no explanation	-	First interview at Centre, second at home.	Offered music vouchers		
Hero supported by YW+ P	Recommended by the youth workers as a good case study	1	Mum and youth worker said he was shy		Interview at the Centre.			Limited interaction probably due to Aspergers
Bob	Requested by researcher	0	-	-	Enthusiastic			
Three VYP	Requested by researcher				Data recorded via observation not used because		Did not want to be interviewed	

					information could not be verified			
2 Parents whose children were not interviewed	Requested by researcher				Enthusiastic - interviewed at centre			
Interviewed – full time youth workers, 2 volunteers, discussions with others								
FUNALEY								
Diego +P	Enthusiastic at beginning of study. Recommended by the youth workers as a good case study	7 no shows at the school – Diego will then avoid taking calls and attending the sessions. and “not bothered”	Sarah assumed he was stalling. Others suggested he was “not bothered”. On one occasion Sarah called his house – a friend answered the phone explaining Diego was out – he could be heard in the background.	Phone interviews, interviews in a different location	Diego acknowledged he found it difficult to divulge past information. He opted to keep details confidential. First interview took place in his house 2 other interviews at school thereafter. Several clarifications/short discussions during observation sessions.	Music vouchers – he turned these down.		Chose not to have some information detailed.
Stan	Requested by researcher	0	-	-	Reserved, gave simple answers	Rewarded for attendance by Organisation.		Unwilling to discuss difficult past.
Kareem	Requested by researcher	0	-	-	Discussion and information gathered in observation.	-	Unwilling to engage.	Unwilling to discuss activity in gangs.
Dama	Recommended by youth workers	0	-	-	Dama was interviewed twice. She was part of focus group sessions as well. Limited information on gang activity	Rewarded for attendance by Organisation – keen to obtain any form of financial incentive		Easily distracted – interviews were short
Jake	Requested by	-	-	-	Engaged in		Unwilling to	

	researcher					observation sessions and discussion		have interview	
Janine	Requested by researcher	0	-	-		Engaged in focus group and observations		Unwilling to have interview	
Ayesha	Recommended by youth workers	0				Two interviews and focus group	Rewarded for attendance by Organisation		Not prepared to discuss difficult past
Jackie + P	Requested by researcher	0				Two interviews and focus group	Rewarded for attendance by Organisation		
Ella + supported by Youth worker + P	Requested by researcher	-	-	-		Limited engagement in sessions. She had one-to-one special sessions.		Unwilling to have interview	
Damian + supported by Youth worker + P	Requested by researcher	-	-	-		Attended one-to-one special sessions.			Enthusiastic, limited communication
Ajash + supported by Youth worker	Recommended by the youth workers	1	Did not give any explanation	Questionnaire		Interview in office			Brief and one word answers
Seven VYP at Funaley	Requested by researcher			Questionnaire		Some data recorded via observation could not be verified, some did engage enthusiastically in discussion during observation sessions		Unwilling to have interview. Did not fill in questionnaire	
Interviewed all full time youth workers, 3 volunteers, 1 manager and 2 teachers									
HEATHTOP									
Umran	Recommended by the youth workers	0		Questionnaire		Interview in the office			
Hayley	Requested by researcher	2 – Not at centre	Apologised	Questionnaire		Interview during session			Not very enthusiastic
Adam	Requested by			Questionnaire				Unwilling to	

	researcher						have interview.	
Gary	Requested by researcher				Had discussions at Centre but involved with criminal justice system – some data could not be confirmed		Unwilling to have interview.	
Lee + supported by Youth worker	Recommended by youth workers	0			Interview in the office - Very keen to talk			Limited understanding of process
Jackson ++supported by Youth worker + P	Recommended by youth workers	0			In the office – not very successful – in the arts corner with pictures and art coordinator			Short interviews because of short attention span and disability
Lynn + supported by Youth worker + P	Recommended by the youth workers as a good case study	1 – Did not come into the centre on the agreed date	Apologised – did not seem aware that she had missed an appointment		Interview in the office			Limited understanding of process
Two VYP	Recommended by the youth workers						Stopped attending before interview could take place	
Three Questionnaires returned by parents of some clients who were not interviewed								
Interviewed all full time youth workers, mentors and trainers, 1 Manager and 1 member of board of trustees, 4 volunteers, discussions with others								

YW – Youth worker
+ P = Separate interview with parent
VYP = Vulnerable young person

Appendix 4.3 Information Pack for Participants

Appendix 4.3.1a Package for young people (Interviews)

- ❖ Information sheet/ Cover letter
- ❖ Consent form
- ❖ Interview questions for young people (A)

CONDITIONS FOR INTERVIEW

During the interview, interviewees would be provided

- Safe and comfortable environment
- The option of opting out of the interview at any point
- Assurance that all information would be kept confidential
- Assurance that data would be used for the purposes of research only
- Appropriate schedules with the consent of participant
- Draft of transcript will be forwarded to participant 4 – 6 weeks after the interview for comments and validation

Letter of Introduction

Faculty of Education

University of Warwick

Coventry CV4 7AL

OR

(Via Funaley Centre Workers

Funaley

Dear prospective participant,

I am a PhD Student at the University of Warwick. My research focuses on young people. Specifically, the study seeks to explore the role voluntary organisations play in the provision of support for young people's capability development and sense of well-being.

Voluntary organisations have become more involved in alternative education provision/informal education as a means to provide support and care for young people. The organisations are said to enable young people engage in education, explore and develop their life skills, and abilities by means of varied activities. My research is seeking to examine these claims.

Over the last nine months I have been involved at the Funaley youth Centre. As part of my study I kindly request willing participants to take part in a short interview (less than an hour) aimed at determining their perceptions of the role Funaley plays in the lives of young people. The interview is designed to provide data for the doctoral thesis - **How do voluntary organisations improve the capabilities and well being of vulnerable young people?**

Participants are assured that all information in this fieldwork is for the purposes of research only. Pseudonyms would be used in the Thesis and strict confidential and ethical guidelines would be adhered to.

Please feel free to contact me or ask any clarifying questions if need be. There is a brief interview protocol attached. Kindly fill in the enclosed consent form and return it to the Centre if you are willing to participate. Thank you.

Kind Regards,

Arinola Adefila: PhD Student, University of Warwick

Consent Form

Centre Number:

Interview Number:

Title of Project: How Do Voluntary Organisations Improve The Capabilities And Well Being Of Vulnerable Young People?

Name of Researcher: ADEFILA, A. A – PhD Student University of Warwick

Please tick to confirm

- I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated 5th September 2007 for the above study.

- I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

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

- I understand that child's/ward's participation is voluntary and that he/she is free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

- I understand that data generated from this study would be used as part of a doctoral thesis

- I agree to take part in the above research study.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of Person taking consent
(if different from researcher)

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

Interview Questions (A): Young People

These are the kind of questions you can expect, though follow up questions and clarifications are likely to be included

Background - personal family and educational histories, influences etc

- Personal history and educational trajectories
- What was happening in your life (personal/educational) before you started coming to VO²⁴?
- How did you get to know about the VO?
- What motivated you to start coming to the VO?

Experience of the VO – Activities, professionals, practices

- What do you do when you come to the Centre?
- Can you describe these activities?
- What do you like/dislike about the activities/ things you do at the Centre?
- What do you like/dislike about the staff?
- How have the staff helped you develop skills?
- Why do you feel the staff are able to help you develop these skills?
- Which sessions do you enjoy the most?
- What do you benefit from the activities? What specific skills have you gained?
- How and why are these skill gained?

