

**YOUTH SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT THROUGH POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN RURAL
ZIMABWE: A CASE STUDY OF YOUTH SELF-HELP PROJECTS IN MWENEZI DISTRICT
(MASVINGO PROVINCE).**

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Abstract

This study looks at policy implementation of the National Youth Policy in rural Zimbabwe. Using youth self-help projects in Mwenezi District as a case study, the research explores the effectiveness of policy implementation in promoting youth socio-economic empowerment. A qualitative approach using in-depth semi-structured interviews was adopted in the study. A total of five key informants drawn from the NGOs and government officers implementing self-help projects were targeted. In addition, twenty-five youth respondents engaging in self-help projects were interviewed across the district, totalling 30 interviews. Findings from the interviews illustrated the policy strengths as well as weaknesses in light of youth empowerment drive in the district. The findings also shed light on the nature of self-help projects and their contribution to youth socio-economic empowerment. Using the sustainable livelihood approach, it became apparent that many of the youth projects are survivalist in nature, with their members operating from 'hand to mouth'. The study pointed to a range of challenges which explain this position, as youth have limited skills and finances to run effective projects. Additionally, competition between projects, transport problems, access to markets as well as raw materials, are further challenges.

The study revealed that the policy implementers do not have adequate capacity to help the youth realise socio-economic emancipation. Several challenges have continued to affect the attempts to implement sustainable youth projects. These include; limited funds, lack of transport, lack of coordination and cooperation. The study concluded that the top-down policy implementation strategy is ineffective in addressing the concerns of the disempowered youth in remote and rural areas. Needs of the youth are scarcely addressed by the policy initiatives. Additionally, the implementation gaps point to the limited capacity of both the government and NGOs. It was noted that this dependency on NGOs created a benefit trap for the youth who fail to expand projects beyond capital support. The study further revealed that there is a level of animosity towards government programmes, as they are seen to be favoured over other youth self-help development initiatives. This thesis recommends that there is need to involve the youth in policy formulation and implementation in order to fully address their concerns. This recommendation is made based upon the findings which suggest that the current arrangement is not taking into consideration the context in which the youth implement their self-help projects.

Whilst the literature revealed that the youth can enhance their livelihoods through income generation, the study revealed that many youth in Mwenezi District perceive self-help projects as temporary engagements, which cannot substitute formal employment. Female youth dominate the enterprises and they are the major beneficiaries of the support given by donors and government. It was also clear that many youth are not aware of the government initiatives aimed at emancipating the youth. Indeed, they appreciate NGOs programmes which they see as contributing immensely to the survival and continuation of the youth projects in the district.

This study advances the view that youth should be trained and equipped with effective skills and competencies in order to confront the challenges found in the 21st century. A major challenge for the youth in Mwenezi District in accessing information related to government programmes is that they are largely illiterate. In addition to low literacy levels, the environmental conditions affect their ability to access resources necessary to maintain their livelihood. Against this background, it is recommended that institutions and policies be mainstreamed towards engendering pro-youth, consensual and progressive policies. This can be attained through a multi-stakeholder approach taking into account the interests of all the interested parties.

Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AU	African Union
CABS	Central African Building Society
CAMA	Campaign for Female Education Association
CAMFED	Campaign for Female Education
CBZ	Commercial Bank of Zimbabwe
DFID	Department for International Development
ESAP	Economic and Structural Adjustment Programme
GEEP	Graduate Entrepreneurship Employment Programme
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDBZ	Industrial Development Bank of Zimbabwe
IEEA	Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ISOP	Integrated Skills Outreach Programme
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDTC	Mwenezi Development Training Centre
NANGO	National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OAS	Organisation of American States
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PSC	Public Service Commission

SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEDCO	Small Enterprises Development Corporation
SLA	Sustainable Livelihood Approach
SLF	Sustainable Livelihood Framework
SMEs	Small to Medium Enterprises
TREE	Training for Rural Economic Empowerment
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WESO	World Employment and Social Outlook
WPAY	World Programme of Action for Youth
YEF	Youth Empowerment Fund
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZIMASSET	Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation
ZimCHEER	Zimbabwe Champions and Heroes of the Economic Empowerment Revolution
ZIMDEF	Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund
ZIMSTAT	Zimbabwe National Statistical Agency
ZIYEN	Zimbabwe Youth Empowerment Network
ZYC	Zimbabwe Youth Council

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Youth empowerment can be understood as a strategy to help the youth realise their socio-economic aspirations. It is considered to be an outcome of both individual effort and external support. This research examines the extent to which the National Youth Policy in Zimbabwe is effective in supporting youth socio-economic empowerment in rural Zimbabwe. This is achieved by paying particular attention to the self-help projects conducted by the youth in Mwenezi District. The perspectives of the policy implementers and the youth involved in the self-help projects in Mwenezi District (Masvingo Province) are considered. The experiences of both categories in the policy implementation and self-help projects execution are also analyzed. This is done through an empirical analysis of the self-help projects, the socio-economic benefits they have brought, and how the rural youth have coped with challenges. This chapter presents the background to the study, in particular, the socio-economic environment that has necessitated the emergence of both National Youth Policy and youth self-help projects in rural Zimbabwe in general, and Mwenezi District in particular. The chapter presents the research objectives and questions, discusses and justifies the research methodology adopted as well as present the context of the study.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

1.2.1 Millennium Development Goals

According to Banks and Hulme (2014: 182) the UN Millennium Declaration “marked a turning point for poverty, feeding into the subsequent adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which brought poverty to the forefront of international development”. The package of targets and development policies represented a unanimous agreement of what ought to be done to eradicate poverty. However, they have come and gone without significantly altering the youth circumstances in the country. A country based analysis reveals that the MDGs strategies simply whetted the appetite of reforms. The major challenge in Zimbabwe has been paying lip-service to the ideas of emancipation without any concrete evidence on the ground.

The selected Millennium Development Goals particularly relevant in this study are Goal 1: Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. Goal 7: Ensuring environmental sustainability. Whilst all the goals relate to development in some way, these goals directly relate to socio-economic empowerment.

Attaining the targets associated with these goals proved to be difficult for Zimbabwe, as the goals were set at the same time when the country underwent an economic crisis. According to Fleshman (in Africa Renewal, 2003: 10) “economic stagnation, combined with declining levels of development aid and private investment” affected the attainment of the MDGs. Evidence given in the MDGs Report of 2016 reveals that some progress was realised in achieving Goal 1. But, it is noted that “rural areas continued to register very high levels of income poverty (82.4 percent in 2001 and 84.3 percent in 2011/12, compared to urban areas, with 42.3 percent and 46.5 percent, respectively” (UNDP, 2016: 13). The percentages give an impression of improvements gained toward reducing poverty especially over the 2009 to 2013 era. The Report also mentions shortcomings in the “reduction of inequalities, in the context of a broad-based, inclusive, pro-poor, gender-sensitive and dynamic economy, capable of generating decent jobs and sustaining high growth” (UNDP, 2016: 13).

The Report noted improvement in tertiary education enrolment (university, primary and secondary teachers’ colleges, technical colleges and industrial training centres), with the “Gender Parity Index (GPI) increasing from 60 percent in 2000, to 95 percent in 2012” (UNDP, 2016: 13). The figures are attractive but they do not necessarily reflect the experiences of individuals. More specifically, the goals and the Report do not view entrepreneurship as a key indicator for development in general, nor as a mechanism for youth empowerment. The era of MDGs lapsed without tangible benefits for the youth in Zimbabwe. A discussion on the Sustainable Development Goals is given in the following section.

1.2.2 The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Sustainable Development Goals are defined as benchmarks focused on priority areas for the achievement of sustainable development. According to Osborne, Cutter and Ullah (2015: 1) these goals are “action oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number,

aspirational, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries". They however take into account varying levels of development and respective policies in different countries.

The SDGs have expanded and broadened development concepts. Koehler (2015: 744) posits that the "SDGs are far more comprehensive than the MDGs". It is noted in the SDGs that, "human rights, governance, the environment, economic and social development are recognised as interconnected" (Ivanova and Escobar-Pemberthy in Koehler, 2015: 744), which are critical for contemporary approaches to development, which will be discussed in Chapter 2.

There is emphasis, in the SDGs, on the need for policies that "address the importance of industrialization (perhaps better called industrial strategy) and productivity" (Koehler, 2015: 745). Zimbabwe is a signatory on the SDG. As a result the government has accepted the 17 Goals. For this study, Goal 8 is critical because it "seeks to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment" (The Herald, 11 May 2016).

Creating sustainable livelihoods for the youth through employment generation and support for the self-help projects is a duty of the government. According to Koehler (2015: 745) "the SDGs text presents more than an incremental change and it offers an approach that builds on earlier development decades". It is however lamented that, the new development approach is weak in that it does not address the question of policies head on. Thus, Koehler (2015: 74) argues that "the question of how and by which policies "sustainable development" would be achieved, must be interrogated. Without effective deliberate policies supporting development, there is a likelihood that Zimbabwe will not reach its targets by 2030. For Zimbabwe, the situation is worsened by the apparently dysfunctional system and comatose economy which cannot sustain any meaningful development.

1.2.3 Unemployment Trends in Zimbabwe

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) predicted that global unemployment was expected to rise by nearly 2.3 million in 2016 and by a further 1.1 million in 2017 (World Employment Social Outlook Trends (WESO), 2016: 3). In Sub Saharan Africa, "creating productive jobs remains a key challenge for the region" (WESO, 2016: 32) as part of achieving development goals. The situation continues to worsen for the rural youth in particular because of limited opportunities.

The prevailing economic conditions in Zimbabwe have steadily worsened from the late 1990s. According to Munangagwa (2011: 114) the decline began with the Zimbabwe stock market crash on November 14, 1997. The evidence shows that the youth have been the major victims. Youth unemployment has reached levels ranging between 80 % and 90% depending on the source. It is important to note here that the National Statistics Agency gives much lower percentage of 10% (Bloch, 2016 Zimbabwe Independent).

Research undertaken by Zindiye, Chiliya and Masocha (2012: 1) indicates that “job creation and poverty alleviation are two challenges facing Zimbabwe today”. The Evidence from the Economist Global Capital Report of 2013 states that, unemployment in Zimbabwe rose from 50 percent, to a peak of 95 percent by 2012 (Bhebhe, Sulochana, Muranda, Sifile and Chavhunduka, 2015: 2). Poverty amongst the youth has been found to be more common in rural areas than urban areas (Mararike, 2014: 98). Additionally, the school system in Zimbabwe has notoriously produced job seekers and not job creators (Dore, Hawkins, Makina, Kanyenze and Ndelela, 2008: 13; Nziramasanga Commission Report, 1999). The low demand of labourers due to national and global economic challenges, has seen both rural and urban youth being exposed to unemployment and underemployment. Youth are thus facing challenges in relation to skills acquisition. Further, the absence of training in practical life-skills, vocational skills, business start-up skills, leadership skills and management skills are inhibiting youth employment prospects in Zimbabwe (Mambo, 2010: 20).

Other evidence has suggested that due to the rise of the population of youth in the country, with limited opportunities for socio economic development, the youth have increasingly become disempowered and disengaged in national processes. The effect here as described by Gondo (Newsday 10 August 2016), has been that as a group they have become open to manipulation and exploitation. In other words, they are becoming increasingly disempowered. This situation is being worsened by the shrinking economy that cannot accommodate the youth (Chingarande and Guduza in NANGO, 2011: 2).

The attempts by the youth to get empowered are jeopardised by hurdles which need the intervention of the policy makers (UNESCO, 2004: 20). The International Labour Organisation (ILO) survey concluded that “youths in Zimbabwe are among the World’s poorest, as they are living in an extremely difficult environment” (The Financial Gazette 1 September 2017). The survey also puts the country “in the 75 to 100 category, which relates to working youths

experiencing extreme poverty”. ILO Deputy Director-General for policy (Deborah Greenfield) said that Zimbabwean youth who earn “less than US\$2 per capita per day live in poverty” (Financial Gazette, 1 September 2017). Such underemployment cannot yield positive results in the quest for youth socio-economic empowerment. The ILO research findings also highlight “wide disparities between young women and men in the labour market” and hinted that these have to be addressed urgently (Financial Gazette, 1 September 2017).

In this situation, understanding the contribution of youth self-help projects towards youth empowerment is important as four out of five jobs are now found in the informal sector, resulting in youth underemployment (Marariki, 2014: 99). Further, it has been estimated that approximately 80 percent of youth have resorted to vending, as there are no jobs on the market (The Standard, 09 February 2014). This situation prevails, despite the provisions of the National Youth Policy of Zimbabwe (2000 and amended in 2013), which seeks to address both social and economic conditions of the youth. This rationalises the need to explore the youth empowerment policy in relation to youth self-help projects in rural Zimbabwe.

1.2.4 Examining the Relevance of Youth Empowerment Policy

Multilateral institutions have expressed concern over youth unemployment. Khaoya and Moronge (2016: 788) found that the ILO has cautioned the rise of a disenfranchised generation. These young people face a “dangerous mix of high unemployment, increased inactivity and precarious work in developed countries” (Khaoya and Moronge, 2016: 788). In response to the growing crisis, “the ILO adopted a resolution calling for immediate, targeted and renewed action to tackle the youth unemployment crisis” (Khaoya and Moronge, 2016: 788). Whilst, most governments and world leaders across continents have realized that the youth hold the key to growth of their countries, the challenge is that there are not enough jobs in the formal sector to satisfy the demand, and as a result solutions must be explored in other sectors (ILO, in Khaoya and Moronge, 2016: 788).

Evidence shows that “Sub-Saharan African youth face a range of barriers in accessing good economic opportunities, constraining their ability to build sustainable livelihoods and escape poverty” (Moore, 2015: 196). According to Perezniето (2013: 3) “investing in children and young people is an effective development strategy, because it generates changes that will last

throughout their lifetime, with higher absolute returns than investing only in older adults (Pereznieto and Harding, 2013: iv). It is upheld that “investments that help young people meet their socio-economic needs, including those of equity, better governance, greater social cohesion, higher quality education and more income generating opportunities are needed” (Pereznieto and Harding, *ibid*). The African Union has been instrumental in encouraging member countries to implement youth policies which support and sustain their empowerment.

1.2.4 Youth Empowerment Policy in Zimbabwe

Youth Empowerment Policy in Zimbabwe is guided by the National Youth Policy developed in 2000 and amended in 2013. This document provides a framework for youth empowerment and development in the country. The policy seeks to “empower the youth by creating an enabling environment and marshalling the resources necessary for undertaking programmes and projects to fully develop the youths’ mental, moral, social, economic, political, cultural, spiritual and physical potential in order to improve their quality of life” (National Youth Policy, 2013: 1).

A total of four goals explain the aims of the National Youth Policy in the country. These are:

1. To empower youth to participate and contribute to the socio-economic development of the nation.
2. To develop a coordinated response and participation by all stakeholders in the development and empowerment of the youth.
3. To instil in youth a clear sense of national identity and respect for national principles and values.
4. To promote the health of young people and develop youth oriented healthcare.

1.2.5 Youth Empowerment Initiatives in Zimbabwe

Studies reveal that there is an upsurge in the number of youth undertaking self-help projects. Beekeeping, fishing clubs, poultry production and sewing projects are among the most common (Chazovachii, Chuma, Mushuku, Chirenje, Chitongo and Mudyariwa, 2013: 126).

Most of the projects are done by people who are not employed within the formal sector and they are run by the youth themselves (Chazovachii et al., 2013: *ibid*). This is an attempt to improve their way of living in light of unemployment, lack of capital as well as the shrinking formal market (Mkandawire in Chigunta, 2005: 17-18). The impact of policy implementation on such activities has not been evaluated previously.

Mpofu, Mutambanadzo and Sibanda (2013: 2) identify the rural areas of Zimbabwe as key for effective development. Their study established that rural banking plays a significant role in rural economies with women being the main beneficiaries, becoming empowered through their improved ability to make decisions that affect their lives.

Bomani, Fields and Derera (2015: 12) posit that, efforts by the state to finance SMEs have been met with several challenges. These include droughts, floods, a comatose economy characterised by high interest rates on loans, hyper-inflation, cash shortages (both local and foreign currency). Mago's 2013 study offers a critical insight into the aspects of economic empowerment derived from the informal sector. It noted that "this sector is characterized by enterprises that have no legal status, lack authorized business location, have no standard forms of collateral security, are small in size and their business activities are risky" (Mago, 2013: 5). These studies are relevant in building understanding of the current investigation, and challenges the investigation to consider the resilience strategies being used by the youth and how they are emancipated through entrepreneurship projects.

Zindiye, Chiliya and Masocha (2012: 656) studied the influence of SMEs on the urban economy and population. They found that "the SME sector in Zimbabwe is critical in national development, employment creation, uplifting of the standards of living for urbanites, as well as the promotion of urban economies". They also found that the Zimbabwean government helped in transportation of goods, sourcing and the storage of raw materials in rural areas (Zindiye et al., 2012). The study established that the government focus was "directed at the rural population to venture into innovative and value-added employment generation projects that tap resources endowed in various provinces" (Zindiye et al, 2012: 661).

Elsewhere, Chimucheka studied the rural youth in Mhondoro and established that, there were various impediments faced by youth entrepreneurs in Zimbabwe. The study established that “insufficient and unreliable government support is an impediment to youth entrepreneurship. Close to 50% of the respondents indicated that the government does not really support entrepreneurship as a career opportunity for youths” (Chimucheka, 2012: 5). Mubaiwa (2005: 33) concurs that Zimbabwean youth entrepreneurs encounter largely similar difficulties. The challenges include access to capital for starting or scaling up projects, lack of business and technical skills and limited access to the markets. This gives the current research insights on the challenges that are faced by potential youth entrepreneurs.

It is noted that discordant policy formulation and implementation, as well as shifting national frameworks has seriously undermined the credibility of the state. This “led to the marginalization of the private sector, and constrained the scope for both state and non-state actors to engage in long-term forward planning” (Dore, Hawkins, Makina, Kanyenze and Ndlela, 2008: 13). Numerous decision-making bodies often working at cross purposes and pursuing disconnected agendas without any apparent coordination have negatively impacted policy execution. They are also blamed for having short-term planning horizons and therefore unable to meet the 21st century development challenges (Dore et. al, 2008: 13). This evidence sheds light on the weaknesses of the policies in the country and therefore enriches this study on policy implementation.

The Zimbabwean government initiated the Integrated Skills Outreach Programme (ISOP) meant to promote the youth skills training in rural areas. Nyika (2013: 53) assessed the impact of the ISOP in rural areas of Shurugwi in Zimbabwe and reported that the programme had mixed results. Youth “were trained in various trades which include welding and fabrication, horticulture, cookery, dressmaking, motor mechanic, carpentry, interior décor and embroidery, brick and block laying as well as hairdressing” (Nyika, *ibid*). However, the impact of such training and skill acquisition was not assessed in relation to the creation of self-help projects and youth socio-economic empowerment. It is the thrust of this research to explore the National Youth Policy and how it has enhanced or undermined the self-help projects done by the youth in rural Zimbabwe and to fill this research gap.

The thrust behind undertaking this research study, is to unravel the experiences of rural youth in Zimbabwe in the context of self-help projects and the quest for youth socio-economic empowerment. Researches have previously sought to understand the complexities of empowerment amongst youth engaging in entrepreneurship projects (Bennel, 2007: 7 and UNESCO, 2012: 2). Their major findings were that “entrepreneurship has become a critical pathway for creating employment to simultaneously drive productivity and economic growth”. It is not clear how this is happening on the ground in Zimbabwe, hence the relevancy of this study on youth socio-economic empowerment through policy implementation.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Youth in rural Zimbabwe face a number of constraints in their attempt to realise social and economic emancipation. Unemployment is very high and this has resulted in young skilled professionals migrating to look for better opportunities. South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, and Britain are the preferred destinations (Zanamwe and Devillard, 2009: 13). Economic policy reforms in Zimbabwe have resulted in declining employment opportunities especially among the youth (The Independent 31 August 2015). The lack of employment opportunities in Zimbabwe continues to worsen resulting in high levels of poverty and powerlessness.

Bennel (2000: 15) noted that, the lack of critical thinking and creativity complicates the issue of youth employment making it particularly difficult. Strategies have been initiated by government to address the problem of youth unemployment (Bhebhe et al. 2015: 15). However, research indicates that few have been able to benefit from these (Charumbira and Chituri, 2013: 15). It is against this backdrop that this study explores the effectiveness of youth policy implementation in promoting rural youth empowerment in Zimbabwe in general and Mwenezi District in particular. The study captures the empirical evidence from both policy implementers and policy intended beneficiaries.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to:

- Understand the nexus between public policy, rural development and youth empowerment;

- Review existing youth policy and interventions designed to solve the challenges associated with poverty and youth unemployment in rural areas;
- Contribute knowledge on the interface between youth policies and self-help projects in rural areas in Zimbabwe; and
- Enhance the understanding of youth socio-economic empowerment and sustainable livelihoods promoted by self-help projects in rural Zimbabwe.

1.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

It must be noted that there are various strategies and initiatives coming from government, churches and NGOs, aimed at emancipating the youth in Zimbabwe. These programmes constitute relevant policy prerogatives which this study seeks to examine. This research aims to interrogate the implementation and effects of youth policies in the context of self-help projects and youth socio-economic empowerment in rural Zimbabwe.

The Vision of the National Youth Policy

The National Youth Policy seeks to empower young women and men in Zimbabwe so that they can “realise their full potential as individuals, as members of communities, political and social action groups, and youth organisations and as key to development of Zimbabwe” (National Youth Policy, 2000). The vision of the Ministry is to achieve the total empowerment of youth.