What They Have Learned, / How and Why?

- What is the most important skill you have you learned from the Centre?
- How do you think you learned this/these?
- What has influenced your learning experience?
- Staff?
- Peers?
- Activities?
- The Centre – facilities, ethos, management, structure?
- How did these influence you? Why?
- Could you have learned these skills from elsewhere – say home, school, TV?
- How has coming here contributed to your social learning at school/home?
- Do you feel like what you learn is relevant to you as a person?
- Do you recognise the learning process immediately or only upon reflection?
- How? Why?

What are the outcomes of the learning – what capabilities are being developed?

- What do you benefit from being a member of the Centre?
- Are there any other benefits? Can you specifically identify the benefits/skills?
- How have these helped you? In other aspects of life – education, home, friends
- Are you a peer mentor?
- Do you think other Centre members learn from you?
- What do you think others are learning from you?
- How have you helped other people learn?
- When you reflect on your experience here in particular what do you treasure the most?
- What other abilities do you think you have developed at the VO?
- How has your life changed as a result of your experiences

²⁴ VO – Voluntary Organisation

Appendix 4.3.1b Package for youth workers (Interviews)

- ❖ Information sheet/ Cover letter
- ❖ Consent form
- ❖ Interview questions for young people (A)

CONDITIONS FOR INTERVIEW

During the interview, interviewees would be provided

- Safe and comfortable environment
- The option of opting out of the interview at any point
- Assurance that all information would be kept confidential
- Assurance that data would be used for the purposes of research only
- Appropriate schedules with the consent of participant
- Draft of transcript will be forwarded to participant 4 – 6 weeks after the interview for comments and validation

Letter of introduction

Faculty of Education

University of Warwick

Coventry CV4 7AL

OR

(Via Funaley Centre Workers

Funaley

Dear prospective participant,

I am a PhD Student at the University of Warwick. My research focuses on young people. Specifically, the study seeks to explore the role voluntary organisations play in the provision of support for young people's capability development and sense of well-being.

Voluntary organisations have become more involved in alternative education provision/informal education as a means to provide support and care for young people. The organisations are said to enable young people engage in education, explore and develop their life skills, and abilities by means of varied activities. My research is seeking to examine these claims.

Over the last nine months I have been involved at the Funaley youth Centre. As part of my study I kindly request willing participants to take part in a short interview (less than an hour) aimed at determining their perceptions of the role Funaley plays in the lives of young people. The interview is designed to provide data for the doctoral thesis - **How do voluntary organisations improve the capabilities and well being of vulnerable young people?**

Participants are assured that all information in this fieldwork is for the purposes of research only. Pseudonyms would be used in the Thesis and strict confidential and ethical guidelines would be adhered to.

Please feel free to contact me or ask any clarifying questions if need be. There is a brief interview protocol attached. Kindly fill in the enclosed consent form and return it to the Centre if you are willing to participate. Thank you.

Kind Regards,

Arinola Adefila: PhD Student, University of Warwick

Interview Questions: Parents (B)

These are the kind of questions you can expect, though follow up questions and clarifications are likely to be included

Background - personal family and educational histories, influences etc

- Personal history and educational trajectories
- What was happening in your child's life (education and personal trajectory) before coming to VO²⁵? Any problems? For how long?
- How did you feel?
- What did you do?
- Did you get any support? From whom/where?
- How did you get to know about the VO?
- Did you motivate your child to start coming?
- What motivated your child to start attending the VO?

Experience of the VO – Activities, professionals, practices

- What skills has your child learned at the VO?
- Are there any benefits?
- Which activities does your child prefer?
- What do you like/dislike about the activities provided?
- What do you like/dislike about the staff?
- When you reflect on your child's experience here in particular what do you treasure the most?
- How has attending influenced your child/ and your relationship with your child?

What They Have Learned, / How and Why?

Thinking about the skills your child has learned at the VO

- How do you think this happened?
- What in particular do you think is the major influence – staff, activities, structure, power sharing, governance???
- Could your child have picked up these skills elsewhere?
- Did your child's experience here contribute to others forms of learning and social development?
- How and why do you think this has happened?

What are the outcomes have been for well-being and capability.

- Has your child's behaviour/performance improved?
- What other abilities do you think your child has developed at the VO?
- Has your child changed in any other way as result of his/her attendance?

²⁵ VO – Voluntary Organisation

Appendix 4.3.1c Package for Parents (Interviews)

- ❖ Information sheet/ Cover letter
- ❖ Consent form
- ❖ Interview questions for young people (A)

CONDITIONS FOR INTERVIEW

During the interview, interviewees would be provided

- Safe and comfortable environment
- The option of opting out of the interview at any point
- Assurance that all information would be kept confidential
- Assurance that data would be used for the purposes of research only
- Appropriate schedules with the consent of participant
- Draft of transcript will be forwarded to participant 4 – 6 weeks after the interview for comments and validation

Letter of Introduction

Faculty of Education

University of Warwick

Coventry CV4 7AL

OR

(Via Funaley Centre Workers

Funaley

Dear prospective participant,

I am a PhD Student at the University of Warwick. My research focuses on young people. Specifically, the study seeks to explore the role voluntary organisations play in the provision of support for young people's capability development and sense of well-being.

Voluntary organisations have become more involved in alternative education provision/informal education as a means to provide support and care for young people. The organisations are said to enable young people engage in education, explore and develop their life skills, and abilities by means of varied activities. My research is seeking to examine these claims.

Over the last nine months I have been involved at the Funaley youth Centre. As part of my study I kindly request willing participants to take part in a short interview (less than an hour) aimed at determining their perceptions of the role Funaley plays in the lives of young people. The interview is designed to provide data for the doctoral thesis - **How do voluntary organisations improve the capabilities and well being of vulnerable young people?**

Participants are assured that all information in this fieldwork is for the purposes of research only. Pseudonyms would be used in the Thesis and strict confidential and ethical guidelines would be adhered to.

Please feel free to contact me or ask any clarifying questions if need be. There is a brief interview protocol attached. Kindly fill in the enclosed consent form and return it to the Centre if you are willing to participate. Thank you.

Kind Regards,

Arinola Adefila: PhD Student, University of Warwick

Interview Questions: Youth workers (C)

These are the kind of questions you can expect, though follow up questions and clarifications are likely to be included

Background - personal family and educational histories, influences etc

- Why did you choose to become a YW²⁶?
- How did you become one?
- What did you have to do to prepare? – qualifications, training etc
- How long have you worked with YP²⁷?
- What is your experience of working with YP?
- Where you adequately prepared?
- Did you have any surprises when you first started? What did you expect?
- Why did you want to support young people?
- Do you enjoy supporting young people?

Working with young people how and why they learn in your organisation

- What do you think YP learn by coming here?
- What do you think VYP learn by coming here?
- Why do you think YP learn here at all?
- How do they learn these (skills/capabilities/attitudes)? Describe please?
- How do you prepare them for learning these things given the different types of YP you work with?
- What are the Activities, structure, management, ethos???
- How do you prepare VYP for set challenges
- Since this is not a formal school setting how do you structure learning?
- How is discipline enforced?

Outcomes for young people

- How do you assess their learning?
- Research has shown that some YW have significant relationship with troubled YP – do you think you have such relationships? Are you a mentor then?
- Have you had YP come to you in times of crisis? How were you able to help them through the experience? What do you think they learned? Could they have learned this from school/home/the media/friends?
- What kind of responses do you get from other agencies and parents

²⁶ YW – Youth Worker

²⁷ YP – Young people; VYP – Vulnerable Young People

Appendix 4.3.2: Letter to Management

Warwick Institute of Education
University of Warwick
CV4 7AL
Phone No

Research Topic: How Do Voluntary Organisations Improve The Capabilities And Well Being Of Vulnerable Young People?