The Mission of the National Youth Policy

The mission of the Youth Policy and its associated plan of action is to work towards the realisation of the vision noted above. Overall, the Ministry has a mission to “develop, promote and implement policies and programs for the empowerment of youth in order to achieve sustainable and equitable development” (National Youth Policy, 2013).

This study aims to contribute to the existing body of literature related to the interface between youth policies and youth socio-economic empowerment within Zimbabwe. In order to realise these aims, the following objectives have been identified:

- To explore the link between public policy, development and youth empowerment;

- To determine the current status of policy frameworks that promote empowerment amongst youth in Zimbabwe;
- To analyse youth self-help projects in rural Zimbabwe within a Sustainable Livelihoods Framework;
- To determine the perceptions of youth in Mwenezi District engaged in self-help projects towards the implementation of the National Youth Act; and
- To identify the challenges faced in achieving empowerment through self-help projects.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS GUIDING THE STUDY

- ✓ What is the link between public policy, rural development and youth socio-economic empowerment in rural Zimbabwe?
- ✓ What is the current status of youth policy guiding self-help projects and empowerment in rural Zimbabwe?
- ✓ What contribution is being made by youth self-help projects towards realising sustainable livelihood in Mwenezi District?
- ✓ What are the perceptions of youth engaging in self-help projects towards the implementation of the National Youth Policy in Zimbabwe?
- ✓ What challenges are being faced in an attempt to achieve youth empowerment through the implementation of the National Youth Policy in Zimbabwe?

1.7 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

It is now approximately four decades since Zimbabwe gained her independence. Over this period, the country has gone through a series of events which have impacted on the levels of development and underdevelopment being experienced by its citizens. The challenges are not uniform across generations, geographical locations or gender. Amongst the youth, low employment rates and the absence of opportunity continues to impact on their ability to

develop and become emancipated. Further, the sustainability of development projects is largely determined by the policy environment within the country. Schnurr and Newing (1997: 2) note that it is particularly difficult for youth given these challenges. The youth thus experience high levels of frustration that emanates from the lack of opportunity. Engaging in self-help projects offers one opportunity to overcome these circumstances.

The goal of the National Youth Policy is to empower the youth through the creation of an enabling environment and seeks to make available resources for undertaking projects to empower the youth. Public officials in the Ministry of Youth are the principal implementers of the youth empowerment policies. This study seeks to examine the perceptions of the youth regarding the impact of the implementation of the National Youth Policy, on the socio-economic outcomes of youth participating in related self-help-projects. In determining the extent to which the livelihoods of the youth are affected, a sustainable livelihoods approach is adopted.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Socio-economic empowerment of the youth in rural Zimbabwe is hinged on several factors within the policy environment. This includes the formulation of appropriate policies, as well as effective and efficient implementation of those policies. It is the interface between the policies and effective execution that shapes the outcome of the youth self-help projects. Sustainability of self-help projects is understood as a “function of how assets and capabilities are utilised, maintained and enhanced so as to preserve livelihoods” (Chambers and Conway, 1991: 8). Policies determine the establishment and impact of self-help initiatives by the youth.

This study seeks to examine the perceptions of those who participate in the projects aimed at youth empowerment through self-help projects. The primary aim of youth policies is to develop strategies that help young people to make the right choices, protect them from exploitation and neglect and ensure their participation in all spheres of society (Lintello, 2012; UNESCO, 2004: 6). The National Youth Policy of the Zimbabwean government is examined to generate perceptions on the extent to which they succeed in empowering the youth. In doing so, the research examines the benefits derived from these projects from a sustainable livelihood perspective.

The study is significant in that it gives the varying perceptions of the youth participants in self-help projects as well as the perspectives of the policy implementers. Additionally, it draws conclusions based on how policies are shaping the outcomes of various youth self-help projects in Mwenezi District. It is also significant in that:

- It contributes to the vast knowledge, research and scholarly literature on policy implementation among public officials in Zimbabwe.
- It examines the perceptions of the youth engaged in self-help projects in the rural areas.
- It examines the strengths and challenges of the implementation of the National Youth Policy in Zimbabwe; and
- It identifies the potential gaps in the implementation of the National Youth Policy in Zimbabwe.

Key themes explored in the research

- Public policy and development;
- Self-help projects and socio-economic empowerment;
- Sustainable livelihoods; and
- National Youth Policy implementation.

1.9 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

This section provides definitions of the key terms used in the study.

1.9.1 Public Policy

Anderson (2003: 2) defines a policy as “a relatively stable, purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern”. Public policies are those produced by government officials and agencies. They also usually affect substantial numbers of people. According to Fox and Meyer, in Marume, Mutongi and Madziyire (2016: 6), “it is a guide of action or statement of goals that should be followed in an institution to deal with a particular problem or phenomenon or a set of problems of phenomena”.

1. 9.2 Policy Implementation

According to Van Meter and Van Horn (1974: 447-8), “policy implementation encompasses those actions by public or private individuals (or groups) that are directed at the achievement of objectives set forth in prior policy decisions”. Elsewhere, policy implementation is defined “as a complex change process where government decisions are transformed into programs, procedures, regulations, or practices aimed at social betterment” (DeGroff and Cargo, 2009: 47).

1.9.3 Youth

Youth is best understood as “a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood’s independence” (UN, 2013: 1). It is noted that the concept of “youth” is more fluid than other fixed age-groups. According to the National Youth Policy (2013: 5) in Zimbabwe, youth are defined as “persons between 15 and 35 years of age. This age range is stipulated in the Constitution of Zimbabwe and is also in line with the continental definition of youth as defined in the African Youth Charter (15 to 35)”. This study uses the age category of 18-35 years as youth in order to ensure that the rights of minors are protected.

1.9.4 Empowerment

According to Jupp and Ali (2010: 16), “empowerment is a contested concept and a moving target. It comprises complex, interrelated elements embracing values, knowledge, behaviour and relationships. The empowerment process is non-linear and depends largely on experience gained from opportunities to exercise rights that are inherently context specific”. Vavrus and Fletcher in Osaigbovo (2014: 2) note that “youth empowerment is an attitudinal, structural, and cultural process whereby young people gain the ability, authority, and agency to make decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of other people, including youth and adults”. In this study the term denotes positive quantitative and qualitative transformation realised by the youth, either material or immaterial.

1.9.5 Self-help Projects

According to Anyanwu, in Fonchingong and Fonjong (2003: 200), “the principle of self-help incorporates into the community development process the means of offering ordinary

citizens the opportunity to share in making important decisions about their living conditions”. This study defines self-help projects as small scale entrepreneurial initiatives engaged in by the youth in the community to improve their livelihoods.

1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The desire to answer the research questions in this study informed the choice of research methodology adopted. Before undertaking the empirical study, the researcher read pertinent literature to be aware of the major issues around public policy, development, youth empowerment, sustainable livelihoods and critical social empowerment. The researcher also took time to reflect on the National Youth Policy of Zimbabwe, and the related acts, namely; Zimbabwe Youth Council Act and the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act. These documents constitute the basis of youth policies in Zimbabwe although the last two are less emphasised in this study. The document reviews made, enabled the researcher to approach research participants informed about critical issues at play.

It is also imperative that in social sciences, researchers use different methodologies which can be quantitative or qualitative or a combination of both. This research employed the qualitative methodology, where key informant and semi-structured interviews were held. The essence of capturing the perspectives of the youth, government and NGO officers insofar as policy implementation is concerned, was considered. It is this reason why the researcher chose the qualitative methodology. Qualitative methodology enabled the researcher to look at different dimensions of the respondents’ social world. It helped in understanding the nature of their lives that is, their experiences, feelings and imagination, as youth participants engaging in self-help projects. The methodology also facilitated improved understanding of the political, economic and social institutions, around which policies are implemented in Mwenezi District. This confirmed Mason’s (2002: 1) argument that the methodology helps researchers to understand how things work in particular contexts.

The study concentrated on Mwenezi District which falls under Masvingo Province, as indicated in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Map of Zimbabwe



Source: <https://www.ezilon.com/maps/africa/zimbabwe-maps.html>

The district has a total of 18 wards (named ward 1-18 and led by 18 councillors), 7 chiefs (Neshuro, Maranda, Murove, Chitanga, Negari, Mawarire and Mazetese) and two House of Representatives (for Mwenezi East and Mwenezi West). The major business centres (where most entrepreneurial activities are done) are Neshuro (ward 5); Lundi (ward 1), Rutenga (ward 18), Sarahuro (ward 4), Maranda (ward 9) and Matibi (ward 3).

This empirical study was undertaken through the use of three semi-structured interview schedules (Appendices 1, 2A and 2B). The idea was to elicit an analysis of the policy implementation with regards to youth empowerment policy and self-help projects in Mwenezi District of Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe. As such, perspectives of the youth, the NGOs and the government officials (District Heads and/ or their representatives) were captured, each with an interview schedule designed for each group.

Due to the nature of the study, the researcher targeted a sample of thirty respondents. The spatial differences of the respondents meant that the researcher had to travel very long

distances to meet the respondents. In a remote district like Mwenezi, moving from ward 1 to ward 10 can take the whole day, due to transport and accessibility problems. Communicating with respondents beforehand was also affected by unavailability of mobile network in some wards. Despite all these odds, the researcher managed to carry out thirty interviews. Six interviews were not audio-recorded because the respondents indicated that they were uncomfortable with the idea of being recorded. As a result, notes related to the findings from the interviews were made immediately after the interview in order to ensure that an accurate description of the findings would be reported.

The respondents were purposefully selected to capture the youth participating in self-help projects. This worked well in identifying and selecting information rich cases (Palinkas, 2016: 1). It was done in line with the aims of the research of capturing the perceptions of informed respondents (youth undertaking self-help projects in the district). Additionally, sampling ensured that the study covered different types of projects, different wards and different people in terms of gender. An attempt to obtain responses from sponsored groups was however unsuccessful, as the targeted respondents did not cooperate.

1.12 DATA ANALYSIS

Interviews were conducted in Shona and in English. Those conducted in Shona were translated and transcribed verbatim. Those conducted in English were simply transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were checked against the tapes to ensure accuracy. The transcript data was coded manually, using themes as key markers. This was followed by an in-depth analysis of the themes, where each emerging theme was given equal attention. Every effort was made to be thorough, consistent and distinctive especially where the perceptions varied. Similar themes were discussed together to give some coherence to the data and uniformity to the presentation of data.

1.13 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In carrying out the study, the first thing was to contact the key informants. This was done through telephone as well as physical visits. The approval letters from the permanent secretaries from the relevant ministries were carried by the researcher. Despite all these efforts, the respondents continuously postponed the interviews. In many cases, two months

lapsed without being able to obtain responses from potential interviewees to make the necessary arrangements. The 2018 general election preparations were a major drawback. Some respondents refused to be audio-tapped and this adversely affected the intended sample and the recording of the interviews. As mentioned previously, where interviewees refused to be recorded, these discussions were compiled into reports soon after the interview.

The absence of telecommunication services in many areas complicated the process of setting up interviews. Despite this, the researcher travelled long distances to meet respondents and sometimes they would not avail themselves. The major challenge was the youth groups (both funded and self-sponsoring). The respondents were reluctant to participate. The political climate with election preparations also made the situation tense as respondents visibly withheld information for fear of victimisation.

Despite all these challenges, the research successfully captured the youth perspectives relating to their socio-economic emancipation and policy implementation. Some respondents were enthusiastic about the research and shared their experiences voluntarily.

1.14 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Chapter One provided an overview of the study. It sets out the rationale, purpose, aims, objectives and research questions for the study. The Chapter further provides a discussion of the significance of the study, an overview of the key definitions, identifies the limitations of the study, and provides a brief description of the research methodology adopted for the study and the mechanism adopted for data analysis.

Chapter Two seeks to contextualise the study within the Policy and Development Studies. The chapter achieves this by examining the public policy process and its relationship to development. The Chapter further highlights the importance of empowerment as a key factor in the development process.

Chapter Three provides a discussion on the role and relevance of the Critical Social Empowerment Theory and the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework in understanding the research context, namely, youth socio-economic empowerment in Zimbabwe. The Chapter

further examines the Zimbabwean context for youth empowerment through self-help using the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework.

Chapter Four outlines the research methodology and methods used in the study.

Chapter Five provides a presentation and analysis of the findings from the empirical study carried out in Mwenezi District using semi-structured interviews.

Chapter Six is a discussion and interpretation of findings.

Chapter Seven provides the conclusion and offers recommendations that are based on the review of literature and findings of the study.

1.15 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided an overview of the study on youth socio-economic empowerment through policy implementation. The justification, significance and rationale of the study are articulated. The chapter gives the purpose, aims, objectives and research questions of the study. A background to the policy initiatives and the subsequent National Youth Policy of 2000 (amended in 2013) is outlined. The discussion also incorporated the description of Mwenezi District, in Masvingo Province, so as to portray the context of the research. The next chapter seeks to contextualise the study within Policy and Development Studies.

CHAPTER 2: AN OVERVIEW OF POLICY & DEVELOPMENT, AND THE LINK TO YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Policy and development are inextricably linked. Policy provides the framework for development intervention, whilst development, in essence, pursues improvement. This chapter seeks to examine development as a concept by way of discussing relevant theories of development. It explores the importance of development in reducing the levels of poverty, and highlights its contribution towards improving the quality of life of people. The chapter proceeds to highlight that, for any development to take place, a requisite public policy environment is necessary. This understanding also leads to a discussion of public policy where the definition, forms and phases of public policy are emphasised, as key elements for the achievement of development objectives. A deliberation on the role of actors in shaping policy and development is made, in order to illustrate the influence of various groups in the realisation of effective policy and development.

2.2 CONCEPTUALISING DEVELOPMENT

Development can be understood as a process as well as a target. Development as a term has many definitions arising out of different perceptions of the nature, form and purpose of development. The theoretical explanations of the term development span close to seven decades. This is reiterated by Alaves (1998: 1), who argued that development is a historical process that stretches over some centuries. Development as a discipline came into prominence after 1945, evolving with theories emphasising a modernisation approach in the 1950s, followed by dependency theory and world systems theory. These were followed by the Basic Needs Approach in the 1970s, and followed by quality of life theories and sustainable approach theories. Modernisation Theory, Dependency Theory and World Systems Theory are briefly examined due to their relevance in understanding the context under investigation. This is followed by a description of some of the key interpretations arising out of the change in the way in which theorists, development practitioners and researchers have considered development as a concept and as a process.

2.2.1. Modernisation Theory of Development

Modernisation theory gives explanations why poorer countries have failed to develop. The reasons are mainly placed on cultural and economic conditions in existence in those countries. Noted barriers to progress were associated with lack of technology, infrastructure, and capital as well as lack of skills. Further, political instability was seen as negatively impacting on the progress towards development (IMF, 2011: 4). It emphasised that progress could be translated into the paradigm of modernisation according to which all societies could be taken out of their traditional constraints and be modernised following the Western example. Thus, underdeveloped countries were seen to have the potential to achieve the same status as developed countries. This is premised on the condition that the underdeveloped country adopts modernisation principles and implements them consistently. To the underdeveloped nations, modernisation offered a guided transition, which moves towards attaining a developed and industrialised society.

The modernization approach did not question the applicability of externally led (or top-down) development planning (De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998: 6), and is mainly criticised due to its “top-down” nature. It offers symptomatic relief - and this only to a limited extent - without addressing the root causes of deprivation. Furthermore, it did not focus on the empowerment of the intended beneficiaries to provide their own needs, and, as a result, was seen as an approach to development that maintained the status quo (De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998: 6). It must be noted here that, empowerment in the new discourse on development, espouses the idea of institutional reforms to align them with the best interests of the people, which was not a focus for the logic of modernization theory.

2.2.2 Dependency Theory of Development

This theory has advanced the argument that development and underdevelopment are related. Dependency theorists argued that nations are divided into the core and periphery dichotomy. The core nations comprise the industrialised nations, and the periphery being the underdeveloped countries. An exploitative relationship was said to exist between the two with benefits accruing to the core at the expense of the underdeveloped areas (Todaro and Smith, 2006: 116). The theory was popular during the decolonisation era, when development

in former colonies was highlighted. In the post-colonial period these relationships continued, because the underdeveloped acted as satellite states and their resources (especially raw materials) were being extracted. Theorists subscribing to this school of thought held that “underdevelopment” is perpetuated by the unequal power relations existing in the world. The logic here illustrates the idea that, development between and within countries is unequal (Alaves 1998: 6). This logic can be applied to the country level context to describe the relationships between the powerful and the poor. A further useful extension of this theory is to examine the relationships between rural and urban centres.

2.2.3 The World Systems Theory of Development

World Systems Theory “focuses on inequality as a separate entity from growth in development and examines change in the global capitalist system” (Vela, 2001: 4). The theory criticises the state for representing the ideas of the elite, whilst subjugating the powerless. This theory underscores the need to embrace divergent perspectives within the system. The theory advances the argument that development and industrialisation are not synonymous (Ojeli, 2014: 8). Current inequality trends are undermining the development prospects by entrenching exploitation and underdevelopment.

2.2.4 Development as Capability

The capability approach is attributed to Amartya Sen whose seminal work in 1979 ushered in a new understanding to the development concept. This approach added the idea of freedom as a dimension of development. According to Sen, freedom has two aspects that is the ability to act on behalf of what matters (agency) and real opportunity to achieve value functioning, selected from among various good possibilities. Accordingly, Sen (1999: 19) argued that agency refers to “someone who acts and brings about change, and whose achievements can be judged in terms of her own values and objectives, whether or not we assess them in terms of some external criteria as well”. This is particularly important when considering development interventions and the extent to which external agents impact or even influence the processes.

It is critical to note, that Sen further developed the concept in his 2009 work, suggesting that justice is important in development. The capability approach has continued to inform the

understanding of development as indicated in the human development reports. For example the 2010 report suggests that “human development is the expansion of people’s freedoms to live long, healthy and creative lives; to advance other goals they have reason to value; and to engage actively in shaping development equitably and sustainably on a shared planet. People are both the beneficiaries and the drivers of human development, as individuals and in groups” (Alkire, 2014: 7).

In a similar perspective, human development has been viewed as a concept that embraces everything that is needed to understand the concept of development. More so, it is claimed that the concept is holistic and supersedes other earlier models. This is because it includes both quantitative and qualitative transformation in economic growth, people’s empowerment, political and social freedom as well as social investment (Haq in Alkire, 2014: 7). The author concludes that it is “neither narrowly technocratic nor overly philosophical and is a practical reflection of life itself”. The capability approach has also informed the contemporary usage of the sustainable livelihood approach (this study’s conceptual framework) specifically the livelihood capabilities that people have in their respective communities.

Other concepts like human security have also expanded the idea of development as freedom that was popularised by Amartya Sen. It is upheld that “human security means protecting fundamental freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people’s strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity” (Alkire, 2014: 14). This emphasises the fact that people need to be given some latitude to implement their livelihood projects through whatever means they have within their communities.

According to Clark (2006: 5) the capability approach, by Sen is critical in that, it is a broad perspective looking at people as development ends and not a means to achieving economic development. The approach also underscores the fact that humanity is not homogeneous, but diverse. This is seen in the light of age, class, race and gender. The approach has also been praised for recognising that societies and different cultures strive to achieve different values

and aspirations (Clark, *ibid*). Such an acknowledgement is critical in that one cannot understand development as a universal and predefined concept in the world.

The evolution of the term development has seen an emphasis placed on empowerment of individuals and communities. Individual empowerment is critical and should be the basis of understanding progress in any particular society. This is the thrust of the research, to understand how empowerment of youth as individuals and youth as groups comes about.

2.2.5 Development as Empowerment

Individual empowerment is seen as an end in itself and the realisation of self-respect, self-esteem, self-confidence and self-reliance is important for human development. Narayan (2005: 7) suggests that empowerment “refers broadly to the expansion of choice and action to shape one’s life. It implies control over resources and decisions. For poor people, freedom is severely curtailed by their powerlessness in relation to the state and markets”. People need to access and control livelihood assets for them to feel empowered. The notion of empowerment implies greater control and ability to influence the decisions that affect their lives. According to Jupp and Ali (2010: 16) empowerment is “a contested concept and a moving target comprising complex, interrelated elements embracing values, knowledge, behaviour and relationships”. This understanding questions the universal conception and application of strategies in addressing issues to do with youth empowerment through policy implementation.

In addition to the above, it is emphasised that “empowerment process is non-linear and depends largely on experience gained from opportunities to exercise rights that are inherently context specific” (Jupp and Ali, 2010, *ibid*). The complex factors that explain the ideal of empowerment call for disaggregation of strategies that may be used to promote youth empowerment through policy implementation. Being a non-linear and context-specific process, there is evidence that designing empowerment formulas and drawing parallels with what obtains in other regions may not be the best option (Narayan, 2005). Indeed, Jupp and Ali (2010: 16) concluded that “different aspects of empowerment may be achieved asymmetrically and at a different pace in different contexts, by recognising and quantifying all positive changes”.

Empowerment also refers to “increasing the spiritual, political, social and economic strength of individuals and communities” (Behal, 2011: 39). Again, the author argues that “it often involves developing confidence of the individual in his/her own capacities”. A confident youth can initiate some economic project to sustain their livelihood. According to Srinivas (2006: 147) empowerment is an “expression of self-strength, control, self-power, self-reliance, and freedom of choice and life of dignity”. Individuals need to fight for their freedom and rights so that they can implement projects based on their own decisions. Whilst empowerment can be economic, social, or political this research focused on socio-economic empowerment of youth in rural areas.