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a PhD Student at the University of Warwick. My research focuses on young people. Specifically, the study seeks to explore the role voluntary organisations play in the provision of support for young people's development of capabilities and sense of well being.

Voluntary organisations have become more involved in alternative education provision/informal education as a means to provide support and care for young people. Voluntary organisations are said to enable engagement for young people in ways that engender exploration, development of life skills and abilities by means of varied activities. My research is seeking to examine these claims.

This short interview is designed to provide data for the doctoral thesis - **How do voluntary organisations improve the capabilities and well being of vulnerable young people?**

Participants are assured that all information in this fieldwork is for the purposes of research only. Pseudonyms would be used in the write up and strict confidential and ethical guidelines would be adhered to.

Please feel free to contact me or ask any clarifying questions. I will like to have an interview with you and take recordings; but if it works best, I am willing to administer a questionnaire.

Kind Regards,

Arinola Adefila: PhD Student, University of Warwick

Appendix 4.3.3 Letter to parents who could not attend interviews

Faculty of Education
University of Warwick
Coventry CV4 7AL
OR
(Via Ilkridge Centre Workers
Ilkridge

Dear prospective participant,

I am a PhD Student at the University of Warwick. My research focuses on young people. Specifically, the study seeks to explore the role voluntary organisations play in the provision of support for young people's **capability development** and sense of **well being**.

Participants are assured that all information gathered in this fieldwork is for the purposes of research only. Pseudonyms would be used in the write up and strict confidential and ethical guidelines would be adhered to.

Please feel free to contact me or ask any clarifying questions if need be. Kindly fill in the enclosed questionnaire and return it to the Centre as soon as you possibly can if you are willing to participate. Thank you.

Kind Regards,
Arinola Adefila: PhD Student, University of Warwick

Questionnaire: Parents who cannot be interviewed

Below is a short questionnaire designed to collate information about how voluntary organisations (Ilkridge Centre) improve your child's/ward's capabilities and well being. Please fill in as required. You can pick more than one option where indicated and write your thoughts in the spaces provided. Feel free to use additional sheets if necessary.

- 1. How did your child/ward become involved with the..... Centre?
 - a. He/She was invited by friends
 - b. Referred by school, social services, other agency
 - c. Went along independently
 - d. You found the Centre and motivated your child/ward to go

- 2. Why did your child/ward need to come to a Centre such as this?
 - a. He/She was bored after school
 - b. Needed to learn some skills
 - c. Needed to interact with others
 - d. Needed a safe place to hang out so they stay out of trouble
 - e. It was an interesting place to be
 - f. No particular reason

- 3. What does your child/ward benefit from attending?
 - a. Specific skills – for example
.....
.....
.....
 - b. Social interaction, discipline and team
work.....
.....

c. Trusted youth workers and mentors they can rely on and talk to

.....

.....

.....

d. Other.....

.....

.....

4. What do you like about the activities provided?

a. They encourage young people to stay out of trouble.

.....

b. They teach young people specific things

.....

.....

c. They benefit your child/ward but not sure how.....

.....

5. What do you like about the staff at the Centre?

.....

.....

.....

6. Is there anything you dislike about the centre?

.....

.....

7. What do you treasure the most in terms of the provision of services offered by the Centre?

.....

.....

8. How has attending influenced your child/ward?

.....
.....
.....

9. What skills/capabilities do you think your child/ward has developed at the Centre?

.....
.....
.....

10. Has your child's/ward's sense of well-being improved in any way since he/she started attending?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not Sure

Please describe

.....
.....
.....

11. Thinking about the skills (if any) your child/ward has learned at the Centre; how do you think this happened? E.g. specific events, sessions, good staff input or good educational plan

.....
.....
.....

12. What in particular do you think (if any) is the major influence for capability development and improved well being?

- a. Staff
- b. Activities

- c. Structure
- d. Power sharing – governance and ethos
- e. Confidence building
- f. Other.....

.....

.....

.....

13. Could you child/ward have picked up these skills elsewhere? (Based on question 11)

.....

.....

.....

14. Does your child's/ward's experience at the Centre contribute to others forms of learning and social development?

.....

.....

.....

15. How and why do you think this has happened? (Based on question 13)

.....

.....

.....

.....

THANK YOU!!!

INT HE MEN 1 and 2 Interview 1

Preliminaries

A: Why did you choose to become a youth worker?

C: Err, Well err, I only thought of the mentoring side which started a few years ago about 2000, err and... I don't know I just wanted to help other people really. And then I did youth work here just in the summer holidays err... and then the mentoring coordinator's vacancy came up, so I kind of fell into it here really. Err...but I first got involved in mentoring because I wanted to support other people and I felt I had something to give in supporting others

A: and was it young people you wanted to support

C: and ... yeah it was young people I wanted to support

S: Err...I err started work here because I was doing a mentoring course err... and I needed a placement, then came here as a volunteer originally and then the job came up and I was very interested with working with young peer mentors so that was why I came to work here. I am not actually a youth worker... err but that was how I came to work with young people here

A: But you have worked with young people before

S: Yes I have worked with young people

A: So how did you become involved with young people?

S: Yeah I have been working with young people for 30 years... that is quite a long time

A: doing...

S: Originally I worked at Riverton advisory centre, which is for contraception for young people and pregnancy things. I worked there for 19 years and then left and did residential work in children's home as a casual working in lots of different children's homes and then I decided to become a foster carer to foster teenagers as a result of working in lots of many children' homes and then as a foster carer I was given the opportunity to d the year long mentoring course and then came here so it's just like a natural progression really.

A: It's amazing that you do not call yourself a youth worker

S: Laugh...

A: I do not understand that can you explain a bit more

S: Ah, I think youth worker, I suppose M is the Youth worker - working with large numbers of young people, err... I suppose I have worked with numbers of people and I still do groups now but my skills normally are one to one and so that's more of the mentoring side I'd say. Can you see a difference between youth work and mentoring?

C: Yeah, I tend to kind of think of youth work as groups really, again I work more on the one to one side; but we generally do youth work

S: Yeah

C: But I do not know whether I chose to do youth work in that I did not do the youth work course at college or it is just that the skills I felt I had helping people on a one to one basis err... And somehow I ended up doing it in a youth work kinds of setting. Cause we could have done it in a school you see or whatever but so – so I did not necessarily choose to do it in this setting

A: O.K the next question I would have asked you is how did you prepare to become a youth worker, but both of you did not really prepare to become youth workers. Unlike say C that we mentioned before... err that is a completely different case

S: Yeah it was more like progression something as one thing led to another, so I did not formally do any formal qualifications apart from the community mentoring so it is more experience one thing leading to another

C: So what do you think about young people, what would you say is your experience?

S: That is a broad question

C: There are all individuals and they are... I do not know, that is a huge question

A: There are many stereotypes

C: There are many stereotypes and some live up to those stereotypes and some don't and some break those stereotypes down so err... that is like saying what do you think of humans..

A: Yeah... I understand it is a complex question I just want a 'broad'..

C: For us really we treat young people as individuals; they have all got their own story and their own history. And they all have different potential and we try and support them to achieve that, err... I think of young people on the whole can get a bad press. But then there are a lot of young people that give rise to that press.