2.2.5.1 Youth Empowerment as a Critical Component for Development

According to Vuvrus and Fletcher in Nnadi, Chikaire, Atona, Egwuwonu and Echetema (2012: 2), “youth empowerment is an attitudinal, structural, and cultural process whereby young people gain the ability, authority, and agency to make decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of other people, including youth and adults”. This definition reflects a wide array of aspects that empowerment needs to satisfy. According to Page and Czuba in Nnadi et al. (2012: 2) “power is often related to our ability to make others do what we want, regardless of their own wishes. Since power is created in relationships, power and power relationships can change”.

Elsewhere, Martínez, Jiménez-Morales, Masó and Bernet (2017: 412) revealed that the “United Nations (UN) recognizes empowered young people as rights bearers, decision-makers, and social actors with potential to participate fully in their own and their community’s development”. This emphasises the fact that youth active participation is a prerequisite for youth empowerment. The influence of policies is aptly captured by Stanton-Salazar (in Martinez et al., 2017: 413) who advances the view that “institutional agencies as agents of empowerment facilitate and enable the development of key survival strategies such as problem solving for young people”.

Youth empowerment interventions by development actors and policy makers should be “based on young people’s strengths, involve them in decision-making processes regarding the

design, planning and implementation of the programmes themselves, and award them an active, central role in this” (Morton and Montgomery in Martinez et al., 2017: 413). Consulting the youth during policy formulation and implementation could enhance the chances of youth socio-economic empowerment through policy. The next section looks at development as positive quantitative and qualitative transformation.

2.2.6 Development as Socio-Economic Transformation

According to Cowen and Shenton (in Wiredu, 2010: 11) development refers to the “remedies for the shortcomings and maladies of progresses”. This implies that development has to transform human beings and the society in a positive way. Nederveen (2009: 5) suggests that development entails planned strategies made by the authorities intervening to improve livelihoods of the people. Limiting material want and improving people’s ability to live a good life is in sync with development (Edwards in Lewis, 2007: 76). Therefore, policies have to be initiated to expand people’s access and control over resources. This broadens the source of livelihood and makes it secure and sustainable. To realise this social change new ideas have to be introduced into a social system and living standards have to be raised through modern production methods and improved social organization (Roger in Wiredu, 2010: 10). Therefore, development has to be conceptualised as a multi-faceted transformation appealing to both individual and social group interests.

Claude Ake (1985: 5) suggests that development is “the process by which people create and recreate themselves and their life circumstances to realize higher levels of civilization in accordance with their own choice and values”. The author believes that positive change should see the economic, social, political and cultural facets of life being transformed (in Wiredu, 2010: 11). This structural change should nurture development that is continuous and beneficial to everyone including the future generations. According to Holcombe (in Brinkerhoff, 2004: 152) “development is about expanding the choices and enabling the agency of individuals and institutions to shape the course of their own development”. Thus socio-economic transformation ensuring independence, self-actualisation and increased self-esteem is critical.

For any country to realise development, it needs to modernise its infrastructure that would facilitate the process of development. Economic infrastructure such as roads, railways, waterways and airways determines the quality of transportation of various commodities. Todaro and Smith (2009: 821) argued that economic infrastructure is critical in spearheading development. Therefore, the modernisation of such critical factors is imperative for development to be effective and sustainable. The level of infrastructural development in a country is a crucial factor determining the pace and depth of economic development.

2.2.7 New Conceptualization of Development

The history of the term development and the theories of development, reflect that there have been several paradigm shifts which have affected the way in which one conceives development. The discussion has shown that development is an all-encompassing process rather than an economic perspective alone. It is also affirmed that the transfer of technology does not automatically overturn a state of underdevelopment (Atal, 1997: 13). Further, economic growth does not imply enrichment of people's lives although it may bring economic benefits to some people (Edwards, 1993: 80).

According to Korten in De Beer and Swanepoel (1998: 8) development is "a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations". This definition resonates with the people centred development paradigm. People's access to and control of resources ensures that they can sustain their lives. Community engagement is seen as critical towards "greater realisation of human potential" (De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998: 8); where human quality is essential (Gray, 1996: 1997; Koehler, 2015 and Fukuda-Parr, 2013); participation is an important part of the process (Fukuda-Parr, 2013: 6); and, where the objective of development is to ensure that adequate resources to meet basic needs of the people are in place (Chambers, 1997: 9; Rondinelli, 1983: 3). It is emphasised that there is need for overcoming power structures that stifle this human progress becoming an important part of development. Thus, there is need to transform the political, as well as social forces acting as barriers to freedom of choice and development.

Attempts were however made globally to refocus development on specific target areas better known as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which form the next discussion.

2.2.8 Development in the era of Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) had an outward appeal to critical human needs such as better education and standard health as well as emphasising gender equality and access to adequate food. They however failed to challenge existing power structures (Fukuda-Parr, 2013: 9) as inequality has continued within and between countries. Thus, the supposed changes in the concept are rather piecemeal.

Despite the positive gesture in MDGs' attempt to improve the quality of life, critics have highlighted that traditional ineffective approaches were still being applied to deal with the poverty phenomenon (Fukuda-Parr, 2015: 14). This reinforces the fact that new wording has been used for old strategies without significantly altering the fundamental aspects of policy frameworks to address the poverty question.

Against such a background, it is noted that MDGs have had a mediocre impact on both policy reform and development outcomes. They were celebrated for their high sounding language, yet they could not match the obtaining challenges constraining human development. After their failure to address the structural impediments undermining human development, it was concluded that they simply raised awareness among states, of the debilitating effects of poverty that needed to be speedily addressed (Fukuda-Parr, 2015: 15). This criticism highlights the rhetoric nature of development management agenda where stakeholders seemingly pay lip-service to address the significant challenges undermining human development. Therefore, the fate of the poor has been sealed by the less effective policies and political grandstanding.

Weak Institutions and corruption at national level hindered the attainment of MDGs in third world nations. This has resulted in mismanagement of funds for development and the elites are using revenues generated by the state to enrich themselves at the expense of the poor. There is little citizen participation in decision making and democracy is weak in most developing nations. Civil wars and political upheavals are common in 3rd world countries and this hindered the attainment of MDGs.

The other key challenges that impeded the attainment of millennium development goals can be summarized as follows:

- MDGs were conceptualized by the West and imposed on the developing nations as a one size fits all jacket. Circumstances in different countries were not factored in hence compromising attainment of the MDGs. This arguably reinforced the “We” and “Them” dichotomy.
- MDGs are not independent, stand-alone goals but are connected, so the failure to meet one is likely to affect realisation of the other goals.
- In Sub-Saharan Africa high maternal mortality is a consequence of both shortage of medical infrastructure and low status of women in these countries; this compromised the attainment of Goal 3 and 5.

The next section looks at the concept of sustainable development and poverty reduction which has been topical since the last millennium. A reflection on the global efforts to tackle poverty is outlined.

2.2.9 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION

The year 2015 saw the adoption of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There is an emphasis that development should significantly reduce poverty levels in communities for it to be sustainable by 2030. The demands for sustainable and equitable development in communities are emphasized in the SDGs. Previous attempts to implement welfare public policy saw the world supporting the expansion of productive employment and reduction of unemployment (Koehler, 2015: 738). This complemented social development, gender equality, environmental concerns and social integration emphasised earlier (Koehler, 2015; 745). It is at this stage where human rights as well as reduction in poverty levels were emphasised.

It is imperative to discuss the concept of poverty and its characterisation in the obtaining literature because it is an indispensable theme in the Agenda 2030. Poverty is understood as “a condition in which people lack satisfactory material resources (food, shelter, clothing, housing), are unable to access basic services (health, education, water, sanitation), and are constrained in their ability to exercise rights, share power and lend their voices to the

institutions and processes which affect the social, economic and political environments in which they live and work” (Vandenberg, 2006: 8). It is envisaged that the adoption of sustainable development goals and implementation of the prudent policies will engender a poverty-free equitable society.

According to Sen (1992: 107) “the failure of basic capabilities to reach certain minimally acceptable levels” is what constitutes poverty. Using Sen’s conceptualisation, one can surmise that the rural youth are incapacitated and therefore cannot afford to uplift their livelihoods, either socially or economically. It is the responsibility of the government to initiate strategies that promote the interests of youth especially the rural youth who are facing numerous challenges in an attempt to get emancipated. In essence, this research seeks to understand the relationship between public policy introduced by the government and poverty alleviation.

Reduction of poverty through an equitable distribution of resources within and between countries is a key theme in the sustainable development agenda. According to Hall and Midgley (2004: 49) inequality for the youth in rural areas “is more frequently related to issues of discrimination, exploitation and oppression”. This arguably generates differential access to socio-economic resources and an inability to exercise power effectively among the disempowered and oppressed youth. If that trend continues unabated, it will be difficult if not impossible to realise positive youth development and empowerment. The starting point for any development intervention is policy. The discussion now expands into the concept of public policy.

2.3 UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC POLICY

2.3.1 Defining Public Policy

Public policy “is what the government chooses to do or not to do” (Anderson, 2003: 2). Similarly, it is “a decision made by government to either act, or not to act in order to resolve a problem” (Dye, 1972: 2). Hogwood and Gunn (1984: 23) refer to public policy as “a course of action that guides a range of related actions in a given field”. Elsewhere, Hogwood and Gunn have understood it as “authoritative and based on law. In other words, a policy should ideally be legitimate and can be legally enforced by the State”. Other scholars defined policy

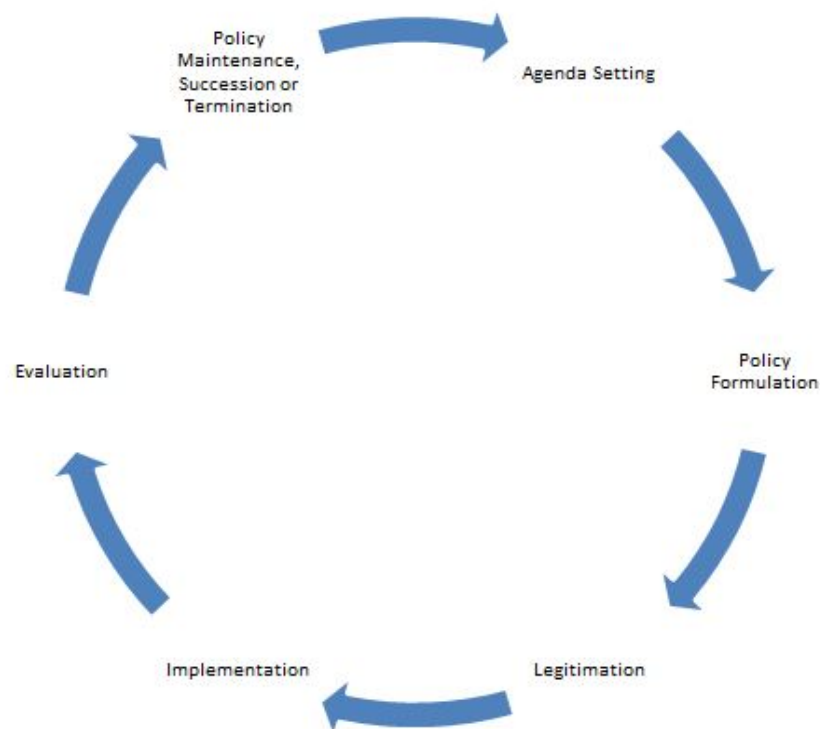
in line with ideas of exercising control on the society. Guba (1984: 64) defines policy as “the accumulated standing decisions of a governing body, by which it regulates and controls, promotes, services, and otherwise influences matters within its sphere of authority”. This perspective is shared by Anderson although there are slight differences in their conceptualisation of policy.

Anderson (2000: 4) defines policy as “a relatively stable, purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or issue of concern”. Issues of concern or existing problems shape the nature of the policy implemented. A distinction is made between intention and action in Anderson’s definition which clearly illustrates that decisions per se are not policies. Anderson (2000: 5) claims that public policies “are those developed by governmental bodies and officials”. This emphasises the role of central actors in shaping what becomes policy. From these definitions, one can surmise that public policy is a centrally planned and binding strategy to overcome some identified challenge in the community. It outlines action to be taken, individuals or institutions to act, and gives some time-frames over which the identified goal should be accomplished. Basically, public policy seeks to improve the welfare of the people by raising their standards of living through a set plan of actions and activities.

2.3.2 Stages in the Public Policy Process

Several stages of the public policy process can be identified. These are; issue identification and problem solving, agenda setting, formulating the policy, adopting the policy, implementing the policy and lastly policy evaluation. A brief discussion of these stages demonstrates what happens at each stage as seen in the following illustration:

Fig 2.1 Stages in the policy cycle



Source: Dye (2003: 5)

Agenda setting

This is the stage where government institutions, prominent and influential individuals, interest groups or even specific events determine what eventually fits on the agenda. Cobb and Ross (1997: 3) “characterize agenda setting as the politics of selecting issues for active consideration”. However, “agenda-setting is far from a rational selection of issues in terms of their relevance, and a shift of attention may lead governments to adopt policies that contradict measures introduced earlier” (Jones 2001: 145-47).

Policy Formulation

A clear definition of the existing problem is done first and decisions and strategies to overcome existing problems are made (Van Niekerk, Van der Waldt and Jonker, 2001: 95). It is at this stage that various actors play a significant role in influencing the crafting of the policy.

Policy Legitimation

Policy creation involves drafting of a valuable authoritative assignment in the form of a law, a program or a provision. It is the created laws or provisions that seek to address the obtaining challenges in the community.

Policy Implementation

Policy implementers would be handed over the law or program with clearly laid down strategies. There is need for proper policy implementation as well as innovation to reduce implementation gaps and paying lip-service for effective development policies. Brewer and deLeon (1983: 249) suggest that “faulty policy implementation can invalidate the earlier, carefully considered steps in the policy process and thereby intensify the original problem”.

Policy Evaluation

Evaluation looks at the extent to which a given public policy has answered the obtaining questions or solved the existing problems. This happens after street-level bureaucrats have implemented policies from the central actors. It therefore centres on consequences of decision making and action.

Policy Maintenance, Succession or Termination

The adoption of political reactions in policy implementation results in continuity and change as some policies are terminated or restated. Termination generally refers to “the adjustment of policies and programs that have become dysfunctional, redundant, outmoded, unnecessary, or even counterproductive” (Brewer and deLeon, 1983: 385).

2.3.3 The weaknesses of the policy cycle

The linear model which is described in the cycle above is criticised for being rigid and based on an implicit top-down perspective. Lack of flexibility is seen in that it is hierarchical and focuses “on single programs and decisions and on the formal adoption and implementation of these programs” (Jann and Wegrich, 2007: 56). It ignores “the role of knowledge, ideas and learning in the policy process as influential independent variables affecting all stages of the policy process” (Jann and Wegrich, *ibid*). Elsewhere, Marume et al., (2016: 87) suggest that

“policy-making appears to be too straightforward and the whole process is reduced to initiating and continuing programs”.

Policy implementation stage is the main focus of this investigation and therefore it will be explored in greater detail due to its significance in understanding the research questions.

2.4 Policy Implementation Theory

Implementation has been defined as an “interaction between the setting of goals and actions geared to achieve them” (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973: xv). Additionally, “implementation literally means carrying out, accomplishing, fulfilling, producing or completing a given task” (Paudel, 2009: 36). The policy implementation strategies are broadly categorised into top-down and bottom-up. Arguments have been documented on the strength and weaknesses of these approaches. It is imperative to look at their tenets and make an informed judgement on their operationalization in promoting development in the world. There has also emerged the hybrid approach which is a compromise of the two contending schools of thoughts.

2.4.1 The Top-Down Approach

The authors who subscribe to the top-down school subscribe to the view that policy implementation commences with a central government decision. In this light, Parsons (1995: 463) posits that “these studies were based on a “black box model” of the policy process inspired by systems analysis”. Scholars who are aligned to this school of thought “assumed a direct causal link between policies and observed outcomes and tended to disregard the impact of implementers on policy delivery” (Marume et al., 2016: 87). This point suggests that they were in support of the unequivocal policies coming from the central actors in the higher offices. Pulzib and Treib (2007: 90) suggest that “top downers essentially followed a prescriptive approach that interpreted policy as input and implementation as output factors”. This leaves little or no room for objection as implementers are instructed to toe the line or get reprimanded.

The model “emphasizes formal steering of problems and factors, which are easy to manipulate and lead to centralization and control” (Paudel, 2009: 40). In this strand, “interest will be directed towards funding formulas, formal organization structures and authority

relationships between administrative units, regulations and administrative controls like budget, planning and evaluation requirements” (Elmore, 1978: 185). This veils the supreme idea that policy formulation is a separate and independent process which has a determinant value over what actors can or cannot do in the discharge of their roles in development work.

Criticism of the Top-Down Approach

It has been criticised for reducing implementation to be essentially an “administrative process and either ignoring the political aspects or trying to eliminate them” (Marume et al., 2016: 88). Top-down models have been criticised for “failing to recognize the political realities that account for policies with multiple goals, vague language and complex implementation structures” (May, 2003: 224). More so, they put “exclusive emphasis on statute framers as key actors” (Paudel, 2009: 40). This tends to underplay the significance of the policy implementers who are then expected to execute the policy without any personal input. The top-down models actually see local actors (street-level bureaucrats) as hindrances to successful policy execution.

According to Paudel (2009: 41) another criticism is that, top-downers “neglect the reality of policy modification or distortion at the hands of implementers”. As has been highlighted above, the street level bureaucrats can significantly alter what is eventually implemented. The model suggests that priorities are known beforehand and can be ranked prior to policy execution. It is argued that “the rational model is unachievable in practice and the result will always be implementation failures” (Elmore, 1979: 603-4). Similarly, Berman in Matland (1995: 149) argues that “choosing the top-down strategy can lead to resistance, disregard and pro forma compliance”. Therefore, it can be argued that there are some limitations on the applicability of the top-down perspective which is seen as rather dictatorial and impractical by critics. The next section looks at the bottom-up or integrationist approach to policy implementation which is an antithesis of the model discussed above.

2.4.2 The Bottom-up Strategy

This implementation strategy (bottom-up) argues that “discretion among street-level bureaucrats is inevitably so great that it is simply unrealistic to expect policy designers to be able to control the actions of these agents” (Paudel, 2009: 41). The model “directs attention at the formal and informal relationships constituting the policy subsystems involved in making

and implementing policies” (Howllet and Ramesh, 2003: 190). It starts by identifying a problem in the society. According to Paudel (2009: 41) the “focus is on individuals and their behaviour, and in this respect street-level bureaucrats are made central in the political process”. The street-level bureaucrats are closer to the policy beneficiaries and may have a better understanding of what they need.

Michael Lipsky propounded a theory of ‘street-level bureaucracy’ focusing on the “discretionary decisions that each field worker or ‘street-level bureaucrat’ makes in relation to individual citizens when they are delivering policies to them” (Paudel, 2009: 41). This arguably empowers them and “makes street level bureaucrats essential actors in implementing public policies. Indeed, Lipsky claims that street-level bureaucrats are the real policymakers” (Winter, 2003: 214). Although this appears to be an exaggeration of field workers’ power in policy implementation, it reveals the potential of street level bureaucrats in influencing development outcomes.

According to Hull and Hjern in Winter (2003: 214) a “relevant implementation structure for a specific policy at local, regional and national level is possible”. This implies that decentralisation is possible in policy implementation. The authors “suggest that central initiatives are poorly adapted to local conditions. Program success depends in large part on the skills of individuals in the local implementation structure, who can adapt the policy to local conditions”. This reveals that policy outcomes (mainly development projects) depend only to a limited degree on central actors because they are far removed from the reality on the ground as they spend most of their times in higher offices.

According to Berman in (Paudel, 2009: 42), “policy implementation takes place at two levels: macro and micro. At macro implementation level, centrally located actors devise a government program. At micro implementation level, local organizations react to macro-level plans, develop and implement their own programs”. It is suggested that elites and central-level actors can influence implementation through self-seeking means. This reflects the power dynamics at play in policy implementation but it can be deduced that development projects finally delivered to the general public are controlled by the implementers.

Criticism of the Bottom-up Approach

Whilst the approach has been applauded by its sympathisers, the bottom-up perspective “does not provide satisfactory solutions to the problems of public policy, as its rejection of the authority of policymakers is questionable in the light of standard democratic theory” (Paudel, 2009: 42). Again, it is important to note that street level bureaucrats do not have the mandate of the people. According to Matland (1995: 10), “policy control should be exercised by actors whose power derives from their accountability to sovereign voters through their elected representatives”. Since the authority of local service deliverers does not derive from this power base, they are rather incapacitated.

Service delivery is affected by several factors besides the central planning and top-down implementation strategies. According to Paudel (2009: 42) “people with very little education and poor social background are less likely to benefit from social services compared to more educated and wealthier people”. Indeed, this happens despite deliberate efforts to primarily target them. Winter (1990: 32) avers that “creaming is done not only by street-level bureaucrats but also by the self-selection of the target groups themselves”. This argument conflicts with the bottom-up perspective which tends to emphasise the role of field workers in shaping development outcomes.

Another factor that supports the importance of the top-down perspective is that the central actors determine the flow and direction of the process. It is noted that “while central actors do not act in detail or intervene in specific cases, they can structure the goals and strategies of those participants who are active” (Paudel, 2009: 43). This is so because “the institutional structure, the available resources and the access to an implementing arena may be determined centrally, and substantially affect policy outcomes” (Matland, 1995: 150). This reflects the indispensable role and capacity of the central actors in determining policy and its outcome.

The seemingly unending dispute between the two schools of thought has been solved by the emergence of scholars who propounded the idea that coalitions are more effective in

explaining what actually happens on the ground. This has seen the emergence of the hybrid school of thought which is a convergence theory and it is discussed below.