A: So what would you say is your particular experience as someone who have worked with young people for six, seven years ... you would say young people are...

C: Young people are... living in a difficult time; I think is probably what I would say.

A: so would you say they are all vulnerable?

C: No... No I think some are... I think my experience I think, the thing I kind of take with me is just what just what they can achieve and how much they can contribute. Err and how much time our young volunteers would put in during all times, you know during exams and school and I don't know how they fit it all in sometimes. And... how they support each other and that is not just peer mentors... like when we had the open day and they were doing the singing competition and a lot of the young people who wouldn't normally be confident enough to have a go .. Or wouldn't normally feel that they are perhaps a bit too cool to have a go just felt really supported by everyone and everyone cheered each other and helped each other. Err... I think they live in a very difficult time where there is a lot of different pressures on them err...

but there is an awful lot of young people that are really good and really supportive of each other. Err you know in the right environment they can excel.

S: I have been really impressed with the young people the ones that want to be peer mentors the ones that give up their free time to come to the training. And there are peer mentors that come on the sessions that M runs the inclusion sessions and the way they interact with the other young people those with learning difficulties and they. It is not – you know you can sometimes witness things when they do not know somebody is watching or listening and some of the nice little interaction I have witnessed is... you know I think it is very part of young people to do that. And these are kids that some people may consider you know trouble, you know they might be stereotyped as “hoodies” you know or difficult people and you know I think is very heart warming my experience of young people here. Err... . And generally in my experience of young people I look to see the positives and to encourage them so that they can you know do their best, achieve their own potential or move towards err so err I generally find that working with young people it is err... a very heart warming thing to do. Sometimes with difficulty obviously, you know because sometimes, young people can be you know they can struggle or as S said living in difficult times. Well, here I think it is a really positive environment. The young people love coming here, which is a plus. They have actually chosen to come here so it is not as if you are working with people that do not want to be here like for example in children’s homes – kids do not want to be in children’s homes. Or like in youth offending the kids do not want to be there so here they choose to come, they love coming. They get a lot out of it so err... so there is a real stability here for them; there is consistency with all the members of staff, they feel safe because they have got firm boundaries but also because it is fun and they have got the opportunity to interact with other young people which of course they love and they have a lot of respect for the people that run the session - for M. They know how far they can go. Maybe they have not got firm boundaries in other areas of their lives possibly so they appreciate that. They know that if they cross the line - and they do that there would be consequences and that is what they like because it is consistent. They know that if they do that this would happen if they do this - this would happen and you know they have fun here and there is a lot of good work that is carried out here.

C: and you know they are part of that sort of they negotiate and kind of ground rules and stuff as well and they have got ownership over the club so it means whilst in other areas of their lives they might be quite vulnerable I think coming here they can feel quite empowered and you know as J said that is their choice so that is empowering by itself that they are making that choice to come here... so whilst they can be in vulnerable circumstances I do not think in this environment many of them would feel vulnerable.

A: So what do you consider the right environment you said right Jan used the word positive?

S: I think it has to be made to work. Young people have to feel safe they have to feel physically safe that they are not going to get bullied... err that it is fair – that you know they would be treated fairly if something goes wrong, and you know they would be listened to, like both sides would be listened to, so it has to be safe and it has to be fun, because if it is not fun why bother to come. They have to be learning

things, young people love to learn new things and that could be interacting. Somebody may not know how to interact with other people and by coming here they can learn those skills which they may not have the opportunity to learn elsewhere. So it has to be nurturing environment and where things that they do – the good things that they do are recognised. And they get to do the things that wouldn't normally – perhaps go on trips go to different places. Over the years I think – you know - I have seen huge developments in young people and watched them come on in leaps and bounds which is very nice, very gratifying.

C: I think it is good for them to have somewhere where they can come, where it is kind of a fresh start, where if they got baggage whatever they are referred to us for. It is kind of left at the door, in the sense that it would be held against them and they have got a fresh start.

Phone rings

C: It is about not carrying that baggage with them, gives them a chance to have that kind of fresh start. And that is kind of an ongoing thing in as... Jan said it is about learning. And learning is about making mistakes, but often YP are in an environment where when they make mistakes that they kind of have them sticks with them. I mean if it in schools it can stick with them through reputation whatever, and it is stuck with them for four or five years whilst here very seldom will an issue be kind of... If they do something wrong it would be addressed and they would learn there is a consequence for that, but then it would be forgotten, it would not be kind of held against them, which gives young people the opportunity to learn by their mistakes but to always kind of have the opportunity to sort of reinvent themselves really, err... and any changes in behaviour are rewarded and acknowledged and constantly positively reinforced whilst in other environments they can be judged by their past behaviour which in this environment does not happen. And often it can be seen as letting them get away with things in a way. But it is not; it is about addressing it at the time giving them the consequence for that action and then helping them to understand that there is consequence for their action but then letting them have another go.

S: I would say that what really works here is that people can be referred to us with a whole list of labels that could be about physical conditions that they have got, it could be that they have been diagnosed with various things but once they come through the door, they are that person, they are that young person – it is not this is so and so he has got ADHD, he has got autism, he has got this or that he is that person and you know it does not matter what they have been labelled with in the past, the simple response to them and as S said it is a learning environment. You know everybody learns what acceptable behaviour is and what is not. And you know some people they might think oh! It is impossible to make progress here but everybody makes progress.

C: that is something that I have learned time here, at the start I was getting referrals get a piece of paper with lists – you know they have got this and this and that has happened and this and I would be like you know eh... I don't know whether we can have them.

Interruption: YP wanted J to do some ASDAN work with him, he was getting upset.

S: I will be there as soon as I have finished this meeting I'll be there

C: Now I mean if I get a referral form through, I mean like whatever it said I will be like – well, get them in, we will have a meeting you know and it does not – you cannot be cut off with all sorts of problems with diagnosis and whatever the sort of history, our approach is that it is kind of left at the door really and certainly with inclusion its... it is not very important to know what their kind of diagnosis are and we are not trying to kind of - with young people with learning disabilities – we have not got kind of got an agenda of kind of doing behavioural intervention or anything it is just treating them like we would treat any other young person.

A: So what do you think young people learn..., skills and capabilities, if you had to break it down, what would you say?

S: You mean here?

A: Yeah

S: I think what they learn is to become more confident and to interact and communicate better with other people; they get the opportunity to find out what they are good at. They have the opportunity to try lots of different things and to do more of what they are good at and to do more of what they enjoy. They.... It can be you know some people love to shoot basketball hoops and if they love to do that if that is what they want to do great, if they want to try lots of different things that is also good. It is their agenda really and so we set the framework and they choose and it can be as simple as learning to have fun really. And learning can be you know as S says each person comes in as an individual and so it is the opportunity for them to explore and to learn whatever they choose

Staff: brief interruption

A: You do not have to add to what J has said if you...

C: They learn that it is O.K. to make mistakes and then they learn by their mistakes and that is it in a nutshell isn't. They learn the... gain confidence that it is O.K. to make mistakes, they learn that it is O.K. to throw a basketball even if you are not very good at throwing the basketball cause no one is going to kind of laugh or judge you for it and that way they keep throwing the basketball and eventually get better at it.