2.4.3 The Hybrid Approach

This is an approach which tries to bridge the gap between the two contentious and divergent views as has been highlighted above. The “hybrid theories” are credited for bringing “two important innovations to implementation theory. First, they tried to overcome the conceptual weaknesses of the polarized debate between bottom-up and top-down scholars” (Pulzib and Treib, 2007: 97). It is critical to note that the approach uses “empirical arguments about the proper conceptualization of the implementation processes and pragmatically blends the extreme arguments of both sides into models that embrace both central steering and local autonomy” (ibid, 97).

Secondly, they insinuated that implementation cannot be analysed without looking at the policy formulation process. Sabatier emphasised the “need to view implementation processes (or processes of policy change in general) not in isolation” (in Pulzib and Treib, 2007: 97). More so, his advocacy coalition framework “recognizes that extraneous factors such as external economic developments or influences from other policy fields have to be taken into account as well” (Pulzib and Treib, 2007: 97). It is this comprehensive approach which depicts the essence of the holistic approach in understanding public policy.

According to Paudel, (2009: 43) policy making does not take place in a vacuum. It is the result of a “bargaining process among actors, who frequently have diverse and even opposing preferences and interests”. It is imperative to note that “the bargaining power of those actors differs, derived from a variety of sources such as the existing formal rules, informal norms, their ability to represent and mobilize other groups in society, or their control over resources” (Paudel, ibid). Therefore, both central actors and field officers are critical in complementing each other for successful policy execution that spearheads community development.

Successful implementation is determined by the quality and quantity of resources at the disposal of the government, as has already been alluded to. Indeed, Paudel (2009: 44) avers that “governments must assess what their resources are and how they can mobilize available resources to promote successful implementation. Decision makers must evaluate political resources while public managers attend to bureaucratic resources”. This division of roles and

specialisation is aimed at improving efficiency. According to Turner and Hulme (1997: 79) this leads to a “more realistic approach to policy where the question of implementation feasibility assumes major importance. Failure can be better anticipated, modifications can be better judged, and resources can be more efficiently and effectively allocated”. This reinforces the complementary role played by both street level bureaucrats and central actors in policy implementation, hence giving rise to the hybrid approach. The next section looks at some of the challenges faced in implementing public policies aimed at promoting development.

2.4.4 Challenges to Policy Implementation

It is noted that decision makers are required to deal with some challenges in an attempt to implement public policies. The challenges affect service delivery and impact negatively on solving the challenges bedevilling communities. These challenges have been discussed by public policy scholars over the years. Edwards and Sharkansky (1978: 295-321) have elaborated on “communication (transmission, clarity and consistency), resources (staff, information and authority) as well as disposition of implementers (bureaucratic politics, incentives and bypassing channels)” as key challenges.

It is emphasised that for effective policy execution, there is need for clear communication of what is to be done. Indeed, Cloete (1982: 8) argues that “laws, proclamations, regulations, official guidelines and other official documents should be so carefully worded that political office-bearers, public officials and lay members of the public can see at a glance what actions are envisaged”. This view is supported by Marume and colleagues (2016), who said that official documents should be precisely written to enable political office bearer and public officials “to quantify and qualify information to the extent that decisions made and actions taken are to be accountable in accordance with the prescriptions or the factual data” (ibid). In reality, policies have remained largely incomprehensible both for the implementers and target beneficiaries. This impedes the development of communities and problems continue to exist despite the efforts to solve them through policies.

It is also indicated that resources put a major restraint on effective policy formulation and policy implementation. According to Edwards and Sharkansky (in Marume et al., 2016: 90) “no matter how clear the implementation orders are, if the personnel responsible for carrying

out policies lack resources to do an effective job, policy makers will be disappointed in the results". This is reinforced by the conclusion made by Marume that policies cannot be declared as being effective in themselves, nor can they be implemented by their mere statement, that is, they are not self-executing, without staff, access to information, and authority (2016: 90). Limited resources have made the implementation of progressive policies very difficult especially in the developing countries (Kaboyakgosi and Morata, 2013: 314). This has led to the crafting of good policies on paper with little practical projects to show for the policies.

Implementation is also affected by the quality of implementers. There is a tendency to underplay the role of personnel responsible for implementation. Cheminais, Bayat, Waldt and Fox (in Marume et al., 2016: 91) maintain that "the availability of finances, physical resources, infrastructure, equipment, buildings, technology and information is of no consequences without a well-trained, efficient and effective workforce to provide the relevant service to clients". This is particularly so in public service organisations where the rendering of public goods and services to the community or society at large takes place in the context of scarce resources and competing demands. Thus, all the factors have to be considered if one has to realise effective policy implementation which promotes sustainable development.

According to Makinde (2005: 66) the environment is critical and as such "the policy maker must be able to consider the environment, social, economic, political and cultural, in which he is formulating his policies if he is to avoid implementation gaps". This implies that effective policy should be preceded by an informed consultation process and research. Makinde further argues that "inadequate definition of goals makes a policy to lack clarity, internal consistency and compatibility with other policy goals with the result that the successful implementation of such a policy becomes problematic". This essentially represents a challenge in communication and it generates an implementation gap.

That policy implementation determines socio-economic development of a nation has been alluded to by preceding researchers. According to Chamie and Mihyo (in Marume et al., 2016: 92) many scientists, academics and practitioners maintain that Africa is in a phase of continuous changes to try to solve many of its social, political, and economic problems. It also

seeks to develop capacities and align itself with global management and administrative performance standards.

The theories discussed above critically help this investigation on policy implementation as they analyse the policy implementation matrix. It is apparent that field officers interact directly with intended beneficiaries of the empowerment policy. Yet, the top-down approach reveals that they hardly influence what they eventually implement in the communities. On the other hand, the bottom-up approach suggests that policy implementers have the capacity to alter the programmes during implementation. Therefore, using these implementation theories enhances the understanding of what transpires on the practical policy execution stage in the current context under investigation. This also enables the researcher to make an informed evaluation of what ought to be done to improve policy implementation in the obtaining circumstances.

2.4.5 Principal actors in public policy making, transfer and implementation.

Governments, think tanks, NGOs and civil society groups are the principal actors in the policy process. The government influences policy formulation by “altering the portfolio of ministries, creating new ones or establishing or abolishing agencies” (Jann and Wegrich, 2007: 49). Authority wielded by the state enables it to direct the process of policy formulation. However, successful policy execution demands that actors work together sharing ideas and resources as coalitions. According to Muhammad (2014: 68) “key implementers should formulate network structures driving joint implementation of public policies”.

Think tanks are seen as critical in the formulation of neoliberal policies (Brans, Geva-May and Howlett, 2017: 337). According to Stones they “are regarded as catalysts fostering the exchange and transfer of policy ideas, solutions, and problem perceptions between governments and beyond” (in Jann and Wegrich, 2007: 51). They influence what is eventually implemented through lobbying the government or other actors to adopt their blue-prints and recommendations.

The transfer of knowledge and policy ideas across boundaries is evident. Dolowitz and Marsh (1996: 345) “identified six types of actors that might conceivably engage in transfer activities: ‘elected officials; political parties; bureaucrats/civil servants; pressure groups; policy

entrepreneurs/experts; and supra-national institutions". Besides, it is clear that "sub-national institutions such as regional and local governments were also identified as important transfer agents" (Benson and Jordan, 2011: 369). The policy outcomes brought about by these processes have a bearing on the development outcomes.

According to Benson and Jordan (2011: 370) "knowledge is more widely spread beyond the boundaries of (central) governments and experts and international institutions play an increasingly visible role in communicating knowledge within the public debate on political issues". Therefore, many actors are seen in the policy process although the state continues to dominate the process in many parts of the world.

The next section highlights the idea of intended beneficiaries of public policies. It is claimed that any democratic government works "towards ameliorating the plight of the society it represents" (Dye, 1978: 6). It therefore has to take measures to "improve the lives of its citizens" (Hanekom, Rowland and Bain, 1996: 25). This is done through policy implementation aimed at meeting the development needs of the general public or specific interest groups. Indeed, if the government has "well-defined policies pertaining to each and every aspect of its intended actions, and knows the resources to be used and the role-players in policy-making" (Hanekom et al., 1996, *ibid*) real development is made possible.

2.5 Actors and Beneficiaries of public policies

The beneficiaries of public policy are understood to be determined by the nature of policy outcomes. Optimal public policy maximizes the aggregate benefits among the general population. It is an ideal although not necessarily a practical arrangement. There is need to involve intended beneficiaries in both formulation and implementation of policies. The source of the policy is seen as critical in appealing to the intended beneficiaries. According to Makinde (2005: 65) "an implementation gap can arise from the policy itself when such a policy emanates from government rather than from the target groups".

It is upheld that various actors interact in the development management and policy implementation aimed at improving the livelihoods of the people. Basically, it is the NGOs and government that play an active role in development. Silverman (in Brinkerhoff, 2004: 151)

avers that parallels exist in the institutional administration of development. The coordination of various actors is therefore imperative for maximum benefits to accrue in the society.

Policies by the government acting alone have had little impact on the poor across the world. Indeed, poor people's lives have remained unchanged by government interventions. This is compounded by the fact that "interactions with state representatives are marred by rudeness, humiliation, harassment, and stonewalling" (Narayan, 1999: 7). This emphasises the need for coalitions in implementing policies aimed at promoting development. Indeed, "the creation of partnerships is seen as a way of making more efficient use of scarce resources, increasing institutional sustainability and improving beneficiary participation" (Lewis, 2007: 84).

In addition to the above, it is ideal to forge partnerships when implementing public policies because "creating links between government agencies and NGOs may strengthen transparency in administration and challenge prevailing top-down institutional culture" (Lewis, 2007: 84). NGOs have continued to fill the gap left by the state encouraging and facilitating the participation of the poverty stricken individuals and groups (Lewis, 2007: 85). It is maintained that NGOs can "reach strata of the population which have hitherto been left untouched or bypassed by public service delivery systems" (Lewis, 2007: 85). Therefore, partnerships are critical in moulding positive development outcomes in the communities especially in situations where the government is overburdened to support the underprivileged.

It is also believed that government decision making is influenced by the interests of elites (Lewis, *ibid*). The underprivileged rarely determine the outcome of development policies. It is the grassroots organisations that can represent the interests of the poor who are side-lined by the elite-influenced government. Such influence underscores the need to adopt a hybrid approach in policy implementation rather than the common top-down approach.

The preceding argument in support of NGOs as effective development managers and policy implementers has been vehemently rejected by other critics. Lewis (2007: 88) says that "one of the most hard-hitting critiques of NGOs centres on the problem of accountability". It is

advanced that NGOs are usually answerable to their financiers and not to the beneficiaries of their projects.

2.5.1 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

In developing countries, there is limited participation of the ordinary people in formulation and implementation of policies. According to Paudel (2009: 49) “participation in policy processes is not so pronounced and the channels for participation are less well established in developing countries”. This is further complicated by the state structures that are relatively powerful vis-à-vis their societies. It is given that poor policy evaluation in developing countries is mainly a result of institutional flaws in political systems (Paudel, 2009: 49).

Central actors dominate the policy processes from selecting sets of options to implementing the various policies. The lower level citizens are rarely considered thereby giving rise to top-down policies (Jain, 1992: 2; Mohair, 1992: 257). Despite their limited capacity and resources, it is noted that the underdeveloped states continue to pursue exclusive strategies in policy implementation.

Lack of commitment and weak coordination among the policy implementers affects the policy effectiveness in developing countries. Disunity weakens the drive to promote development within communities as policy actors pursue selfish agendas. Paudel emphasises that “policy effectiveness can be explained by whether and how well institutions are performing these functions”. Without total commitment, strong coordination and self-less cooperation, the developing countries are unlikely to implement effective and positive policies that bring about socio-economic transformation.

It is evident that policies require a lot of commitment as well as coordination and cooperation if development is to be realised (Denstad, 2009: 19). It is however difficult to consistently follow agreed policies due to changes that are brought about by the environmental factors in developing countries. At times the policy formulators are forced by unforeseen circumstances to change the course of action resulting in substantive changes. Indeed, the socio-economic conditions are not permanent. The political circumstances also alter time and again giving rise to new demands in the society.

2.5.2 Policy, environment and development outcomes

Resources in developing countries are in short supply thereby limiting the capacity of government to implement sound policies. Besides, there is poor project concept selection and failure to operate and maintain assets effectively. Checks and balances are either non-existent or dysfunctional in many countries (Shiferaw and Klakegg, 2012). This lack of commitment and shortage of resources undermine effective scrutiny on the project relevancy in addressing the needs of the public. More so, absence of guidelines to ensure smooth implementation of public investment projects creates implementation gaps. According to Shiferaw and Klakegg, “a failure to map public needs and priorities; a failure to analyse the relationship between policies and projects; and a failure to analyse various levels of planning processes” (2012: 19) are the common outcomes. With such a dysfunctional system, it will be unrealistic to assume that policies will yield any development outcomes.

The efficacy of policy implementation is premised on the existence of accountability and transparency among policy actors. They also need to be responsive to the needs of the communities. Rule of law and a clear vision have also been singled out in many studies as critical enablers of sound policy implementation and development. The traits have become the core of development that is sustainable and equitable. It is worrying to note that most developing countries are devoid of these principles. Rather, corruption, lack of transparency and dictatorship are common.

Leadership challenges and poor governance account “for persistent failure in public policy implementation and development irrespective of the good administrative/management practices adopted” (Muhammad, 2014: 66). It is in light of this argument that “effective public leadership and good public governance are regarded as preconditions for proper public policy implementation and imperatives for accelerated and sustained development” (Muhammad, 2014: 66). It is also widely upheld that leadership crises is the source of developmental challenges in the world.

2.5.3 IMPORTANCE OF YOUTH IN DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

At the global level, youth are highly recognised as an important category. It is imperative that “youth are regarded as the greatest assets that any nation can have. They are seen as the centre of reconstruction and development” (Oduwole, 2015: 30). This emphasises the

centrality of youth as a category in the population. According to the United Nations Population Fund close to 85 percent of youth live in developing countries (UNFPA, 2014). It is also claimed that “this figure is projected to increase to 89 percent by 2025” (ibid). Neglecting youth in the policy development will be regressive and therefore undermines any prospects for positive development in the world. Freire (2005) argues that incorporating young people’s experiences into development of policies and programmes through effective participatory frameworks is necessary for their empowerment.

In a similar study pointing to the need to give youth an important space in policy considerations, Dalon and Rajak (2016: 514) have lamented the level of youth exclusion. The authors argue that the “rate of youth unemployment across Africa on average is twice that of the adult population”. Meanwhile, strategies to address youth challenges have largely failed. Brempong and Kimenyi (2013: 2) lament that “weak coordination amongst government agencies, donors, and regional organisations among others is to blame”. It is argued that if the trend continues, there is little likelihood that sustainable development will be realised.

The indispensable role of youth is also captured by Oseifuah (2010: 4) who quotes the South African statesman Nelson Mandela’s speech which he made in 1999. It is given that Mandela said “youth are valued possessions of the nation. Without them, there can be no reconstruction and development programme”. It is further highlighted that without them, “there is no future as their needs are immense and urgent”. Similarly, Calves and Schoumaker (2004: 1) posit that a “shortage of employment opportunities postpones marriage and access to housing, and lengthen the period during which young people remain economically dependent on elders”. Such dependency will negatively affect the human development in the world. Thus, pro-poor and youth inclined policies are critical in transforming the youth lives.

According to Perezniето and Harding (2013: 1) “investing in young people can generate significant social and economic returns, making it an effective use of technical and financial development assistance”. They suggest that changes brought about by “interventions to improve the lives of young people in one area can ripple out from the local to the global level” (ibid). Such an investment has the potential to transform the lives of both the youth and the community at large.

Lakin and Mahoney (2006: 4) suggest that “youth is a stage of increased vulnerability as well as a time of maximal opportunity wherein adolescents have a chance to begin to develop a positive self-identity and orientation towards others”. This signifies the essence of developing and implementing pro-youth policies. Similarly, Singh and Kahlon (2016: 2) suggest that youth have a great role to play in bringing about qualitative change in a tradition bound society. Against such a background, it is really pertinent to develop the youth segment of the society and prepare them for the leadership role they would assume in future.

Youth mainstreaming is a pillar of the agenda to promote youth empowerment currently spearheaded by the policy makers globally (UN, 2017: 3). Mainstreaming is seen as a “strategy for making youth concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes. This is done in all political, economic and social spheres so that youth benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated” (Commonwealth Youth Foundation; UN: 2017: 3). These strategies represent a step in the right direction to eradicate poverty.

It is argued that young people are critical in the drive to reduce poverty levels. This is so because of “their share in the population of developing countries (youth bulge) and the enormous economic potential (youth dividend) that can be realised through their full employment in the workforce” (Pereznieto and Harding, 2013: 5). A deliberate policy to enhance the capacity of the youth as well as ensuring their employment is necessary. Indeed, “gainfully employed young citizens are more likely to demand good governance and accumulate the capacities necessary to foster social cohesion” (Idris, 2016: 6). These features are critical elements in the development agenda where efficient and sustainable existence is guaranteed.

In another study, Brixiova, Ncube and Bicaba (2014: 2) said “with tight fiscal conditions in the aftermath of the global financial crisis, new jobs in the region are unlikely to be generated by the public sector”. This argument provides a fertile ground for the entrepreneurship ventures among the youth. Essentially, this gives the 21st century youth an opportunity to invest in

some developmental initiatives. However, a myriad of challenges encountered in many countries continues to work against the realisation of youth empowerment.

Besides, it is also noted that ensuring that “youth are well integrated into society and have opportunities to earn a living is the bedrock of building peace and resilience” (Fraser and Hilker, 2012: 16). Young people constitute the majority and possess critical skills that enable them to be creative and explore new avenues of survival. This is the rationale of co-opting youth in institutions that seek to promote development. Pereznieto and Harding (2013: 9) argued that countries need to “take advantage of the youth dividend to develop leadership skills and social cohesion”. Indeed, youth are more likely to embrace the technological advances compared with their adult counterparts. The next section of the study looks at the self-help projects as strategies used to deal with youth unemployment and promote socio-economic emancipation amongst the youth.

2.5.4 Strategies for change: the Self-help projects

The self-help projects are an important feature across the globe but there is evidence that they are more common in the developing world (Chigunta, 2001: 35). In Africa, numerous examples of self-help projects have been documented (Chigunta, 2001; Mkandawire, 2001). People, including the youth rely on self-help projects “to meet their goals that include not only economic but social and environmental objectives” (Bibby and Shaw, 2005: 15). These include overcoming poverty, securing productive employment and encouraging social integration (Bibby and Shaw, 2005). These findings are at variance with the mass exodus of rural youth who are restless and look for instant rewards in the cash economy. These youth naturally migrate to the towns and sometimes to neighbouring countries looking for greener pastures.

A study in Ghana has revealed that self-help initiatives are heterogeneous. At one end of the spectrum, informal sector activities include viable and thriving small scale industries which appear to have growth potential. At the other end, there are individuals such as hawkers and street vendors whose income merely reaches the subsistence level and whose prospects for growth seem minimal (Dijk and Rabellotti, 1997: 44). Although the two researchers focussed on the urban set up, their findings are critical in shedding light on the nature of the self-help

informal sector in Africa. Another important point that the two authors raise is the fact that increased competition and diminishing demand can work against entrepreneurs. Hence, researching on a new context with a different environment is very important in generating evidence to complement earlier researches that have been done before.

Entrepreneurs vary from person to person and the poor entrepreneurs fare less successfully compared to their colleagues. Most of the poor entrepreneurs are involved in micro-enterprises that operate from temporary structures and informal settings (Dijk and Rabellotti, 1997: 46). The characterisation above is much in keeping with what obtains in the rural set up although the rural areas especially in Zimbabwe have much permanent infrastructure. Again it is noted that the level of technology they apply is generally low and, very often, traditional. This however varies from project to project as different localities are exposed to different partners as well as opportunities. Such revelations are critical in the current research as they point out the limitations of a generalised perspective on youth.

2.5.5 Contributions of self-help projects among the youth

Researchers have given contrasting views on the potential benefits of self-help entrepreneurial activities undertaken in rural areas. Some investigations concluded that youth engagements are necessity driven and not out of choice, hence they are survivalist projects which are unsustainable (Chigunta, 2005). On the other hand is the argument that youth self-help projects are an engine of economic growth in many African contexts (Fafchamps 2000: 20). This research sought to establish the effectiveness of policy implementation in promoting youth socio-economic empowerment through self-help projects.

A study in Uganda on the potential benefits of engaging in entrepreneurial activities revealed that women tend to benefit. According to Bandiera, Buehren and Burgess (2014: 5) “improvements in income generating activities among girls might reduce teen pregnancy and early marriage”. They examined the effectiveness of a program that equipped young girls with entrepreneurial skills as well as guidance and counselling. Skills were imparted to enhance the socio-economic empowerment of the female youth in the country. Informed choices on sex, reproduction and marriage were reported.

In a study in Kenya, Ngugi and Bwisa (2013: 4) observed that the one village one product (OVOP) self-help initiative “can be used as a vehicle to encourage creativity, innovation and competition in the SME sector by embracing value addition, new technology and marketing designs”. The youth cohort of the population is seen as adaptive in implementing innovative and creative self-help projects. This raises income and reduces illness among the young generation. These findings are critical in pointing towards the potential of youth self-help projects undertaken by the youth in an attempt to empower themselves.

Elsewhere, Tamuno and Iroh (2012: 58) have also shared similar sentiments with regard to the role of self-help initiatives. According to Tamuno (2009: 162) results of “studies in the execution of self-help projects in the River State of Nigeria show that the local people can on their own volition initiate and execute programmes aimed at checking the problem of rural backwardness”. In this study understanding the potential of policy supported self-help projects among the rural youth is imperative.