A: My research is about Vulnerable Young People and how Voluntary organisations like yourself help to improve the their capabilities and sense well being, do you think there is any particular thing that you have not said that you think addresses this directly particularly in response to capabilities and well being

S: I think that it is like all of what we have said generally contributes to people's self esteem because that is sort of the key to it really – if you are feeling good about yourself then you are going to feel less vulnerable. So, it is about putting all those things together and learning life skills that maybe they have missed out on, learning about negotiation, interaction and like S it is alright to get it wrong, it is whether you learn by that or not. Err... so it is about being patient but clear

S: in fact sometimes people have not found that they are good at anything. I mean I found this in Children's homes that people sometimes thought that they were not good at anything and felt that they were really quite worthless and thought that there is no point in trying that because I am no good at art, I am no good

at this... and that was not necessarily the case. If you get people to have a go, so if people have got an experience in the past of maybe trying things and it not working then they are going to be reluctant to try new things, so here it is about building confidence so people can have a go and if things do not work it is not the end of the world it does not mean say you are not going to try anything again, just close the door, it is like some things would work and some things won't. So all that confidence building, self esteem mixing with others, learning with other the social rules that might have been missed out along the way, err... all that helps to make people to maybe feel less vulnerable because they are more likely to make informed choices, they are more likely to not maybe go ahead with peer group pressure and steal cars because they have learned about consequences and responsibilities they have learned that that's wrong. It is not to say that they all would stay out of trouble but you know I believe they are less likely to because of their experiences from places like this.

A: So how do you think they learn these things, is there any structure? Would you like say we are going to teach the young people to make good decisions today, so we are going to structure the program around this learning experience?

C: It is an ongoing thing really, I mean we have done issue-based work with young people, sometimes that has been good and sometimes it has not been good. I think sometimes ... not lack of structure but the less structured environment than the school is very important in the young people and their transition from being young people to adults it is just simply by calling J "J" and me "S" or "Jesus" or whatever they call me, I mean it kind of breaks down – I mean it is not kind of 'Miss' and 'Sir' and put your hand up to speak and I think that is, that environment they learn some things than they would at school. That means it is a kind of ongoing teaching experience and learning experience when we kind of sat kids down and done issued based work and had session plans – sometimes it works – it can just depend it can depend on the day, Tuesdays work better Fridays sometimes, it can depend on what they have had to eat that day, so it is about kind of being sensitive to their needs and if it was too structured you could not be sensitive to their needs and meet the needs of each of those young people. And it would be about – if we sat down and had a big session plan on healthy eating or something and we had a couple of the young people in there that were really upset and there were obviously issues and they were having problems then it would be kind of – that would be the priority really, rather than getting your kind of session done, you know let us meet, let us address the needs of this young person. Which is something they cannot really do in schools, they have got their session plan, they have got their curriculum and they cannot really... work with the individual and kind of yet be sensitive to what they are going through. Which can kind of often make young people feel ignored and not important and that is what we hopefully here do – I do not think we ever kind of say oh! We can't do that, you have to sit and listen and do this or that... you know we sit and take time out and spend time that would be more important for them, that is what makes it hard when you got some targets and whatever, I mean for the workers it makes it hard really. I mean it makes it hard in the sense of getting

reports and evidence done. It does not make it hard in the sense of doing the job because that would always come first wouldn't it in terms of taking time out with the young person.

S: Also it is about example I think. It is like young people learn in an ongoing process. It is not about necessarily delivering you know things in a workshop setting. They set the rules for PAYP – positive activities for young people. They set the rules themselves so they say at the start of each PAYP what rules they want; so it is like no bullying, treat everyone with respect; pick up your own litter. They come up with the framework and so they are more likely to uphold those rules and they become aware on coming here of things that are not acceptable and things that are acceptable so they know that they can't use racist comments, that they cannot intimidate others, and so it is like an ongoing awareness they know that those are the rules of this place.

A: |What you said just focussed on the roles of the youth worker and the relationship they have with young people. Would you consider yourself as a significant adult to these young people?

C: Well, as I said before just the breaking down the barriers between them and us, the kind of adult and young people barriers, they come here, call us by our own names, we can have a laugh and joke with them. We can make mistakes and make fools of ourselves, we have got no kind of sort of hidden agenda really we are quite open with them about why we are funded and why we do different things and I don't know it is about having the time to treat them as an individual which helps them to feel value they are not just a classroom of young people. They would not be seen as a class they are all individuals and we would open the session whether they was sixty young people in or just two young people. And the workers would take time out to sit and chat with the young person and get to know them and equally there has to be of letting the young person get to know you which again in the school environment, that does not really happen. The teachers are there to deliver their information and the young people are there to learn it, whereas here it is different – there is a bit of kind of learning from each other really as well. Kind of... because we do get things wrong with certain young people and then we would learn from that, it is about that knowing of mutual stance isn't it.

S: I would say that all or quite a number of young people and the workers here do have a significant relationship with the workers having a significant impact they would often for example go to M if they have something going on in their home life or something that is troubling on outside of the youth group and they would know who to turn to, and they would know that they would be listened to and taken seriously and that is important because they might not have anybody else that would fulfil that role. And that is important because they know they can come here and talk about anything and get a response, the workers would not say – well they might be busy at that particular moment – but they know that they would be given individual time to support through that thing that has happened that is important to them. And it might only be a small thing in terms of the weight, but it might be a huge thing to them, but they get the opportunity to off load don't they and get support in a way.

C: Also there are times – we have contact with parents – and we can speak to parents and get consent from parents up to a certain age but there is not, we do not have parents evenings or things like that where they come in and we report in on the young people, so the young people kind of – they can be themselves without fear of information that they do not want getting back to their parents getting back, obviously in certain circumstances it is essential, but there is that whole kind of confidentiality that adds to the kind of safety for them to be themselves. And that is the important thing isn't it - it is kind of finding out who you are and that is the sort of an ongoing thing but it is particularly a big issue during teenage years – it is trying to get to know who you are and not what someone else wants you to be

A: I will ask two more questions – the first one is do you measure learning in any way?

C: We... for the mentoring sometimes we use the Richter scale – do you know the Richter scale?

A: yes

C: O.K. we do the youth achievement awards as well which kind of is self-assessment and peer based learning so err... we were talking about this the other day, just kind of how you know when you get working every day or week in week out – you know since M started the inclusion session when you actually think back to kind of how some of these young people were err... the difference in kind of levels in communication and confidence is incredible really err... how you assess and whether it is important to assess that I do not know. It can quite difficult certainly if the people who are delivering – the youth workers themselves have to the kind of burden of constantly having to assess and monitor learning it can interfere with the kind of whole ethos and environment of the environment. So it is a difficult one, I do not know whether it would be better to just of have independent assessments, there is talk some kind of OFSTEDing of youth projects and the like. I do not know whether that might be better in a way since it is just once, rather than the kind of constant pressure of staff having to worry about that, they can just kind of get on with the job and all the learning just kind of happens and it might only be when you kind of all sit down and have a chat and say maybe – you remember when N came a couple of years ago... That might be easier because things like confidence and self esteem are kind of you know – there is not really – you can't really get a great definition of confidence and self esteem it is pretty hard to measure something when you can't even define it. But we all know what we mean

S: Yeah, I mean it can actually get in the way of doing the work, can't it? When you are constantly thinking about evaluation and getting evidence, err but yes the difference the “visible to us” difference in some of the young people that - like when they first come with head down, looking at the floor, looking at their shoes, unable to interact with others, to becoming confident, more confident, engaging in conversation, actually choosing to speak... you know. There is a huge difference in a lot of young people you know so

C: There is only so much you can kind of prove that was your involvement, we see them for a certain number of hours a week, and then they have got this whole kind of other bit which is their life and it is actually kind of measuring – you know it is difficult what you can take credit for isn't it when doing

measuring. You know things like the Richter scale that tells you nothing it could be something else that has happened in their life that has helped them progress.

A: What kind of responses do you get from parents, agencies, teachers etc?

S: We get very good responses don't we?

C: I can't think of any negative responses...

S: No I think parents are really appreciative; particularly parents of the kids who come to inclusion, some of the kids that come do not go anywhere else. There is no other place that provides that opportunity for them, so we have good responses affirmation and M has a folder full of letters from parents, we get good responses from parents if we elicit them. We are recognised as any agency that does good work and err we have loads of affirmation

A: Is there anything you would like to add

S: I would like to add that I think it is a very good project and it does fantastic work with young people and it is being mentored, non-judgemental and makes a difference to the lives of young people that use it. I think it is a very positive thing in the lives of young people here

C: What was your research question again?

A: How do voluntary organisations improve the capabilities and well being of vulnerable young people

C: It just helps them to find out who they are and that is the most important thing you can learn isn't it

A: thank you so much

Appendix 4.4b Transcripts of Interview with Vulnerable Young Person

INT FUVYP13 Interview 3

Preliminaries

A: Thank you so much for meeting up would you like some sweets or a drink – laugh... I know we are...

D: No I am O.K. thank you

A: The first question really is why did you start attending the project?

D: Basically because I was bored with the streets and I needed something to spend my time doing, yeah, to find other creative ways to go forward in life.

A: What made you think that was the best way to go?

D: It was mainly advertising and going to different parts of it and obviously I attended the Saint Paul's school and so I knew quite a lot about the facilities that were going on

A: Did you have any problems on the street, was there anything going...

D: Oh yeah, I did have yeah

A: So what was the big change in attitude? Any particular event or situation?

D: Oh yeah, well I started working voluntary... pause. Err, I started doing voluntary, so I started using their services and that changed me as a whole person to get off the streets and start living my life, as a normal person should be doing.

A: If you look back what specific things do you think facilitated the change?

Pause

A: Was it the youth workers? The structure of the organisation? Was it the activities?

D: It was the organisation of it and the participation that was allowed... the youth workers helped a bit as well; obviously you can say like the mentoring etc, etc

Pause

D: Yeah it was the activities as well; it was a lot broader

A: Which particular activities

D: Err... the ones were, like football where you get hands on and you become a better team player, err football, sports activities we played a lot of them and we done like team work OCN as well that helped quite a bit

A: So which kind of capabilities would you say you learned in general?

Pause

A: Like the skills you learned...

D: What are the skills I learned err... well I learned to become more determined and patient at the same time with things like... also I learned to participate with people I do not really like. So there is a lot of participation going on and I started to get a level of diplomacy as well from being with different people

A: Did you know this at the time or is this knowledge upon reflection?

D: No... I thought I was just buying time. Well, upon me joining the youth service I just thought it was going to get me off the streets and buy me some time. I did not realise it was going to take me forward and give me err career paths... and that opened the light for me, I just thought it was going to out of the streets for them certain hours I was there

A: When you say you were on the streets what exactly were you doing?

D: Well I was selling drugs, err, fighting, doing normal illegal stuff, carrying weapons, all that kind of stuff, obviously I did not know the importance of life when I was out there, until I started attending workshops

A: Err... why didn't school help you?

D: School? Why didn't school help me... hmmm?

A: Where you in school at the time? Why didn't that sort of education help?

D: No, I was in school at the time... well mainly, school doesn't help with the peers around really when it come it comes to that it. Obviously, there is a lot of peer pressure around at that post 16 age and you seem to follow a lot of the crowd, and just get into all sorts that others were getting into...

A: I was wondering why schools are different from places like Funaley. What makes the difference? Why did they succeed with you for example?

D: It is the environment, school I more get your head down and here is a load of theory work whereas W would be a lot more practical and it is a lot more hands on err... yeah as I said school is basically writing... reading where as W was building err and creating relationships

A: What did you enjoy the most...?

D: What did I...

A: in all your experiences at Funaley as a young person?

D: The thing I enjoyed the most was seeing how I could change as a person and how I could learn to benefit other people because I have been there and done it - in their own learning and all the team work activities I found a great help and quite enjoyable as well...

A: What about your sense of well being, you have already touched on this a bit, but how do you thing this area was targeted? How do you think they wanted to help you improve?

A: Do they use the activities?

D: Do you mean do they use the activities to engage our well being?

A: Well not in that way... how do you think they use the activities to achieve their goals say of improved well being...

D: It was more persuasion to determination

A: So you think that mostly they try to persuade you?

D: Yeah persuade you and show you, well, make you aware of the possible paths you could take, and let you know just how much you can benefit

A: Someone said they make the activities very relevant?

Disturbance...

A: They make what you are learning very relevant to what is happening in your life...

D: Yeah of course obviously, say for example with your team work you need it basically and that has helped me be a better team player and helped me get on with all sorts of different people. So yeah they targeted different attributes of life in its own way.

A: It is like teaching life skills –

D: yeah that's right

A: So you became a peer mentor while you were there

D: Yeah I started helping younger guys out and trying to get them onto err... on track

A: What did you like most about the staff?

D: There was all on the same level as the children and err easy to understand, err very flexible with themselves and very easy to work with and err, if you ever had any problems they were happy to go through them with you and listen

A: There is talk about this special relationship between young people and youth workers, how does that work?

D: I do not really know, I think youth workers obviously know a lot about kids that are in different situations, they probably bring themselves up that way... but I don't know, I think it is the way they are. They are on a certain level; they are not authoritative, but they can be authoritative - you know what I am saying- so like try and get along with you as a friend and not a worker

A: They care about your whole person?

D: Yeah Yeah, they take you as a whole person and not just a learner or something

Pause

A: What about the peers you had when you were there?

D: Eh, when I was there my peers all come from the same place as me so it was difficult to separate from them to become a better person than them. Eh, I think there was about 12 of us and couple of us got out and done what we done, but a couple stayed the same. That is just their own mentality so obviously just choose not to follow them people and that

A: So did you like go with those who were working hard and...

D: Yeah, I

A: Did you have to choose to do that?

D: Yeah, I choose personally to go with the achievers

A: Did the staff encourage that?

D: Yeah obviously the staff tried to encourage that and praised it when you do. Once again explaining why it is a good thing and how it can help you in life.

A: I am going to ask you a few questions about your status as a youth worker

D: O.K.

A: What was your motivation to become a youth worker?

D: My motivation to become a youth worker was that I started on the streets and I have been there, done that had all the experiences of it and I basically just wanted to get people out of the boat that I was in. Eh, and that was not long ago.

A: So it was passion?

D: Yeah passion, that is it!

A: Then did you decide to do any qualifications or training towards this or what happened? You started as a volunteer didn't you?

D: Yeah, I started on a voluntary basis obviously I had my OCN's that I had picked up as a young person as well. Then I started looking into qualifications and stuff and so I can give my experiences to other people and say this is how it should be and not how you want it to be

A: So would you say you have a special understanding?

D: Yeah, well I was in the same boat that they was in so err, I have been there, in their shoes so obviously if I can try to help out cause I have come out of the same situation

A: And what makes a good youth worker successful?

D: Like I said it is the level you are on and youth work is to your young person as a whole and not as a learner or someone to be taught and looked down at. Err yeah and the very in with problems, if they have got problems, try and talk about it, listen to them very carefully, you try and sort out a path for you to go by and sort out and in conclusion I think what makes them so successful is that they have got all the skills to pass down to you as a friend

A: Can you name any such skills or any particular qualities?