According to Gwiza and Hamauswa (2015: 5) evidence shows that Zimbabwe is awash with individuals and SMEs who have a noticeable spirit of innovation. Khalil and Olafsen (2010: 1), note that, business incubation is important in that it promotes innovation. They noted that, “innovation in particular triggers a virtuous development circle that unleashes human ingenuity to develop and deliver products and services that are needed by the population and increase enterprise competitiveness”. For an entrepreneurship spirit to grow, the need for a favourable environment is quite germane. This research explored the rural setup and sought to understand whether it is suitable for the sustainable execution of self-help projects.

Youth are socially empowered when they engage in self-help entrepreneurship projects. According to White and Kenyon in Chigunta (2005: 13) “social and cultural identity is promoted through youth enterprises, as there is a stronger sense of community where young women and men are valued and better connected to society”. The change from being marginalised to become emancipated is facilitated by the fact that self-help projects significantly raise the self-esteem of the individual youth thereby improving their self-confidence and social empowerment.

2.5.6 Challenges in implementing self-help projects aimed at empowering the youth

Several challenges have been noted by previous researchers looking at the execution of self-help projects. The documented challenges relate to lack of will and lack of capacity by the policy makers. According to Bennel (2000: 62) “ministries of Youth usually have very limited personnel and other resources that can be devoted to supporting youth livelihoods. In many respects, they are Cinderella ministries”. With the limited budgets in many developing countries, leaders usually choose to sacrifice the ministries that are seen as less significant and less strategic. This affects the implementation of self-help projects that are mostly dependent on government policy.

Whilst the state is blamed for undermining youth self-help projects because of lack of funding, the youth are not exonerated. It is alleged that they lack interest in entrepreneurship. Besides, it is further claimed that some youth are illiterate and unemployable (Bennel, 2010: 64). According to Mensch and colleagues (1998: 78) “female youth are silent and lack confidence, but generally, are the most oppressed”. This is a consequence of absence of a deliberate policy that supports them to confront the challenges they face in an attempt to implement self-help projects.

Besides, it is argued that “decades of poor education has inhibited the development of entrepreneurial and social skills and of social networks that are important in gaining confidence for entrepreneurship” (Kingdon and Knight, 2005: 26). This is evidenced by what is currently obtaining in South Africa where “most Blacks prefer working for somebody to taking the risk to start their own business” (Kalitanyi and Visser, 2010: 367). Many people prefer to get employed or work for someone rather than initiate their own enterprises. This is believed to be due to the fact that they were socialised to yearn for a formal job.

There are suggestions that rural youth are excluded and exploited by the elders. This translates into powerlessness as they fail to access and control assets. The youth have little input in decisions made in their communities. According to Bennel (2000: 78) “the subordinate position of youth has been compounded by the ‘traditional welfare approach’, where youth are viewed as presenting ‘problems’, which need to be solved through the

intervention of older people”. This has resulted in top-down policy implementation strategies that are devoid of any input by the intended beneficiaries.

Entrepreneurs are blamed for lack of vision and indiscipline in their self-help projects. It is pointed that young people face challenges in making concrete decisions pertaining to their projects. According to Blattman, Fiala and Martinez (2011: 11-12) “entrepreneurs are not always forward-looking, time-consistent, and disciplined decision-makers”. Due to their inconsistency and restless behaviour, youth tend to initiate and abandon projects before they are mature. According to Fafchamps (2011) there is evidence of lack of self-control among youth implementing projects in Ghana.

In addition to the above, youth engaging in self-help projects usually operate survivalist projects. Onyuma and Shem (2005: 206) reveal that “the informal sector’s vision is one of survival, low productivity and very little value-added. In other words, it represents an inescapable evil when it comes to real economic growth”. Expectations that it is the informal sector that will lead to economic growth in poor countries are affected by the nature in which its businesses are conducted. Environmental factors are being blamed for the unsuccessful implementation of self-help projects.

Policy environment challenges have been blamed for the failure of self-help initiatives in East Africa. According to ILO (2012: 4) “weak regulatory frameworks to support enterprise growth including weak infrastructure, complicated and expensive licensing requirements, inadequate access to business advice and support services were blamed for the lack of youth-led micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in Kenya, Zambia and Tanzania”. This evidence is critical in shedding light on the threats to self-help projects which will stifle the attempts to socially and economically empower the youth in rural Zimbabwe.

According to Kristiansen (2003: 22), the other key challenge is the dominance of copyists rather than innovative businesses. Arguably this leads to a saturation of markets with certain products and this lowers demand and prices thereby reducing profits. These revelations are critical in the understanding of the limitations faced by the youth in rural Zimbabwe whose

quest for empowerment through engaging in self-help projects is under scrutiny in the current research.

2.5.7 The gender dimension of youth self-help projects and empowerment

Female and male youth experience their empowerment differently. According to Chatter (2016: 33) failure to disaggregate by gender in such global goals of poverty leads to fallacy of aggregation, as the idea of “average household consumption” does not show how individuals access and control their income (Vandemoortele, 2002: 9). This gives the impetus to look at the gender dimension of self-help projects especially in rural areas where the ideas of gender equality and equity are yet to cascade into the societal values.

Gender exploitative relations in the broader society are also reflected in the self-help projects. This is seen in the nature of activities as well as the time spend by female youth in their projects. It is also claimed that female youth engage in less remunerating activities as compared to their male counterparts. It is observed that “gender stratifies entrepreneurial activity along all points of the continuum, including both survival and accumulation ends” (Kabeer, 2012: 25). Previous studies in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Tanzania have also shown that activities such as brewing beer, gardening, hairdressing and poultry production are feminine and less rewarding. Male youth are concentrated in welding, building and carpentry. The masculine projects are said to be more rewarding “with an annual income that is at least seven times higher than that earned by women” (Scott in Kabeer, 2012: 2). Whilst these studies were not particularly focussing on youth, they capture with unrelenting accuracy the gender dimension of enterprises around Africa.

Policies in Africa have been criticised for ignoring the gender differences. According to Bennel (2007: 6-7) “a common misconception of youth policy has been that boys and girls are a homogeneous group”. The evidence on the ground shows that female and male youth often have conflicting interests. Female youth are mostly subordinated to their male counterparts or other elder women. Bennel laments that “rural adolescent girls are virtually trapped within the domestic sphere in many countries” (2007: 6). This domestication of female youth affects their potential to implement lucrative self-help projects. It is concluded that males tend to be

more visible in highly rewarding activities (Bennel, 2007). This evidence is informative on the current study on policy implementation and youth self-help projects in rural Zimbabwe.

2.6 The Interface between Policy and Development

This study seeks to understand the link between policy and development. Lynam (2006: 7) avers that “policy is a statement of values, aims and objectives that a government wishes to realise, together with strategies and instruments for achieving them”. On the other hand, the author says “public policy is commonly understood as the combination of basic decisions, laws, regulatory measures, commitments, courses of action and funding priorities that are made, in the ‘public’s’ name, by those who hold or affect government positions of authority” (Lynam, 2006: 7). These instruments determine the course of development in the country. Muhammad (2014: 68) concurs by saying that the design and implementation of public policies determines how successful countries progress towards prosperity.

Linking public policy and development is critical as it enables the policy actors to craft and implement relevant policies that have a bearing on the well-being of the people. Indeed, “through the decades, critics challenged mainstream strategies for neglecting attention to what should be the ethical motivation for development, namely to improve human lives” (Fukuda-Parr, 2013: 5). The emergence of development with a human face paradigm brought about issues such as well-being into prominence. It is this understanding that has necessitated research on the contribution that can be made by policy actors in promoting development in the 21st century.

The nexus between power and poverty has been rather hazy. According to Lynam (2006: 7) “poverty has much to do with who has access to power, who influences decisions and who has the resources and skills to lobby successfully and who does not”. This suggests that power wielded by individuals determines their wellbeing. That is why some say the powerful cannot be poor. Therefore, “it is possible to define poverty as a group’s lack of influence over the decisions that affect it” (Lynam, 2006: 7). If the powerful in the society can influence the policy outcomes in their own interests without any regard for the poor, there is little chance that socio-economic transformation can be attained.

The fact that policies are designed as prescriptions to solve some ailments emphasise the nexus between policy and development. Indeed, “policy can be designed for a range of

reasons, for example, to give substance to a vision, to introduce reform and to deliver better quality services” (Lynam, 2006: 13). It is advanced that “policy making usually begins when people perceive that a problem exists” (Anderson, 2003: 2). A problem can receive public attention through “the media, politicians, organisations and interest groups in civil society, or the institutions of government” (Lynam, 2006: 13). If the problem identified is solved through policy implementation, development is realised as poverty is eradicated.

According to Segone (2008: 27) “monitoring, reviewing and evaluating policy and its implementation is crucial in ensuring that the outcomes are consistent with those intended by the policy makers”. It is further suggested that reviews help in maintaining the centrality of public issues as well as raising new public concerns. Lynam posits that “policy reviews and evaluations are intended to provide lessons for an improvement in the implementation process and to influence new policy formation” (2006: 15). This argument presents the centrality of monitoring in the policy cycle. Lynam further highlights that “the context framing a particular policy initiative can alter dramatically during the period of implementation and a review can point to the need to refocus objectives to produce better results”. This understanding reveals the instrumental value of policies in shaping development outcomes where higher-level targets and expectations are set.

Some critics believe that “the ability of governments to effectively implement the policies they have chosen, may not, by itself, be sufficient for successful development, if standards of governance are poor” (Asian Development Bank, 2005: 3). The Bank advances that countries need to improve governance and development management. This reinforces the conviction by the multilateral institution in promoting good governance that ensures positive development through policy implementation (Asian Development Bank, 2005: 4).

2.6.1 Public policy and development: the synergy

It is suggested that public officers constantly strive to attain the best circumstances for humanity. These attempts are made through policy formulation and implementation aiming to eradicate such socio-economic ills like poverty. Poverty is understood as “a state of economic, social and psychological deprivation occurring among people or countries lacking sufficient ownership, control or access to resources to maintain minimal acceptable standards of living” (UNDP, 2002: 10). According to Paudel (2009: 49) “on one hand, low level of

economic development leads to political instability and, on the other hand, political instability worsens poverty". Therefore, stabilisation of both is imperative if successful policies promoting development are to become a reality.

If policies are effectively implemented there is a possibility that poverty reduction becomes a reality in developing countries which need both economic development and political stability (Paudel, 2009: 49). There is a rationale of implementing deliberate policies aimed at lessening the burden on the poor countries. Redistributing available economic resources will foster economic growth and development. This will be guaranteed through effective policy formulation and implementation as has been discussed above.

The continued political uncertainty in most developing countries affects policy consistency and coordination. Indeed, policy making and implementation is dealt a major blow by the unstable and conflicting environment of coups (military threats), civil wars (domestic violence) and absence of rule of law. Caiden and Wildavsky in Nagel and Lazin (1999: 37-38) argued that "severely limited resources, weak political institutions and limited capacities for policy making and program implementation result in political uncertainties". This reveals that good governance and political order are a pre-requisite for development to take place.

2.7 Conclusion

The chapter looked at various definitions of development, theories and trends of development as well as development management. Having discussed the main theories of development, the chapter also looked at the nexus between development and public policy. This was done to show how policies influence development outcomes. This chapter also looked at the concept of public policy as understood by various theorists and practitioners. Policy analysis, policy phases as well as various actors in the public policy realm were also discussed bringing out various perspectives on the topic. An attempt to illustrate the policy formulation and subsequent implementation has been made. The Chapter showed that the concepts of policy and development are linked contributing to an understanding of the relevance of youth empowerment. Understanding how development is influenced by policy implementation helps to clarify why failure to implement pro-poor and youth driven policies has weakened the drive to empower youth. It is made clear that the classical top-down approach has resulted in policies that undermine the potential of youth to initiate their own

development as well as that of the community. Indeed, youth have become victims of centrally planned and insensitive government programmes that have failed to positively transform them socially and economically. The next chapter looks at the theoretical framework of the study, youth development, empowerment and strategies for change.

CHAPTER 3: EXAMINING YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN ZIMBABWE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 provided an overview of the term development, and sought to describe the link between public policy and development. The chapter further examined the importance of implementation in the achievement of development objectives. This chapter describes the theoretical framework used for the study and its rationale. A theoretical framework is a “structure that guides research by relying on a formal theory...constructed by using an established, coherent explanation of certain phenomena and relationships” (Eisenhart, 1991: 205). The Critical Social Theory of Empowerment and the Sustainable Livelihood Approach provide the basis for the empirical inquiry of this study. The Critical Youth Empowerment Framework was chosen as it “was designed to be used as a frame of reference for creating opportunities for youth empowerment” (Jennings, Parra-Medina, Hilfinger Messias, and McLoughlin 2006). This was a key aim for the study whose focus is on socio-economic empowerment. The Sustainable Livelihood Approach assisted with the assessment of the policy influence on youth projects, their establishment, operation and benefits on the youth. The Chapter further examines the context for youth empowerment through self-help projects in Zimbabwe using the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. The Chapter concludes that the theory enhances the understanding of policy implementation aimed at empowering the youth.

3.2 THE CRITICAL SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT THEORY

3.2.1 Describing the Theory

This theory is popularly known as the critical youth empowerment theory and was propounded by Jennings, Parra-Medina, Hilfinger Messias, and McLoughlin. It “encompasses those processes and contexts through which youth engage in actions that create change in organizational, institutional, and societal policies, structures, values, norms, and images” (Jennings et al., 2006: 40). The theory therefore talks about active participation among the youth cohort of the population. It is a theory that comprehensively looks at the possible avenues the youth can pursue as individuals and as groups to realise empowerment. It has refined and expanded the earlier conceptual models of youth empowerment and youth development already in existence such as the Adolescent Empowerment Cycle, Youth

Development and Empowerment Programme Model, the Transactional Partnering Model and the Empowerment Education Model. Its principal aim is “to support and foster youth contributions to positive community development and socio-political change, resulting in youth who are critical citizens, actively participating in the day-to-day building of stronger, more equitable communities” (Jennings and Green, in Jennings et al., 2006: 40).

3.2.2 Key Elements of the Theory

The theory has six critical elements that are used to evaluate empowerment amongst the youth. According to Jennings et al., (2006: 41), these elements include “a welcoming and safe environment, meaningful participation and engagement, equitable power sharing between youth and adults, engagement in critical reflection on personal and socio-political processes, participation in socio-political processes to effect change and integrated individual and community level empowerment”.

- **A Welcoming and Safe Environment**

It is suggested that youth need an environment that is safe and welcoming in order to allow them to act freely (Jennings et al., 2006: 41). Such an environment is seen as conducive in nurturing creativity amongst the youth. In this study, creativity is understood in the light of self-help projects that the youth engage in. The environment is shaped by the policy framework in Zimbabwe, therefore, the theory enables one to explore the compatibility of the policy in its quest to promote youth socio-economic empowerment. This element also implies that youth are actively involved in making decisions and expressing themselves freely without fear of retribution. Additionally, the environment is understood to promote active learning amongst the youth who may experience both success and failure.

- **Meaningful participation and engagement**

In terms of meaningful participation and engagement, it is noted that the youth need to be given an opportunity to exercise some latitude in implementing their projects. It is noted that the youth need to “engage in activities relevant to their own lives, ones that excite and challenge them” (Heath in Jennings et al., 2006: 43). It is further argued that, the youth activities “need to promote underlying competence and intrinsic motivations of youth so that they can test and master their own interests, develop skills, and gain confidence” (Kim in

Jennings, 2006: 43). This element also implies that the youth need to engage in their activities for a longer period for them to fully develop their skills. According to Chinman (in Jennings et al., 2006), this also enhances “opportunities to develop a positive self-identity, increased sense of self-worth, and enhanced self-efficacy”. The proponents of critical youth empowerment further posit that Critical Youth Empowerment emphasizes “the need for authentic, youth-determined activities that challenge youth to engage in new roles and develop new skills and insights while also engaging in critical reflection and action” (Jennings et al., 2006: 44).

- **Equitable power-sharing between youth and adults**

The element of equitable power sharing between the youth and adults is also pertinent in this theory. The activities engaged in by the youth, should be determined and directed by them, with some level of support and guidance from the adults. However, it is emphasised that their “role is to create and maintain a balance of providing support without domination” (Jennings et al., 2006: 45). This suggests that there is need for collaboration between the youth and the adults but the relationship should not be exploitative.

- **Engagement in critical reflection on interpersonal and socio-political processes**

In addition to the above, critical youth empowerment also emphasises the need for critical reflection. It is noted that “critical reflection is required to help youth come to see and understand the very structures, processes, social values and practices that they seek to alter” (Jennings et al., 2006: 47). This tenet of the theory is in sync with the idea of social emancipation that, the youth require to be able to transform the policy environment that regulates their self-help projects. According to Freire (in Jennings et al., 2006: 47), “if people are not critically aware of the visible and invisible structures and processes that make up social institutions and practices, nor of their own role and actions within these institutions and practices, there is little room for empowerment”.

- **Participation in socio-political processes to effect change**

It is also imperative to note that the theory advances the view that “youth are not truly empowered if they do not have the capacity to address the structures, processes, social values and practices of the issues at hand” (Jennings et al., 2006: 48). Critical social theories also

advance the idea that, youth should have opportunities to analyse the obtaining socio-political situation so that they can approach the obtaining challenges from an informed perspective. This would improve their ability to be agents of change, in the quest for youth socio-economic development.

- **Integrated individual- and community-level empowerment**

The idea that youth empowerment operates at different levels is also underscored in the theory. It is upheld that “critical social empowerment involves both individual and group level change: enhancing the capacity of individuals to contribute to and work in collaboration with others to effect social change” (Jennings et al., 2006: 50). Here, the rationale of being empowered provides opportunity for the youth to alter agency, or in other words, allows them to make contributions to the decisions that affect their lives. This implies that they would also need to be aware of processes, structures and social practices that have a bearing on their livelihood. Such a consciousness suggests that youth have to change the circumstances that are not in line with the realisation of a sustainable livelihood.

3.2.3 Relevance of Critical Youth Empowerment Theory

Understanding the mechanics of empowerment helps this study to explore youth policies and their effectiveness. It is upheld that “empowerment is related to the change and transformation of such people, groups and communities, and to the process by means of which a situation of lack of power or disempowerment becomes one in which some kind of power is somehow gained” (Martinez, Jimenez-Morales, Maso and Bernet, 2017: 408). Critical social theory is transformational, “seeking to change the way societies deal with social problems. In particular it rejects approaches which are inconsistent with reasonable level of welfare provision” (Payne, 2005: 233). The theory is emancipatory in that it advances ideas of freedom, where individuals need to be liberated from covert and overt restrictions in the environment. Its elements “include a focus on structural rather than personal explanations of social problems and a concern of inequality and oppression” (Payne, 2005: 233). Although the original theory may not have dealt with youth as individuals, this research deals with the concerns that are particular to youth, both individuals and groups, in Zimbabwean rural areas.

- **Recognition of the Individual and Groups**

This theory understands youth empowerment from an eminently personal perspective “in which well-being and the reinforcement of self-esteem are basic features as they represent improved interpersonal relationships and an enhanced community life” (Jennings et al., 2006: Morton and Montgomery, 2012). Besides, Wagaman (2011: 284) argues that the theory “stresses the connection between critical reflection and meaningful action, and includes an element of social action directed at the root causes of problems (changes of systems, institutions, values, norms and practices).” This is in line with the study’s aim of assessing the changes that youth experience socially and economically attributed to implementation of youth policy.

- **Empowerment as Freedom**

The thrust of the critical social theory is giving rural youth some freedom against the policy challenges as well as other challenges peculiar to their communities. The government provides a regulatory framework through pieces of legislation and its programmes. These are the determinants of the policy environment. Political, economic and social challenges may present some hurdles which conspire against the successful implementation of youth empowerment policy. These structural limitations are not easily overcome and deliberate policy interventions are seen as critical in spearheading youth emancipation in remote and rural settings.

3.2.4 Recognition of Critical Variables for this Study

The Critical Youth Empowerment Theory was found to be relevant to this study because it explains the relationship between variables that this study sought to investigate. The theory is helpful in investigating the different experiences of the youth respondents undertaking self-help projects. At the individual level, psychological empowerment is said to focus on “individual level capacity building, integrating perceptions of personal control, proactive approach to life, and a critical understanding of socio-political environment” (Zimmerman in Jennings et al, 2006: 45). By defining empowerment and giving some examples of the empowerment outcomes, the theory is linked to the obtaining literature on the contested subject of empowerment. Further, the framework is useful in addressing the individual concerns of the youth engaging in self-help projects in rural Zimbabwe.

- **Personal dimension of empowerment**

According to Staples (in Jennings et al., 2006), “personal empowerment relates to the way people think about themselves, as well as the knowledge, capacities, skills, and mastery they actually possess”. It is emphasised that “individual empowerment develops when people attempt to develop the capabilities to overcome their psychological and intellectual obstacles and attain self-determination, self-sufficiency, and decision-making abilities” (Becker, Kovach and Gronseth in Hur, 2006: 531). These abstract concepts like self-determination were evaluated in the research where youth were asked to assess how they fare in relation to social empowerment (self-determination, self-sufficiency and decision making).

The fact that this study sought to understand the impact of self-help projects in promoting youth critical consciousness, self-determination and economic independence in the obtaining policy environment, makes the theory very critical. The interplay between abstract ideas like self-determination and more practical experiences like economic independence is made explicit by the theory in the combined understanding of empowerment. Understanding that these are determined by the National Youth Empowerment Policy in Zimbabwe, enabled the researcher to assess the critical role of policy implementation. In this light, the theory has been found to be useful.

- **Positive transformation in empowered individuals**

Critical Social Empowerment Theory is rich because it “involves both individual and group level change” (Martinez et al, 2017: 413). These changes are not understood as competing but rather complementing variables, in an attempt to effect social change in a positive way (Jennings et al., 2006: 33). Although youth have competing interests against limited opportunities, it is understood that they share a range of commonalities. Self-help projects initiated by the youth have a thrust to improve the welfare of the youth as individuals as well as improve their society in a sustainable manner without prejudicing any member of the society. It is in this light that the progress made by one should not result in the disempowerment of the other members of the community. The institutional structures and government interventions are believed to determine the successes and failures of the self-help initiatives. Thus, one may opine that socio-economic outcomes are also determined.

It has been highlighted earlier, that “youth empowerment is not complete without critical reflection, reflective change, and social change at individual and collective levels” (Jennings, *ibid*). This resonates well with the research objective of understanding the contribution of self-help projects towards youth socio-economic empowerment, in the context of youth empowerment policy in Zimbabwe. Given that youth were interviewed as individuals, the theory speaks into the idea of understanding each and every respondent as an independent entity. Additionally, the theory appreciates the differences that characterise individuals partaking youth self-help projects, by bringing out the dimension of personal empowerment.

- **Environment and its impact on empowerment**

According to Christens and Peterson (in Hur, 2006: 533), human ecological perspectives by Bronfenbrenner, “have emphasized the importance of the environment in which people live for understanding developmental processes and outcomes”. The said environment alludes to the existing policies and institutional challenges and opportunities found in the communities. Youth in rural Zimbabwe are understood to be influenced by their own environment and this explains why the empowerment process and outcome is peculiar to individuals and groups found in different contexts. In the same vein, this study focused on the experiences of the youth in rural Zimbabwe. According to Christens (2011) “positive youth development perspectives frequently treat environments and settings as both predictors of developmental outcomes and as likely targets for interventions”. The contextual paradigm is seen in this research to make the findings unique to the target population.

- **Participation by Youth**

As underscored in the “Adolescent Empowerment Cycle and Youth Development and Empowerment models” (Jennings et al., 2006: 39), youth empowerment is said to involve “a participatory cycle that engages youth in a safe environment and meaningful activities where they can learn skills, confront challenges, demonstrate success, and receive support and positive reinforcement for their efforts” (also shared by Chinman and Linney in Martinez et al., 2017: 412) leading to empowerment on an individual level. The current study sought to analyse the compatibility of the youth empowerment policy and socio-economic empowerment of the marginalised rural youth. It is critical to note that the model gives a priority to participation of the youth. According to Jennings et al., (2006: 40) “critical youth

empowerment encompasses processes and contexts through which youth engage in actions that create change in organizational, institutional, and societal policies, structures, values, norms, and images". It is also suggested that the theory is holistic in that it "builds on, integrates, and expands existing conceptual models of youth development and youth empowerment" (Jennings et al., *ibid*). Empowered youth should be able to demonstrate assertiveness, critical reflection and being active in community development. Positive youth development suggests that youth can transform their livelihoods overcoming institutional restrictions. It is argued that this is only possible if the policy environment is conducive.

The opportunity to implement youth self-help projects can enable the youth to make realistic contributions for themselves and for the community (Jennings et al., 2006: 43). Youth engagement in community projects gives them an opportunity "to learn and practise important leadership and participatory skills and try on different roles and responsibilities". It is imperative that youth need to be involved in activities they are excellent in. This is a view shared by Heath (in Jennings et al. 2006) who suggests that "youth should engage in activities relevant to their own lives, ones that excite and challenge them". This reinforces the fact that youth should take the initiative to empower themselves in their societies and the state supports them through an enabling environment of empowerment legislation and programmes.

In addition to the above, Kim, Crutchfield, Williams and Helper (1998) "stressed the notion that activities need to promote underlying competence and intrinsic motivation of youth so that they can test and master their own interests, develop skills, and gain confidence". The engagement in self-help projects by the youth is understood to be in sync with their interests and skills. Continuous engagement will enhance their self-esteem and improve their well-being. Therefore, "meaningful participation can contribute to more sustained and prolonged engagement, necessary for skill development and mastery and positive youth identity development" (Cargo in Martinez et al., 2017: 412). It is such engagement which is desirable for the youth to become socially and economically empowered.

The participation of youth in self-help projects contributes to personal enrichment in both material things and skills. It also enhances the welfare of their families through savings and

income generation. This will also extend to the community at large as the benefits trickle to others in the society. Participating in these projects suggests that youth can reduce idleness. Thus, it can be argued that “meaningful roles can provide youth with opportunities to develop a positive self-identity, increased sense of self-worth, and enhanced self-efficacy” (Chinman in Jennings et al., 2006: 45). All these outcomes are shaped by the prevailing policies implemented by the government. Thus, a study focusing on the effectiveness of policy implementation is critical in understanding the contribution of self-help projects towards youth socio-economic empowerment.

This implies that the youth should play an active role in the realisation of their social and economic emancipation. Income generating activities which promote learning of various skills are believed to promote active youth than passive individuals. There is an express need to support the youth initiatives, and this can be done by adults, NGOs and the government officials implementing youth empowerment policies.

- **Policy Environment**

As highlighted in the discussion above, an environment that is safe and welcoming for the young people demands that deliberate policies be introduced to enable youth to implement sustainable self-help projects in their communities. In this light, it denotes a society where the inception of income generating activities is promoted rather than inhibited. This policy environment should also promote youth “potential and actual achievements of youth within the community”. According to Jennings and colleagues (2006: 43) “youth recognize that adults have power and the value of using adult power to support their own causes”. These adults are actively involved in policy formulation and implementation determining the environment under which youth self-help projects are implemented. The government as a duty bearer in the country has the primary responsibility to provide youth with some employment opportunities.

- **The role of institutions and power**

According to Jennings (2006: 44) for Critical Youth Empowerment to “transpire, organizations need to examine attitudes, ideas, and activities related to power and power-sharing”. This power has to ensure that youth are in real control of their income generating projects. There

is also need to make and implement policies that support the youth initiatives to be sustainable. In theory, “youth-centre power is associated with youth empowerment programs. However, in practice it is often difficult to achieve and maintain an equitable balance of decision-making and power within youth programs” (Jennings, 2006: 44). The fact that youth programmes are initiated by adults complicates the situation further as self-interest usually takes precedence before anything else. This reality flies in the face of state driven youth empowerment policies.

Zimmerman (1995) argued that “empowerment is about gaining mastery within a given social environment”. It is a fact that the social environment is shaped by forces outside the realm of the youth themselves. Essentially, youth have to make an effort to sustain their initiatives despite the limitations presented to them by the environment. According to Jennings (2006: 48) the mastery to be gained by the youth “entails understanding the underlying processes and practices of that environment and how to best influence them”. Critical Youth Empowerment involves youth “gaining a critical understanding of the underlying processes and mastery through participation in transformative social action”. All this will be possible if the bottom-up approaches of policy implementation (where youth actively participate) are adopted.

Scholars are however at variance in their understanding of how empowerment is realised amongst the youth. From a Critical Youth Empowerment perspective youth’s ability to confront structural limitations affecting their well-being is interpreted as empowerment as it enables them to improve their livelihoods. Youth need to be co-opted in programming and implementing community projects for them to feel valued. Indeed, integrating youth socially enables them to share power with the elders and encourages them to partake in activities that enhance mutual benefits. Critical Youth Empowerment ensures that both individual interests and community interests are satisfied.

3.2.5 Studies that have used the theory before

Ewertson (2014) used the theory to study youth empowerment in Uganda in a study on youth unemployment in the country. The study used the six dimensions of critical youth empowerment theory already highlighted. It concluded that there is need to empower youth in Kambala. Fulton (1997) used the theory to study the British nurses' perspectives on empowerment as a concept. Her study concluded that nurses were feeling oppressed and they felt the need to be liberated. The study also revealed that participants wanted autonomy and wanted to improve their personal operating sphere independent of the regulatory authority. Goark (2013: 17) also used the theory and concluded that "individuals are challenged to review institutional and systematic barriers, how these were created, and then how to mitigate their negative impacts". It is also demonstrated that, by "utilizing their critical analysis skills and working together, youth are better able to impact social change in their respective communities" (Pearrow in Goark, *ibid*). Elsewhere, Bompper (2017) utilised the theory in a study of website representations of empowerment amidst urban youth conservation projects in an attempt to gain insights about CSR/S programming. The study concluded that critical reflection among the study participants was missing.

This theoretical framework has been found to be relevant in this study as it clearly unpacks the concept of empowerment. It delineates the fact that individuals have distinct personal values and expectations that are peculiar to them. Indeed, each individual youth is arguably unique and any attempt to generalise the perceptions of youth should be dismissed with the contempt it deserves. The theory also touches on various aspects of empowerment, that is, material as well as psychological empowerment. This qualitative research on the effectiveness of youth empowerment policy in ensuring socio-economic empowerment among youth in rural Zimbabwe, benefits from the insights in the theory. Self-help concept shares a lot with the ideas expressed in the critical social empowerment theory. Ideas such as self-reliance, independence and critical consciousness are evidently emphasised in both concepts. This arguably renders the theory comprehensive and appropriate in the understanding of the research. The next section discusses the conceptual framework informing this study.

3.3 The Sustainable Livelihood Approach

The Sustainable Livelihood Approach helps to understand how individuals and communities use available assets to balance out their livelihoods. The Framework “forms the core of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach and serves as an instrument for the investigation of poor people’s livelihoods, whilst visualising the main factors of influence” (Kollmair and Gamber, 2002: 4). It analyses this at the individual, household and community levels. Norton and Foster (2001) maintain that the approach enables researchers to explore poor people’s livelihoods using an asset/vulnerability benchmark. In the early 1990s when the approach began generating increased prevalence, it presented a paradigm shift in the way in which one considered development especially rural development (Chambers and Conway, 1992; Solesbury, 2003). The sustainable livelihood offered a new lens which challenged the ways of analysis and implementation of development (Ashley and Carney, 1999). This study used the Sustainable Livelihood Approach because it offered opportunity to examine the influence of policies in promoting sustainable livelihood among the youth.

3.2.1 Features of the Sustainable Livelihood Approach

The approach needs to be understood as a framework that helps in understanding the complexities of poverty. Traditionally, development theory and practice emphasised quantitative aspects such as gross domestic product, whilst paying little attention to distribution. The Sustainable Livelihood Approach changed the emphasis and focus on “poverty reduction, empowerment and the promotion of increased security of livelihood for the poor rather than economic growth” (Norton and Foster, 2001, Solesbury, 2003). It is important to note that although the Sustainable Livelihood Approach put people first, “they fail to emphasise sufficiently the need to increase the power and rights of the poor and stimulate changes in social relations” (Carney, 2002: 22). The argument here is that, poor people should be at the forefront in identifying and addressing livelihood priorities (Bennel, 2007). It is critical to note that the Sustainable Livelihood Approach enables researchers to understand power dynamics in society. Amongst other places, these power structures are evident in the policies initiated and implemented by the state, in an attempt to coerce or convince youth to undertake various projects.

It is in light of the need to understand how policies and institutions influence the livelihood outcomes of the youth that the Sustainable Livelihood Approach was adopted as a conceptual framework in this study. The Sustainable Livelihood Approach draws on a range of analytical tools that enhance the understanding of the institutional environment and its determining role in shaping youth self-help projects. In this research, the mechanics of sustainable livelihood were used to examine the policies adopted in line with youth empowerment, spearheaded through self-help projects. Bearing in mind the fact that institutions in the community are an indispensable factor in determining the outcome of livelihood activities, the research used the framework as a basis for such analysis.

3.2.2 Sustainable Livelihood Approach in Relation to Youth

According to Bennel (2000: 33) the Sustainable Livelihood Approach “is a particularly useful conceptual framework for identifying the livelihood needs of youth”. Bennel further elaborates that, “a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living” (ibid). Youth have almost become synonymous with poverty, particularly in remote rural areas where job opportunities are scarce and scant. The Sustainable Livelihood Approach starts with what poor people are already doing to overcome poverty. Beneficiary participation signals “the starting point of livelihood improvement programmes (is) to identify ‘livelihood security gaps’ and to exploit the resourcefulness and ingenuity of the poor and their own skills to the maximum” (Bennel, 2000: 33). In this study, the focus is on youth engaging in self-help projects guided by the National Youth Policy. It is in these projects that the livelihood security gaps will be identified. Within this perspective, interventions need to start from what the youth have initiated.

According to Xu, Kang and Jiang (2012: 14) the Sustainable Livelihood Approach “is a useful framework in explaining the effects of policy change on household livelihoods and in providing guidelines for sustainable self-help projects”. Policies change over time in the pursuit of reform, and in so doing, reflect the shifts in the priorities of the state. The link between micro-level livelihood responses by the youth in the rural areas, and macro-level policy procedure by the state, is not always clear. This calls for an investigation into the relationship between the two. This is a process which facilitates further policy review enabling

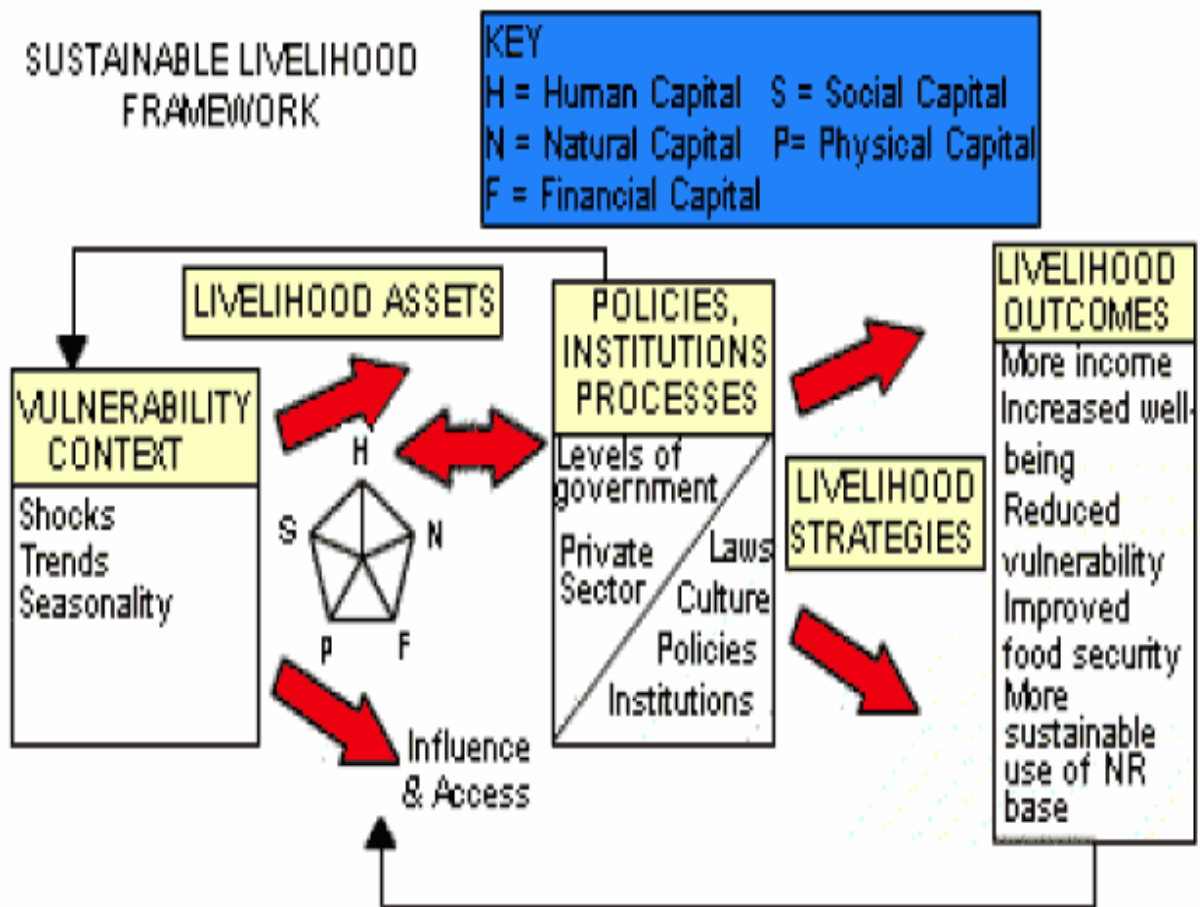
“policy adjustment and amendment by the feedback from livelihood outcomes” (Xu et al., *ibid*).

The SLF thus provides a basis for understanding the impact of policies on the livelihood outcomes of individuals and communities. Further, the framework can “serve as an integrating factor that allows policies to address development, sustainable resource management, and poverty eradication simultaneously” (UNDP in Krantz, 2001: 6).

3.3 The Sustainable Livelihood Framework

The logic of the Sustainable Livelihood Approach, presents a toolkit, or framework that allows one to investigate issues related to livelihoods. The Sustainable Livelihood Framework provides an instrument by which one can analyse the youth’s livelihoods derived from self-help projects. It graphically illustrates the key components of the SLA as presented in the figure below.

Figure 3.1: The Sustainable Livelihood Framework



Source: adapted from Carney (1999)

The Framework above is an analytical tool useful in demonstrating the interlinking relationship of the various components. It simplifies the rather complex components so that one can vividly draw some conclusions on how individuals, households and communities interact with the environment in order to mould their livelihoods. According to Scoones (1998: 9) “the tool is used to understand livelihood strategies and their interaction with processes, institutions and policies”. In this study, the links shown by the arrows reflect how youth convert assets to become self-help entrepreneurial projects. The Youth Empowerment Policy of 2000 (amended in 2013) as well as institutional mechanisms to implement the policy was investigated. It is important to note that the government intervenes through laws regulating the operational environment of youth self-help projects. It also avails funds through local banks to help the youth with start-up capital. These initiatives support or

undermine the youth self-help projects and regulate access and control of livelihood assets among the youth. For this particular study, it is imperative to look at how the framework helps policy researchers to understand how public policy influences the livelihoods of youth in rural Zimbabwe. Therefore, the next section looks at understanding the rationale for the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework.

3.3.1 Key Components of the S.L.F

- **Livelihood Assets**

Assets are understood to be “the building blocks of a sustainable livelihood and access to assets determines the sustainability of such livelihood” (DFID, 2000). They enable youth to cope with the challenges they face in their lives as they attempt to improve their livelihoods in a sustainable manner. The youth exploit resources and skills to ensure that they are freed from the poverty trap. Scoones (1998) advances that “livelihood resources may be seen as the ‘Capital’ base from which different productive streams are derived from and livelihoods are constructed”. The five capitals, natural capital, physical capital, financial capital, human capital and social capital are critical.

- **Transforming Structures and Processes (Policy, Institutions and Processes)**

This component of the framework explains why the approach was adopted as a conceptual framework in this study. Social structures and processes through which sustainable livelihoods are achieved need to be comprehended. Policies and institutions determine how youth access different kinds of capital and generate self-power. According to Davies in Scoones (1998: 12) “institutions are the social cement which link stakeholders to access capital of different kinds to the means of exercising power and so define the gateways through which they pass on the route to positive or negative livelihood adaptation”.

The policy component helps to shed light on how youth interact with obtaining environmental factors. According to Scoones (1998: 12) “policies, institutions and processes, and their relationship with governance, rights and power, helps to explain why people chose certain livelihood strategies”. Besides, it helps to illustrate where strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats lie in the policy environment. It is also evident that “an analysis of policies, institutions and processes helps explain social processes that could impact on livelihood sustainability” (Scoones, *ibid*). Besides, it also “explains the environment in which

the livelihoods exist, and helps to identify where the intervention could lead to a more enabling environment for sustainable livelihoods”. This further reinforces why the researcher chose the framework in this study.

- **Livelihood Strategies**

Choices and opportunities that help the youth to withstand shocks and overcome stress are their livelihood strategies. It is critical to note that the livelihood strategies are not static and will change as the external environment (over which rural youth have little control) alters, as policies, institutions and processes shift and evolve, as access to and control over assets change and as opportunities arise. The fact that youth are a group in transition further complicates the strategies as they try to cope with the demands put on them by the environment.

3.3.2 The Rationale of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework Within The Context of Zimbabwe

Using the Sustainable Livelihood Approach enables one to view youth as key decision-makers who make informed choices based on their own sets of priorities. Youth in rural Zimbabwe are understood to be impoverished by the lack of livelihood assets as well as unemployment. The transformation from disempowerment to empowerment among the youth is seen as a positive change. According to Carney (2003: 17) “this empowering change should result in amplified voice, power, opportunities and well-being for the poor”. For the youth, amplified voice entails that they become socially empowered and become assertive. Opportunities should manifest themselves in rewarding self-help entrepreneurial activities that enhance their well-being. The issue of empowerment is further echoed by Solesbury (2003: 14) who argues that SLA “focus on poor people and their needs; the importance of citizen participation; the emphasis on self-reliance and sustainability”.

Exploring youth empowerment through policy implementation can be enhanced by the sustainable livelihood framework. This is because it is “an analytical device for understanding the complex forces that condition people’s livelihoods and situations of poverty” (Hall and Midgley, 2004: 98). It is argued that the SLA contains a wider political message by “prioritising the eradication of poverty and the strengthening of livelihoods as a fundamental objective of

planned development, through situation-specific interventions tailored to meet the livelihood needs of particular groups” (Hall and Midgley, 2004: 98). This is critical for this study looking at the Zimbabwean government programs aimed at promoting youth development.