Pause

A: Can anyone become a youth worker?

D: Well, I will say to become a youth worker it probably requires a lot of patience and understanding; patience and understanding obviously for the blatant things of having to do things. You also have to have a skill of making friends and creating a bond and relationship with specific young people. That is just to take yourself and the young person into success. And you can look back and say that you got 'err there.

A: So not just anyone of the streets no matter how good you are or what course you have read...

D: You could come from where you come from, anyone can do it; it is just that you have to be so understanding and so patient to work with a child and work with them as a friend and not as a learner as I keep saying. So you basically are on the same level. So it makes... When I was a youth worker, I did not class myself as a youth worker; I would say I am your friend.

A: How long where you a youth worker?

D: I think I was a youth worker for the short period of a year, before I started working where I am now. That is still in the same situation; well it is a teaching assistant with the same kind of children, but I am not a

youth worker no more. I still have some qualities to do so but I just choose to work with a bigger group of children with more problems

A: What kind of vulnerabilities do the young people you work with now have?

D: It is more people with less fortunate or the problems called educational needs and some of them are like the kids you would see as a youth worker – coming off the streets or being bullied or are the bullies, err... and just basically going through a rough time at home. It is a lot more problems to sort, working where I am. And even though I am in a different role I still see myself as a friend and not someone to look up to and the kids to look down on

A: do you think you were properly prepared because you had the experience? What prepared you the most the qualifications or the experience as a young person?

D: I think the experience is a big BIG help on it, obviously you know exactly the in and outs of where they are coming from, but also qualifications mean a lot because it helps you learn to deliver to themselves. So you can deliver anything to the children to whatever it is to help them to move forward in life

A: Did you have any surprises when you started working with young people? Laugh – yeah, odd question – but was it difficult?

D: Yea obviously of course I did, when I turned into a youth worker I was a more mature person and I just looked at it as if to say

Pause – phone call

D: Yeah I looked at it as if to say ‘was I really in that situation? And is this how I really was?’ Obviously, again coming back to experience you learn to deal with it; you get over it and help people out of it. Yeah the main surprise was actually looking back at myself and thinking ‘why was I actually like that’ it makes me more determined to get people out of that situation and into the real world

A: What do the young people who come to you now learn? What kind of skills?

D: Well I am hoping that they are picking up the same skills and qualities as I did err... to work as a team player and to also be an individual. Not to follow their peers if they are going the wrong way. This is exactly what I am trying to deliver to the YPs because I have been exactly through the stages, I have had the teaching and now I am the one that is teaching. So basically just to draw them out of where they are coming from. I have had a few successes but obviously you do not always get 100%

A: How do you feel about those?

D: Oh yeah, I am quite proud of it just to look back now and see that they are all in work

Pause... disruption

A: So how do you structure this learning, like you just said you wanted to them to learn the same skills, so do you think of team work and design an activity to teach or use persuasion or what? How do you structure the learning?

D: Err... I structure the learning as it comes and I have t see the kind of YPs that I have obviously you get different levels of understanding from people and at different ages, I try and even playing a team, getting

everyone involved, getting people talking to others they do not actually like or don't get on to well, so we can start creating relationships within a group and obviously the youth workers as well

A: So you are using activities, your skills, your experience and group structure – everything – not just one thing

D: Yeah, I use it all together obviously, and sometimes it gets changed here and there to suit the kind of YP that we have

A: That the things about youth work isn't - you are more flexible than teachers

D: That's it yeah because we understand every age limit and every situation. We have to be really understanding about everything – where as teachers are just set to teach.

A: There is a goal like A*

D: There is no level work with teachers and stuff

A: What about working with vulnerable young people?

D: Vulnerable in what way

A: The ones you just described – young people who are finding education difficult, learning disabilities etc you have a whole mix at the trust – how do you work with them to engage them?

D: We take each of them as an individual, but when they are in the group we treat everyone exactly the same... there is no treating you because you are special or you because you have got problems at home. Everyone is the same person in a group... if it is needed we will take them out individually and go through their problems with them – try and see how we can give them advice, contact external companies to help them through basically. Just so that they feel they are made comfortable as a person and it can boost their self esteem.

A: Do you actually enjoy this work or...

D: Yeah I enjoy this work because no day is the same day, every day you encounter a different problem you come across a new thing that needs to be sorted... sometimes there is things that I come across that do not actually know but then I get advice and that way I am learning as well. So every day is a learning day for me

A: Again, I go back to this close bond and young people, as a youth worker, why do you think this exists?

The research is looking at this question why is it that young people tend to...

D: I think because a youth worker and young person should not be connected as... as I keep saying the young person should not be looked down on, I see personally. I think they should be on the same level and be able to talk to one another as friends, err just go through problems at they come but let them also know that you are a friend that can help them out with problems if it is needed, you know give advice. So basically you are quite a 'higher' friend but you are also quite a good friend because you are helping them out in a way. And same with the young person that is how probably see you. They see you as a good mate that they can always go to if they have got trouble or what not. Obviously they know that if they have got

problems with something say drugs then you are going to get an external agency and try and help them out on whatever means you can.

A: The also talk about being strict – young people say they people who are...

D: Oh yeah youth workers have authority but they do not tend to be authoritative as I keep saying they need to be there as a friend, but if something goes wrong they need to let their authority come into play which the young person understands as they are a worker that authority is still there as a back up

A: How do measure learning? You mentioned having success stories, how do you know that a story is a success?

D: I keep on track, when I was a youth worker I kept in touch with my YPs and just making sure they were getting on with life and still being their youth worker if they still had problems with work they can still come and chat to me even though they were no longer using the service. Err... we have the occasional meeting to have them come out and just mess about for a bit like in the youth base, you know playing pool and that. Jus to have a chat and tell us about their life as it is now

A: When you say getting on in life, what do you mean – training, employment...

D: It could be in college, training, with a girlfriend and making a family, eh, anything

A: What about their well being?

D: Yeah, yeah, obviously we check that confidence, self esteem, we see how much more confident, self esteem that have got and how comfortable they are as a person?

A: Those kinds of things are very fuzzy – because I am sure you can see them but it is difficult to tick them off in a box

D: yeah, yeah, yeah of course...

A: They are more difficult to measure

D: You can tell...

Pause

A: OK, What kind of response do you get from parents and other agencies?

D: Err... we tend to make a relationship with parents as well, err; pause so that way parents can also be a great help. Eh, external agencies we have a connection with mostly, so the know who we are and where we are calling from eh... yes we shouldn't ever have a problem or need to get in touch with parents or external agencies because we have got relationships with both sides.

A: Have you had any young people come up to you and say 'I learnt a particular thing from you'

D: I have had a couple of people come up and thank me for the help I gave them but not that such that I have learned this from you. They probably have learned things from me but they haven't realized it as such, because I picked up my skills and did not realise till I was much more mature learner that I picked them off certain people. And that is only because I can see them working now and still delivering them same skills that were delivered to me

A: One more quick question please, I am sorry I have to repeat this. I just want you to expand on the capabilities that young people learn. What kind of things do they learn from you? You mentioned a few – team work, self confidence, respect, self esteem, life skills, social skills – any more

D: Yeah of course they learn to control emotions, and they learn how to deal with them and come over their own problems as well. I help them jump the fence from their own problems and get to the other side of the fence so they have a clean sheet. Skills like just interview skills as well – I will help you out with. I will help you out with anything that would help you out going into the future talking - anything that would come in your path, I would try and span out so that you have an understanding or at least a bit of experience and that

Pause

A: The topic of my research is voluntary organisations and how they help to improve the capabilities and well being of vulnerable young people; is there anything you would want to add

D: Eh, - no I think we have covered it all.