The approach, in the context of this investigation, is seen as comprehensive in understanding the youth experiences in rural Zimbabwe in their quest to be socially and economically empowered. The reason is that the SLA “takes a realistic view of poverty which includes both ends and means perspectives. It examines what poverty means to people by identifying the desired livelihoods outcomes” (Purdie, 1996: 69). Poverty is not seen as a common phenomenon but it is understood as experienced differently. Besides, using the approach enables one to understand both tangible and intangible livelihood outcomes.

It enhances the formulation of a realistic picture of rural lives of the youth and their poverty experiences. This is done after a realisation of the complexity of rural life that the youth lead (Singh and Gilman, 1999: 541). The approach is informative as it “emphasises the economic, social and environmental aspects of rural life, organising factors that constrain or provide opportunities to the rural poor and knowing how these relate to each other” (Scoones, 1998: 14). The constraints or opportunities are believed to be consequences of the policy environment.

3.3.2.1 Livelihood Approach enables poverty assessment among Zimbabwean Youth

The approach is also advantageous in that it shows the influence of macro-level policy and institutions on the livelihoods of the rural youth in Zimbabwe. SLAs help in understanding relevancy of policies formed considering the reality of local youth. According to Ellis (2000: 28-29) “it attempts to bridge the gap between the micro level and the macro level”. Therefore, it is an important framework used to understand the interface between national youth empowerment policy and youth grassroots initiatives in the rural and remote poverty stricken districts.

It is also critical to note that the approach recognises that people are flexible and they adapt to various circumstances. This enables them to cope with the shocks and stresses obtaining in the environment. Self-help projects respond to changes in the environment or

circumstances. By emphasising livelihood assets, strategies and outcomes as well as policies, institutions and processes, the SLA gives varied intervention opportunities. Indeed, “multiple entry points can be identified, from supporting access to assets to providing an enabling environment for sustainable livelihoods by getting the institutional and organisational setting right” (Scoones, 1998: 14). This reflection is critical for any successful policy intervention that can be made on the Zimbabwean youth livelihoods.

The SLA enables the clear identification of constraints faced by the youth in implementing self-help projects. The opportunities are also made clear where youth can utilise the window of opportunity in the environment. If policies and institutions are presenting challenges, it becomes apparent and necessary improvements will be made. Moreover, the approach enables interested stakeholders to identify ways of reducing vulnerability through appropriate interventions. Hence, the SLA is a critical analytic instrument in understanding the Zimbabwean situation of youth socio-economic empowerment.

3.3.2.2 Livelihood Approach exposes Power Constraints affecting youth

Monitoring and evaluating of youth projects is seen as the missing link in the implementation of youth empowerment policy and self-help projects in Zimbabwe (Duri, Newsday 29 April 2014). The fact that projects have been running with no tracing of progress as well as impact has undermined their sustainability. Toner and Franks (2006: 82) highlight the significance of the approach when they said “it has a package of principles that frame the process of development intervention”.

According to Brock (1999: 17) “the institutional focus of the analytic framework allows the findings to be used to locate policy spaces where useful interventions can be made”. Interventions by both the government and NGOs are seen as critical in the successful execution of youth projects. Policies and legislation shaping livelihoods can be better dissected using the SL approaches. This study looked at the youth policies implemented by the government to promote youth socio-economic empowerment in rural Zimbabwe. This analysis helped to understand the strength and weaknesses of the policies as interventions to reduce poverty among the youth in rural Zimbabwe.

Laws determine the access and control of livelihood assets and strategies to be employed by the youth engaging in self-help projects in rural Zimbabwe. The Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act is seen as an important piece of legislation in making resources available to the black majority in the country. However, access per se is not enough in promoting youth empowerment. Indeed, quality, relevancy and effectiveness of such laws are also critical in ensuring youth emancipation. Therefore, using insights from the Sustainable livelihood framework is imperative.

Zimbabwean government bureaucrats also known as the senior civil servants are the policy makers who determine the outcome of the policy process. The power dynamics in the society clearly points to the little negotiating powers among the ordinary rural youth in influencing the youth empowerment policy. Against such a background, the SLA helps in understanding influence of policy and institutions in determining youth livelihood outcomes.

Credit is given to the SLA for expanding the focus when looking at the livelihoods of communities. Before the usage of the approach, focus was on “conventional interventions such as the transfer of technologies and skills” (Scoones, 1998: 14). The advent of the approach saw “emphasis getting even to the institutional and organisational setting” (Scoones, *ibid*). This enhances the likelihood of improving “the effectiveness of conventional interventions, as well as extending the range of options across livelihood strategies”. Therefore, the approach is critical in assessing the effectiveness of policy implementation in promoting youth self-help projects scenario in rural Zimbabwe.

3.4 Challenges of using the SLA as a Conceptual Framework

Although the SLA is critical in assessing the rural livelihoods in general and youth livelihood in particular, it has its limitations. It fails to “differentiate between an individual as a child, a young person or an adult” (Chigunta, 2005: 42). Furthermore, the SLF “does not address the issue of whether and how livelihood (including self-employment and entrepreneurship) capabilities are developed and nurtured during the youth development life-cycle”. Chigunta further notes that notions of creativity (creating self-help projects), experimentation and innovation are missing in the sustainable livelihood literature, yet they are critical in the promotion of self-help entrepreneurship amongst the youth.

The approach neglects issues to do with power relations that apparently have a bearing on determining livelihood outcomes. According to Sadkpolrak (2014: 23) it neglects the broader social and economic structures. It is also mentioned that the approach is silent about segregation in the communities. Yet, critics of the approach point out that “livelihoods shape and are shaped by processes of inclusion and exclusion” (de Haan and Zoomers, 2005: 34). Youth in rural areas are subjected to manipulation by the government bureaucrats who determine who gets what, when and how. Therefore, ignoring broader social and economic considerations determining the power relations is a weakness.

In the same vein, Carney avers that “issues of governance, power and rights of poor people are not clearly emphasised in the livelihood approach” (2002: 23). This means the approach is not holistic in its treatment of policies and how they impact on interventions. Given the invisibility of the poor and how they may eradicate poverty, the approach is bereft of the much needed emphasis on transforming structural limitations affecting the poor. It is lamented that “the role of power and politics is disregarded by the fact that the SLF does not give any direction or explanation of how structural aspects such as institutions and policies influence livelihoods, or of how livelihoods influence the structural level” (Sadkpolrak, 2014: 21). This weakness impedes the desire to understand how youth engaging in self-help projects can alter the institutions and policies for their own betterment. Thus, the SLA should give more emphasis on youth’s capacity to influence existing power dynamics in the allocation of livelihood assets and control of livelihood outcomes.

It is upheld that the approach has suffered ineffectiveness due to the fact that it tried to overstretch its capacity. This argument suggests that there cannot be an effective theoretical framework that covers virtually everything, assets, vulnerability, policies, and outcomes among others. According to Levine (2014: 15) “livelihoods analysis often does too little because it tries to do too much and it inevitably ends up as too superficial a description to explain how those factors have shaped the livelihoods of different people”. In spite of the limitations noted, the approach significantly helped to analyse the livelihood strategies and livelihood outcomes from the youth self-help projects under this study.

3. 5 POLICY, DEVELOPMENT AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN ZIMBABWE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE S.L.F

The ultimate goal of policies implemented, is to see an empowered individual whose livelihood is sustainable. Community development is impossible when the majority lead an impoverished life. The duty bearers (government and NGOs) need to create an enabling environment that facilitates execution of youth projects. According to Moore (2015: 195) “economic opportunities for youth are crucial not only to generate an income to support young people and their households today, but also to support their long-term well-being and that of their communities”. Youth need to use available livelihood assets to produce sustainable livelihood outcomes.

To ensure the synchronisation of youth empowerment policies that promote youth development which is sustainable, there is need to address the barriers to youth self-help projects. Policies that support the implementation of youth initiatives should be crafted in a bottom-up approach and policy gaps in the current policy environment have to be filled. This is critical if the youth are to be socially and economically emancipated through self-help projects. The policy gaps are seen as weaknesses in the policy environment and they stifle the attempt by the youth to realise socio-economic emancipation.

Policy gaps can be filled by involving the youth in crafting youth related policies. Needs analysis among the youth will enable the articulation of key demands and aspirations among the youth. Supporting youth initiatives such as self-help projects is commensurate with the quest to improve their living standards. Besides, there is need to “develop institutional capacity at the local and national levels that will be able to lead and drive the execution of the policy aimed at emancipation of these rural youth” (Moore, 2015: 19). If these policy gaps are filled, it will be possible to link youth empowerment policy with youth development initiatives with minimum challenges.

According to Singh and Titi (1995: 13) “empowerment has been used to imply: good governance, legitimacy and creativity for a flourishing private sector”. The policy initiatives have to help transform youth into self-reliant and independent individuals. Youth participation can be used as evidence of good governance that promotes independent

thinking and problem solving. These are the traits in sync with youth empowerment that fosters inclusivity, transparency and accountability. These key tenets are critical in cementing the nexus between good governance and effective policy implementation.

Empowered youth better understand their socio-economic environment. They can identify the limitations as well as opportunities that affect their participation in self-help projects. Singh and Titi (1995: 18) argued that empowerment “gives people a true capacity to cope with the changing environment as societies and communities enter the transition towards sustainable development”. Coping strategies reflect an empowered individual who is able to adapt to the different circumstances unfolding in the environment. The shocks and stresses in the sustainable livelihood framework point to the challenges that youth may encounter in an attempt to implement successful projects.

According to James (1999: 19) it is suggested that empowerment makes “individuals, communities and nations obtain collective responsibility for their own future”. Therefore, it provides rural youth “with the capacity to feel like masters of their own thinking and view of the world, and to achieve the desired level of well-being” (James, *ibid*). This will only happen if the youth are given enough support in an amicable policy environment in which they can excel. Therefore, the implementation of youth empowerment policy supporting income generating activities is critical in rural Zimbabwe.

3.5.1 The state of Development and Underdevelopment in Zimbabwe

The country has a complex history as far as development is concerned. It gained political independence in 1980 when the white settler administration was replaced. Dhembu (1999: 10) posits that the new dispensation “inherited a highly polarised and dualistic society where the majority of the people in both rural and urban areas lived in abject poverty”. Developments in the early years of independence were marvellous. According to Mazingi and Kamidzi (1999: 327) “the new government viewed development planning as an instrument for achieving rapid socio-economic development and raising the living standards of the people”. Poverty reduction through employment creation and aggregate economic expansion were emphasised in the development plans of the government.

The Economic and Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in the early 1990s resulted in forced retrenchment of workers, reduction in public expenditure, food riots and high incidence of poverty in the country (Munangagwa, 2009: 112). The ESAP programme partly failed due to the fact that the country lacked experts to evaluate and implement the programme. According to Bond (1998: 143) “there was a dearth, even near complete absence, of skilled personnel with a requisite grasp of policy instruments”. This is a fact that the government conceded to the World Bank, noting that, indeed, there was “limited institutional capacity” in its ranks and that “weak capacity in line ministries and implementing agencies led to an overstretching of resources devoted to policy analysis and formulation in a period when far-reaching policy reforms needed to be designed” (World Bank in Bond, 1998).

The new millennium saw the unemployment figures soaring (USAID, 2014). As a result, many people have resorted to the informal activities such as petty trading, panning, vending, and overall dealing and hustling. It is emphasised that such work is for survival and creates vulnerability and precarity with little opportunity of accumulation (Scoones in the Herald, 26 April 2017). The gloomy situation experienced in Zimbabwe around 2008 is aptly captured by Prowse, Philip, Bird and Kate (2008: 1) who suggest that “statistics and trends were hardly able to convey the magnitude of the crisis in Zimbabwe”. The year marked a new peak in the history of economic collapse. The Zimbabwean economy was the “fastest shrinking globally with GDP contracting by 40 percent from the year 2000. Agricultural production reduced by 50 percent and inflation rose to around 300 percent per month”. This portrays a deplorable state of underdevelopment which reached its zenith in 2008. The country is yet to recover from this economic setback.

In spite of the chaotic situation, the country has some incentives for growth such as natural resources, a reasonable infrastructure, a well-educated population and hard-working and innovative people. These can stimulate economic growth and development. But, the incentives are not enough in themselves. According to Bond and Manyanya (2002: 292), these factors can be negated by bad governance and corruption. This implies that good governance and functional institutions are critical in facilitating sustainable growth in the economy. Besides, the country boasts of a solid human resources base with the USAID (2014: 7) country report illustrating that young people below the age of 25 constitute approximately two-thirds of Zimbabwe’s population.

According to Kanyenze, Chitambara and Tyson (2017: 6) over the past twenty years, the country has undergone several structural changes. They noted that there is now increased dependence on primary commodities due to de-industrialisation. This has also forced many unemployed people to join the informal sector. Moreover, it is given that the infrastructure in the country has been destroyed such that it can no longer sustain real production. To compound the situation, weak institutions have abetted corruption resulting in further economic instability. To make matters worse, the country currently has a huge internal and external debt that affects its borrowing powers locally and internationally.

3.5.2 Evolution of empowerment projects in Zimbabwe

It is critical to understand the background of the current youth empowerment policy and empowerment projects in Zimbabwe. Traditionally, empowerment projects were based on the microcredit principle. The genesis of micro-credit is chronicled by Mago (2013: 601) in a study on the evolution and development of micro-finance in Zimbabwe. The attainment of independence in 1980 saw the emergence of cooperatives that took a leaf from the micro-finance paradigm. Mago (2013: 601) notes that the government established the “National Association of Cooperative Savings and Credit Unions of Zimbabwe (NACSCUZ) in 1986 under the Ministry of Community Development and Women’s Affairs”. This was a policy initiative aimed at supporting the poverty stricken individuals and communities.

An employment creation plan was developed and approved in the late 1990s. Kanyenze, Mhone and Sparreboom (2000: 30) suggest that the plan focused on “education and training, rural development, promotion of the informal sector, and facilitating access to capital and finance”. Policy initiatives aimed at youth empowerment considered education and training because this enhances the human capital in the country. Proper skills training and acquisition enables youth to be employable in formal jobs. Besides, it can also enhance the execution of self-help projects with youth engaging in diverse activities that are more rewarding than the casual activities.

In addition to the above, there was creation of “the Youth Services and Youth Training Section to (a) mobilise, initiate and plan youth programmes and activities; (b) promote, co-ordinate and mobilise resources for youth development; and (c) develop, implement and monitor

policies concerning the youth” (Kanyenze et al., 2000: 30). The thrust to monitor and promote co-ordination gave birth to the Zimbabwe Youth Council tasked to supervise the achievement of these objectives. These policy initiatives have failed to significantly alter the situation among the country’s youth. Cooperation and co-ordination is missing and the achievement of set targets remains delusional. It is argued that “fragmented and non-integrated approaches are competing with each other resulting in duplication of roles, and inadequate resources” (Kanyenze et al., 2000: 30).

With high unemployment in Zimbabwe youth population have resorted to the informal sector. It is understood that the “informal sector is a manifestation of the failure of the formal sector to meet the needs and wants of the people” (Mago, 2013: 606). This implies that the youth who undertake self-help projects do so as a consequence of social and economic necessity rather than as a choice. This study explores the experiences of rural youth engaged in self-help projects in their quest for socio-economic empowerment given the existing policies in the country.

That small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are important is acknowledged. According to Mudavanhu, Bindu, Chigusiwa and Muchabaiwa (2011: 82) the sector has “long acted as engines of economic growth”. This view is shared in several countries where “entrepreneurship is considered as a solution to unemployment and other socio-economic challenges like poverty” (Mago, 2013: 604). This view reflects the necessity of entrepreneurship in a country that has weathered economic challenges over the past seventeen years (Chimucheka (2012: 2). The economic tribulations were “evidenced by hyper-inflation, negative gross domestic product, low productive capacity, loss of jobs, food shortages and massive decent work deficits” (Chimucheka, *ibid*).

Absence of job opportunities means “students exiting education cannot be absorbed in the job market, as a result, youth unemployment has become one of the most formidable problems facing the country” (Mambo, 2010: 22). Thus youth self-help projects emerged as a panacea to unemployment. Against such a background, an appraisal of the youth empowerment policy in relation to self-help youth entrepreneurial activities is necessary to

answer glaring questions arising from the drive to empower youth socially and economically in rural Zimbabwe.

3.5.3 Youth Empowerment Programmes in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe realised the need to resolve the unemployment problem since independence in 1980 (Mararike, 2014: 97). Policies, economic blueprints, projects and programmes have been launched in a bid to solve unemployment which is a macro-economic issue whose resolution is at best a function of the state (Bhebhe, Nair, Muranda, Sifile and Chavhunduka, 2015: 51). It is the prerogative of the Zimbabwean government to ensure that its citizens are emancipated and the youth are not an exception. This is indicated in the various initiatives implemented by the state and its partners.

Projects and programs targeting employment creation among the youth portray the policy environment in the country inasmuch as youth empowerment is concerned. Some of the projects include the Graduate Entrepreneurship Employment Programme (GEEP), Kurera/Ukondla Youth Fund (administered through CABS), Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE), Youth Empowerment Fund (YEF), Wealth Creation Fund (administered through Stanbic, CBZ, IDBZ) and Skills for Youth Employment and Rural Development Programme (Bhebhe et al., 2015: 15). This research aims to fill the gap in literature on the effectiveness of such policies in promoting rural youth empowerment in Zimbabwe in general and Mwenezi District in particular.

The government has tried to address the issue of skills through “the Integrated Skills Outreach Programme (ISOP) adopted by the government in 2006 aimed at addressing the challenges of youth unemployment” (Murinda, 2014: 23). The ISOPs provide the youth “specific skills training through short competence based courses lasting between one and three weeks” (Murinda, *ibid*). Whilst the effectiveness of such short courses is questioned, it is understood that the program is yielding some results. According to Murinda (2014: 23) “the training is done within the community using local skilled experts, imparting skills such as how to make a coffee table, keep bees, solder leaking pots, mould bricks, mend vehicle tyres, repair domestic electric gadgets, or how to grow specific vegetables”. It is these income generating activities done by the youth found in communal areas that form the basis of youth empowerment. The

fact that the program is an outreach one reduces the costs on the part of the youth beneficiaries as they are trained in their communities. This also implies that the community challenges peculiar to the different areas will be addressed.

To ensure that the youth are technically emancipated, the ISOP program gives the youth beneficiaries the necessary equipment to use (Nyika, 2016: 2). Murinda avers that “graduates are awarded certificates of competence from the Ministry of Youth and are also supposed to get tool kits to assist them in starting their own enterprises after graduation” (2014: 24). Graduate youths return to their local communities to implement the acquired skills. Besides raising some income, it also ensures community development as youth identify and solve development concerns in their communities during implementation.

It is very critical to note that ISOP was initiated targeting youth in rural Zimbabwe and this resonates well with the current study. It is the thrust of this research to understand the impact of government policy in promoting youth empowerment especially in the rural areas. Training of youth in various entrepreneurial skills demonstrates the government interests in youth socio-economic empowerment. According to Murinda (2014: 2) “the skills developed through ISOP are such that the youths will not be tempted to leave their communities in search of employment in urban centres. In addition, the skills are aimed at exploiting locally available resources and the items or goods produced can be exported for sale to other communities where these materials may not be readily available”. Therefore, one can conclude that the state driven policies are in line with the youth empowerment drive that seeks to promote sustainable livelihood and critical social empowerment.

The idea of empowering youth has not however been a preserve of the rural communities alone. There have been some generic policy initiatives meant for both urban and rural dwellers. Such policy initiatives include the establishment of the “Zimbabwe Youth Employment Network (ZIYEN), formulation of the National Employment Policy Framework (ZNEPF), establishment of the Youth Development Fund, establishment of Youth Economic Zones, the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment programme and the formulation of the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIM-ASSET)” (Murinda, 2014: 25). The number of programmes gives the impression that youth have been

a main target in the drive towards creating social and economic opportunities in the face of high unemployment. The effectiveness of such policies in enhancing the interests of the rural youth in Zimbabwe is the prime focus of this research study.

According to Murinda (2014) the government through ZIYEN has worked towards the realisation of youth empowerment in the country. The programme seeks to promote youth entrepreneurship training and development. This aim tallies with the ISOP program discussed above. In line with youth funding, it promotes access to project finance for the youth. Besides, “ZIYEN also seeks to develop strategic partnerships and mobilise resources for promoting youth employment” (Murinda, 2014: 25). Murinda has concluded ZIYEN is the source of numerous programmes implemented by the ministry of youth aimed at promoting youth empowerment in the country.

The drive to support youth self-help projects that enhance employment creation has seen the government launching the youth fund in 2012. Supported by the Old Mutual, the youth fund popularly known as Kurera/Ukondla Youth Fund seeks to nurture youth driven self-help projects. The Fund is “administered through the Commercial Bank of Zimbabwe (CBZ) and the Central African Building Society (CABS). There are also other facilities under the youth fund initiative being managed by other players, for instance, the Stanbic bank among others” (Financial Gazette, 18 May 2012). Although the programme has been applauded by many observers who see it as critical in creating jobs for the youth, concerns have been mounting. According to Murinda “there is a general feeling that if the fund is to have maximum impact, issues such as broadening the scope, equitable distribution and gender sensitivity have to be addressed” (Murinda, 2014: 26). There is a feeling that youth beneficiaries have rarely been from the poverty stricken, remote and rural areas. Rather, it is claimed that patronage and nepotism have affected access to the fund (Warikandwa and Osode, 2017: 23). Thus, the policy initiative has been riddled with some controversies from the onset.

Another policy initiative that has attracted interest among researchers is the indigenisation policy. The Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act (IEEA) and its strategies have been criticised for leaving out the needy (Mayszak, 2016: 20). It is noted that most indigenous Zimbabweans have not benefitted from the policy. According to Magure (Newsday 29 April

2012) “they appear to be advancing the interests of politically connected elites. This is the result of deficiencies at the levels both of legal instrument design and of institutional enforcement”. Similar sentiments were echoed by Warikandwa and Osode (2017: 23) who pointed out that “the major deficiency of the IEEA is the omission to systematically address the problem of business fronting”. Hence, policy strategy is weakened in so far as it seeks to empower rural youth.