A: thank you so much. Thank you for your time

Appendix 4.5a Observation Protocol

Organise Set up and preparation

Use outline

YP consultation

Incidents –: Discipline, style of confrontation, punishment, use of ground rules

Learning experiences –: Arguments style used to resolve – confrontation, negotiation

Log Incidents
Who is involved?
What happened?
Where did the event take place?
Was it planned or spontaneous?
How is this linked to other activities?
What is the outcome?
REFLECTION AND ANALYSIS: What is taking place?

Appendix 4.5b Example of a completed observation log

Log for Monday June 18th 2007

Log Incidents

No set up required today. MA asked to help place a few chairs and a table outside. She said she found more chewing gum and cigarette studs at the back of the pool table. A play station was broken and placed in the cupboard without information about how it was damaged; several discs are missing from the video game pile the empty cases left behind. The ongoing disregard for rules has been troubling MA for a few weeks now, but now she wants to confront the members. Quiet day- staff available James and Lisa, 2 volunteers

MA took down ground rules from the small hall and has placed it on a chart under the tree in the front of the building, paper and pens on tables as well.

Who is involved?

MA, James, Lisa and members

Members have been asked to review guidelines and ground rules for attending Club

What happened?

Members start arriving, most are upset that Club is not open, the football group from private school leave immediately they realise club is not open. Some consistent members listen to the agenda but do not sit; they walk around building and leave. PJ and group arrive – it is FD's birthday – she is wearing a special head band and carries balloons. The group is disappointed there is no club. They protest and sit down to write their points. PJ seems particularly upset. None of them smoke and they are not particularly interested in the video games and play station. She does not like the fact that everyone is punished for the sake of a few.

MA explains that club ground rules need to be protected by all. MA is very 'matter of fact' today; she does not go into long drawn out conversations. She may be trying to be firm and unyielding.

PJ gets up, they make some plea to MA and James and leave

DG and group arrive – they are loud and complain. GF says he cannot write and ask Lisa to write his points for him. He uses some inappropriate words and MA and James tell him off – he storms off, expecting the group to follow him but they don't.

More people arrive, more discussion, they all defend their actions – 'I don't play games'; 'I never put the disc in the game console'.

James encourages people to write and discuss ideas rather than say what they have not done.

More people arrive, writing seems to begin

PJ and group return – they make on e more plea for MA to open club and leave

Interesting point made by BJ he says ground rules should be more specific. Instead members commit to handle all equipment with care, he suggests members should use play station responsibly and ensure that only staff handle discs.

MA responds positively to this and begins to discuss expanding the language of the rules. Lisa brings some flip chart paper and members begin to debate and discuss items on list and change language AR request squash and toast. MA permits drinks put does not allow toast to be served

DG argues that members should be given two verbal warnings in the office before the 'three strikes and you are out' rule applies. Others disagree, James tactfully gives room for LK to speak up and she argues that the rule is fine and too much leverage will mean people would not take rule seriously. DG protests saying sometimes people are in a bad mood or unhappy.

MA suggests a vote on the issue when a full house is convened

Members discuss use of Kitchen: James points out that health and safety regulations require that kitchen is kept clean and safe, members agree rules should remain the same, but, staff and members should give everyone a fair hearing when they ask for drinks or snacks by the hatch.

Members decided that if people were too ashamed to acknowledge responsibility for breaking equipment verbally, they should write a note and speak to staff in private. James said this rule already existed but many members said they did not know about it. Members agreed to have a more detailed code of conduct in the office, so people know about the rules not written on the main ground rules sheet in the halls.

Members agreed to help staff tidy up after sessions and all members should report any one littering the centre to the staff. Those who were present have joint liability if they do not expose the wrongdoing.

KH even proposes a new name for the Club so members feel a greater sense of belonging and ownership. This delights MA. Many ideas are put forward; MA proposes that members will vote in a full house on three acceptable ones. James and DG have being assigned to do some research to ensure no other club uses any of the three.

Lisa writes down rules and meeting is wrapped up

Where did the event take place?

Outside the Centre's premises underneath the large tree to the left of the front doors of small hall

Was it planned or spontaneous?

Planned – MA wanted members to assume more responsibility

How is this linked to other activities?

MA is drawing on the fact that members want to attend

What is the outcome?

Ground rules are likely to be adhered to more vigorously in the coming days

The members are learning to solve problems – identify needs, propose solutions

Beyond the organisations will the members learn to obey rules for mutual benefit?

Will members learn to make good decisions and act wisely in order to avoid unwanted consequences?

Do the members see more clearly the link between attitudes – action – consequences?

Do members feel a greater sense of belonging as a result of being allowed to participate in this process?

REFLECTION AND ANALYSIS: What is taking place?

Boundaries and norms are being enforced: This helps the young people learn about the consequences of their action and the concept of collective responsibility.

Confidence building and taking action – young people are learning that they can choose to be in control, because they are members of the club, they can influence the political and social climate.

They can confidently discuss opinions and ideas, they learn how to negotiate, defend and convince others. By voting they learn about being fair and mutual cooperation.

Discipline enforced – boundaries, norms, obedience to rules, joint authority

Decision making – actions have consequences, problem solving

Mutual cooperation – team work

Dialogic learning – interaction is improving on object

Negotiation – bounce ideas around, be tolerant of others views, tackle the issues sensitively

Taking responsibility – Acknowledging individual and shared liability, learning to take duties seriously

Appendix 4.6 Observations Schedule

	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	RESIDENTIAL	SUNDAY
Ilkridge	One to one sessions: Special invite arranged for researcher					Saturday club 4 – 6 pm	2:00pm onwards Care home sessions
		3.30 – 5:00 pm Boys only		3.30 – 5:00 pm Girls only			
Funaley	10:00 – 12:00 am Sessions with Clients from School					Several Friday to Sunday trips	-
	1:00 – 3:00 pm Clients for beyond 16 sessions						
	3:00 – 4:00pm Drop in						
		4 – 7pm Youth Club		4 – 7pm Youth Club			
Positive activities for Young People 10am – 4 pm during holidays – day trips							
Heathtop						Several Friday to Sunday trips	
	3:30 – 5:00pm Drop in		3:30 – 5:00pm Drop in		3:30 – 5:00pm Drop in	Some mid week overnight stays	
	6 – 7:30pm Youth Club		6 – 7:30 pm Youth Club		6 – 7:30pm Youth Club		
	7:30 – 9:00 pm Inclusion session		7:30 – 9:00 pm Inclusion session				
	Positive activities for Young People 10am – 4 pm during holidays – day trips						

Attend

Attend Alternate sessions

Attend once a week

Attended full session for first week of term 1 and 2; thereafter attended two sessions a week with specific group

Attend one full session a week

Duties as volunteer: arrive before session, was on rota for set up, kitchen duties, clean up. Sometimes my presence meant sessions could be opened when staff were on leave or ill. Sessions could only open if staff ratio matched expected turn out. Some sessions were cancelled for this reason

Activities I did not attend – overnight stays i.e. trips to activity centres or residentials

Ethical considerations: I registered as a volunteer in all three organisations because it meant that I could be included as staff for insurance or legal purposes, for example the secret camera productions at Funaley involved a significant degree of risk