Despite the noted challenges, research reveals that in Zimbabwe self-help projects that deal with the youth have been increasing (Zheke, 2010: 5). The government through the Ministry of Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Development, has lobbied for empowerment of the youth (Mambo, 2010: 23). The Zimbabwe Youth Council, Zimbabwean Youth Agenda among various youth organisations have also campaigned in favour of self-help projects that have a direct benefit for the youth (Chapter 25:19 as amended 1997). In 2012, the Central African Building Society (CABS) issued loans to the youth taking part in various income generating projects (National Youth Policy, 2012: 7). A few years back the Industrial and Development Bank of Zimbabwe also financially assisted numerous projects run by the youth (Ibid, 2012). All these policy initiatives have been introduced to try and help the youth to start their own entrepreneurial activities. The successes and failures cannot be generalised however and an empirical examination of the youth initiatives can be used to answer pertinent questions that are associated with youth socio-economic empowerment driven by self-help projects in rural Zimbabwe.

3.5.4 Reasons for the expansion in self-help projects

Although the informal sector is generally unattractive for the youth, the circumstances have driven the majority of youth into the entrepreneurship circle. It is critical to look at the reasons for the expansion of the informal sector in Zimbabwe. According to Mago (2013: 603) “people find refuge in the informal sector for employment incomes, assets accumulation and livelihoods”. The fact that prospects of getting a job are constantly eluding the youth has left them with little choice. This has seen many individuals establishing small businesses to cushion themselves from poverty. Indeed, self-help projects have been adopted as livelihood strategies by the youth in Zimbabwe as they try to meet the socio-economic demands faced at their age.

It is important to note that despite the expansion into the informal sector, it's not a rosy situation. Mainly, youth enterprises "have non-legal status, lack authorized business location, have no standard forms of collateral security, are small in size and their business activities are risky" (Mago, 2013: 608). These characteristics have made the self-help projects vulnerable to various threats as they collapse time and again. Thus, government policy is seen as critical in ensuring the successful implementation as well as expansion of the self-help projects among the youth in the rural areas.

Data on the number of youth entrepreneurship projects is not easy to find in Zimbabwe. But the economy is reportedly "dominated by small to medium enterprises (SMEs) with a 1998 estimation putting the figure at 860 000 micro and small enterprises engaging in manufacturing, commerce and service activities" (Mago, 2013: 608). These figures do not give the reflection of youth involvement in the said projects. They are however critical in illustrating the nature of employment dominant in the economy. Indeed, "SMEs generated self-employment and jobs for about 25 percent of the Zimbabwean population" (Barnes, Keogh and Nemarundwe, 2001: 2). The study by Barnes and colleagues focused primarily on Zambuko Trust and its findings cannot be generalised on the youth self-help initiatives in rural areas. The fact that employment was generated does not necessarily indicate that there was socio-economic empowerment but demonstrates the importance of the sector towards employment creation. It is the aim of the current research to establish the position of rural youth within the context of self-help projects undertaken in the prevailing policy environment on youth empowerment in the country.

Another reason for the expansion of self-help projects is the government intervention strategies to eradicate poverty. According to Goriwondo (2012: 1) "micro, small and medium enterprises and cooperatives in Zimbabwe have been used for increasing economic growth and empowerment among the communities". This has been done through the Ministry of Small to Medium Enterprises and Community Development. The ministry envisions to "be the 'nerve' centre for economic growth and empowerment through the development of SMEs in Zimbabwe" (Goriwondo, *ibid*). This quest has seen the ministry aiming to create an enabling environment that promotes a vibrant SMEs sector. Again, the ministry has introduced a number of projects that have benefited the communities. However, the focus has not been

on the youth alone but rather on the SMEs in general. This policy strategy has been successful in enhancing the access to technical skills among the youth and other beneficiaries as they can easily consult the district officers in the ministry.

The characteristics of youth income generating initiatives indicate an attempt by the participants to escape from the poverty bedevilling the country due to the economic crisis that is characterised by high unemployment and liquidity crunch. The situation is actually different for the rural areas where there is no obvious market for the products and the youth generally are less skilled to initiate such technical initiatives. The next section looks at the intervention of NGOs into youth entrepreneurship and how that has impacted the sustenance of self-help projects.

3.5.5 The role of Non-Governmental Organisation in Self-Help Projects

As highlighted in the previous chapter looking at actors in development and policy implementation, this section looks at the role of NGOs in promoting self-help projects. It is highlighted that besides the government efforts to upgrade the welfare of the youth, non-governmental organisations have also come in handy to help the youth in their quest to initiate some self-help projects. There is extensive research that has been done on the role of NGOs in the self-help projects. Mwenezi District has seen many NGOs coming with entrepreneurial projects for the youth. Currently, Plan International, Care International, Lutheran World Services as well as Mwenezi Development Training Centre are implementing various projects. Critics point out the ineffectiveness of NGOs in promoting empowerment of their beneficiaries. Some argue that they entrench dependency and this stifles the spirit of self-help and economic independence. Cases of unsustainable projects abandoned after the pulling out of the funding NGOs are used to illustrate the weaknesses of outward interventions in promoting empowerment (Munir, 1995: 244).

Despite the criticism, it is prudent to note that many NGOs have emerged working with youth in self-help entrepreneurial activities. Indeed, youth engagement in self-help projects has generated increasing interest among non-governmental organisations. They mainly impart technical knowledge to the youth who may have the need for such skills. It is argued that NGOs “provide knowledge in business management, interpersonal skills and leadership skills”

(Adesope, Amadi and Agumagu, 2010: 2; Kapitsa, 2007: 49). This evidence alludes to the immense contribution of these philanthropic organisations in filling the gap left by the retreating state which is facing numerous challenges.

Social empowerment is made possible by the extension of support by the NGOs. According to Ulleberg (2009: 21) “involvement of NGOs contributes to intrinsic motivation of youth who develop self-esteem, self-confidence, self-efficacy, sense of control, sense of empowerment, feelings of hope, success, independence and self-reliance”. Development of the above attributes illustrates that a positive change is facilitated by the NGOs when they implement self-help projects in rural areas.

Criticism has however been levelled against NGOs despite the appreciation expressed by their supporters. Accordingly, lack of consideration of the individual needs of the youth is seen as a major weakness. Indeed, it is important to note that youth interests are sacrificed when entrepreneurship programmes are designed or implemented. This is characteristic of the welfarist approach in the development industry. In fact, NGOs intervention programmes are homogeneous implying that they design a one size fits all program. Against this background, “insufficient attention is given to local conditions and interests within communities” (Chambers, 1987: 3).

Creation of employment through self-help initiatives in Masvingo province has benefitted from the partnership of the government and the non-governmental organisations. The “Informal Sector Training and Resource Network (INSTARN) Programme in Zimbabwe was started in 1995 as a bilateral project between the German (through GTZ) and Zimbabwean governments” (Kanyenze, Mhone and Sparreboom, 2000: 30). The project which was based at Masvingo polytechnic aimed to impart practical entrepreneurial skills to the beneficiaries. Although there were no clear specifications on the age categories 18-35, many of the enrolled individuals fell in the same category of people regarded as youth in this study.

This programme arguably helped in the eradication of the skills problem among the majority of the unemployed people in rural areas. This was done through the provision of “technical training for informal sector businesses to improve the production skills of participants and the

marketability of their products” (Kanyenze et al., 2000: 30). Although the evidence presented in the research is not focusing on rural youth per se, it demonstrates the important role played by the NGOs in the creation of self-help projects through capacity building. In essence, it was ideal to provide training linked to already existing skills because beneficiaries generally had some basic knowledge on what could work for them in their local communities.

In the spirit of promoting self-help entrepreneurship, “those interested in starting their own businesses were referred to Zambuko Trust, which received a grant from INSTARN for on-lending to clients recommended by the project” (Kanyenze et al., 2000: 30). Efforts were made to create business linkages by twinning the infant projects with established enterprises. This is said to have successfully created employment among the youth as they were co-opted in the host business. Employment creation enhances the chances of socio-economic empowerment by expanding the youth’s asset base. Besides, employment was also expanded through setting up of new businesses.

The next section seeks to understand youth unemployment using the SLF.

3.5.6 Understanding Youth Empowerment in Zimbabwe using the SLF

- **Vulnerability Context of Youth in Zimbabwe**

According to Gwimbi (2009: 71) “vulnerability is viewed as the proportion of human lives, assets and economic activity that could be affected in a given place should a given disaster occur”. Droughts, occasional floods and high unemployment characterise rural Zimbabwe’s vulnerability context. Calamities brought about by the vulnerability context impact negatively on youth as individuals, as groups and the whole community at large.

- **Livelihood Assets**

The sustainable livelihood asset component was specifically used to guide the study in investigating livelihood scenarios among the youth. This was done through analysis of self-help projects and their contribution towards youth socio-economic empowerment. The fact that assets are the building blocks reveals that they form the foundation of the empowerment pyramid which needs to be nurtured if final youth empowerment is to be realised. Rural Zimbabwe comprises youth whose access to livelihood assets is shaped by the political

environment. Youth affiliated to the ruling party have better chances to access resources provided by the state. This means they have better opportunities compared to their compatriots who are either non-aligned or belong to the opposition parties. Such discrimination inhibits the potential of youth to realise socio-economic empowerment. This also affects the potential of self-help projects in emancipating the youth as the females constitute the majority.

It is critical to note that youth do not have control on such assets as land and capital. Adults exercise this control on behalf of the family and there is evidence that inability to control livelihood assets impacts negatively on the youth's potential to initiate successful entrepreneurial projects. In rural Zimbabwe, land is communal property and the institutional arrangements determine the access and control over livelihood resources that are derived from the environment. Council by-laws as well as the traditional leaders regulate the exploitation of such resources as land, minerals, wood, fish and honey. Thus, youth depend on the environment which they have little control over. This significantly affects the implementation of their self-help projects in rural Zimbabwe.

The scanty and scarce empirical discourse on the influence of self-help projects and youth empowerment in rural Zimbabwe, in the literature motivated the researcher to focus on the sustainable livelihood approach in relation to youth entrepreneurial activities. According to Odusote (2016: 144), SLA incorporates dynamism in its attempt to understand and proffer solutions to factors that shape people's lives. Chigunta (2005: 42) avers that "pursuing a livelihood is a process of reducing vulnerabilities and building capabilities, largely through enhancement or transformation of human, social, financial, physical and natural assets".

- **Institutional Arrangements and Policy Processes**

The government policies implemented in line with the drive to economically empower the youth are explored in this study. According to Scoones (1998:12), an institutional understanding is commensurate with the desire to explore the efficacy of interventions made by the government to deal with development challenges. Indeed, institutional arrangements determine the livelihood outcomes that the youth in rural Zimbabwe achieve. Government interventions affect the "composition of portfolios of livelihood strategies through provision

of access to livelihood resources". The sustainable livelihood framework component on policies and institutions is critical in shedding light on youth socio-economic empowerment supported through policy interventions in the country.

Scoones (1998: 12) suggests that "understanding institutional processes allows the identification of restrictions/barriers and opportunities (or 'gateways') to sustainable livelihoods". Secondly an "institutional analysis sheds light on the social processes which underlie livelihood sustainability in rural areas". Therefore, the SLF helped the researcher to gain "an insight into social relationships, institutional forms and power dynamics embedded" in youth self-help initiatives in rural Zimbabwe. The officials in the stakeholder ministries implement the state policies designed to ensure the realisation of youth socio-economic empowerment as youth negotiate sustainable livelihood strategies.

Youth empowerment laws in Zimbabwe can be traced as far back as 1997 when the Zimbabwe Youth Council Act was promulgated. However, the youth empowerment policy itself was heralded by the adoption of the National Youth Policy in 2000. The document was drawn from the African Youth Charter and the Constitution of the Republic of Zimbabwe which recognise the youth as an important category in the population. According to Mambo (2010: xi) "the establishment of a National Youth Policy; the enactment of the Zimbabwe Youth Council Act (Chapter 25:19 as amended 1997) creating the National Youth Council; the establishment of the National Employment Policy Framework, the establishment of Zimbabwe Youth Employment Network; and the drafting of the National Skills Development Policy Framework" reflect the government thrust to empower the youth socially and economically.

Scoones and Wolmer (2003: 4) suggest that the emphasis on the asset pentagon side-lined the role of "policies, institutions and processes in determining access, control and use of assets, and the choice and interaction of different livelihood strategies that are used". Bureaucrats who work for the government and NGOs influence the empowerment outcomes among individual youth involved in self-help projects. Again, it is important to note that "understanding issues of rights, power and institutions is critical in understanding and

influencing policy, which has long term implications for sustainable livelihoods” (Carney, 2002: 28).

The National Youth Policy of 2000 (amended in 2013) is the basis of analysis as it stipulates the strategies designed by the government in its quest to empower the local youth. In addition to the National Youth Policy, the government and the donor community have also initiated various programmes aimed to engage youth in projects. These programmes are also seen as critical in the promotion of youth self-reliance, critical thinking and wellbeing. Institutions designed to enhance the welfare of youth in rural areas are also critical in answering how livelihood outcomes are shaped in rural Zimbabwe. This reveals that there is a network of policies, institutions and processes aimed at facilitating the socio-economic empowerment of rural youth in Zimbabwe.

- **Livelihood Strategies in Zimbabwe**

Choices and opportunities that help the youth to withstand shocks and overcome stress are their livelihood strategies. In rural Zimbabwe, youth have adopted several livelihood strategies which are often based on resources, skill and shaped by the policies of the government. The strategies could also be reactive like selling livestock at abnormal times and structural decisions that can change the whole nature of livelihood like migration (Scoones, 1998: 11). Youth in rural Zimbabwe have resorted to migration into South Africa and Botswana. Many of the youth livelihood strategies depend on the environment for example Mopani worm harvesting and selling or alluvial gold mining in local rivers. Youth self-help projects can be understood as livelihood strategies that the study assessed in relation to the National Youth Policy.

Youth in rural areas have differentiated access to assets which shape the nature of self-help projects which they are likely to embark on. Rural areas generally offer fewer opportunities compared with the urban areas. Preceding researches have established that migration is a livelihood strategy. Quite a significant number of youth in rural Zimbabwe migrate to towns such as Masvingo, Bulawayo and Harare to look for formal employment. Despite such attempts, the prospects of finding any formal job in the cities have constantly diminished. Whilst livelihood strategies include migration, this research rather focused on the self-help

projects initiated and controlled by the youth as individuals in rural Zimbabwe. These are seen as strategies to overcome poverty and unemployment. Understanding how livelihood strategies are conceptualised and interact with other components in the framework sheds light on this study looking at policy implementation in rural Zimbabwe.

- **Livelihood Outcomes**

Sustainable livelihood outcomes are moulded by livelihood strategies and institutional factors. The livelihood framework identifies outcomes as the achievements or outputs of livelihood strategies. These outcomes are shaped by the differences in accessing capitals as well as the policies determining the operating environment. Individuals and groups experience different livelihood outcomes due to distinct vulnerability contexts (Carney, 2003).

In this study youth livelihood outcomes are seen as the benefits realised by youth engaging in self-help projects in rural Zimbabwe. Outcomes are determined by several factors which inhibit the potential of youth engaging in various self-help projects. The study sought the perspectives of the youth on the role of policy in emancipating them through access to resources. In this research, the important livelihood outcomes should characterise an empowered youth. It is understood in this research that income per se does not determine the level of empowerment and should not be given emphasis when evaluating the livelihood outcomes. However, increased income may enhance the youth's well-being and quality of life as they become financially emancipated to access basic needs. This study focused on the socio-economic empowerment of rural youth. Aspects such as critical thinking, assertiveness, independence and well-being among the youth are viewed as important livelihood outcomes in this research.

3.5.6.1 Challenges in spearheading pro-youth development in Zimbabwe

Although there is a clear interest by the government to implement youth empowerment policy in the country, this has been derailed by a litany of challenges. It is noted that youth face "constraints in terms of employment due to lack of skills because of limited access to skills development institutions and programmes" (Newsday 29 April 2014). The challenge continues "in spite of the expansion of the education and training system at all levels after independence in the public and private sector and NGO sectors". It is further claimed that

“lack of access to livelihood assets affects the youth in rural and remote areas more than those in urban centres and women more than men” (UNDP, 2013: 5). These challenges faced by the youth necessitate and justify government policy to improve youth livelihoods

Despite the Integrated Skills Outreach Programme initiative by the government, the challenge of skill mismatch is still prevalent in the country. Skills are critical if the policy by the government is to become effective. It is noted that “providing youth with decent jobs is in keeping with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDG target 4.4 which calls for a substantial increase in the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills” (Sunday Mail, 16 July 2017). Machadu observed that “youth represent the majority of the population in the country and they face a myriad of other challenges apart from unemployment. The problems range from inequality, corruption, poverty, human trafficking, emigration, drug addiction as well as HIV and AIDS pandemic” (in Sunday Mail, 16 November 2016). Youth tend to be exposed to all socio-economic ills and that is not compatible with the ideals of socio-economic empowerment and sustainable livelihood.

Similarly, it is noted that “mismatch between the skills being developed in the training system and what is needed in the labour market is worsening youth unemployment” (Ligami, 2016: 1). Several reasons contribute to this problem. It is noted that there are weak linkages between the training provided and the private sector needs (Mambo, 2010). Besides, mismatch of the technologies used in training institutions and those existing in industry is evident. The curriculum is also blamed for being too theoretical (Nziramasanga Report, 1999).

Human capital is also a challenge in the Ministry of Youth. There are allegations of incompetence and partisan conduct among the officers in wards. According to Public Service Commission (PSC) audit report “there is no single project which the youth officers have initiated in their respective areas despite being on the government pay roll” (New Zimbabwe, 21 December 2016). The PSC audit also gathered that “youth officers claim ownership of projects initiated and managed by other extension workers at ward level”. It is further claimed that the officers in the ministry are partisan because most of them “are ZANU PF militia who double as ZANU political commissars during the elections as they forcibly mobilise support for the ruling party” (New Zimbabwe, 2016; Mude, 2014: 108). This evidence highlights the

serious limitation faced in policy implementation promoting transparency and equity for the youth.

Access to capital needed to implement projects is also a challenge even though the government initiated the small enterprise development cooperatives (SEDCO). The challenge noted with SEDCO which offers loans is that it prefers registered enterprises. This affects many youth who fail to register because they operate enterprises which are temporary. It is noted that “SEDCO lends to registered enterprises in the case of SMEs and Cooperatives, who can borrow up to USD5,000.00 and to individuals in the case of micro-enterprises (this includes individual vendors and flea market operators) who can borrow up to USD500.00” (Mambo, 2010: 65). The amount is however subject to availability and with the crippling cash shortages in the economy it is apparent that many youth fail to access the loans.

Critics have also raised concern on the conditions attached to the loan facility with intended beneficiaries failing to meet the laid down procedures. Repaying loans within a period of four to six months is a challenge for many youth who operate survivalist projects. It is argued that the period “is quite smaller for the youth to be in a position to pay back the loan” (Majoni, Matunhu and Chaderopa, 2016: 381). The conditions are insurmountable for the rural youth whose access to cash is limited by the unavailability of lending institutions and banks. More so “all loans have to be secured by some form of collateral which can include title deeds; cessation of lease, shares in listed companies; and movable assets like household goods and livestock” (Mambo, 2010: 65). Further still, the facility demands a guarantor upfront before the loan approval.

Youth are excluded in planning of projects that seek to empower them as top-down policies neglect the rural youth in the country in project implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of the interventions (Charumbira and Chituri, 2013). This happens despite the fact that the National Youth Policy provides for the involvement of youth and their active participation in national political, economic and social processes (National Youth Policy, 2013). Research done previously has demonstrated that rural people can barely influence the public policies (Charumbira and Chituri, 2013). Alexander (1996: 80) notes that “far from

empowering the disadvantaged through democratic bodies, policies reinforce patriarchal authority within communities, thus helping to marginalise women, the young and the poor”.

Additionally, corruption and nepotism continue to hinder efforts by the youth to get material and financial support from the government (Newsday 29 April 2014). These are indeed among the list of barriers to youth development in Zimbabwe. There is evidence that the youth are failing to benefit from interventions aimed at supporting them due to corruption and lack of transparency. For example, programmes are being ‘hijacked’ by officials for personal gain leaving youth unattended to (Ministry of Youth Report, August 2016). Public funds abuse impacts negatively on the youth because their plight continues to be ignored yet they are real. The Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund (ZIMDEF) is a case in point. Instead of having government departments complementing each other, they compete for resources (Dore et. al, 2008: 86). Capacity Building Programmes have also lacked coordination thereby weakening the prospects of success. Overlap of activities between the Ministry of Youth and Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have not produced best results. It is also noted that most programmes in the ministries are not demand driven but rather they are supply driven (ZINEPF 2009: 68). This also weakens the position of the unemployed youth as youth empowerment policies come from the top and not from the grassroots.

3.5.6.2 SWOT analysis of the National Youth Policy in Zimbabwe

This section helps to position the policy on how its implementation will enhance or undermine the social and economic emancipation of youth in rural areas. It is critical to note that the current National Youth Policy is “consistent with the Constitution of Zimbabwe and major international conventions and agreements which Zimbabwe has subscribed to, in particular the rights and freedoms set forth in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights” (Murinda, 2014). This gives it a legal base and moral foundation upon which the national programs for the youth have to be based.

- **Strengths of the policy**

The youth policy is praised for being gender sensitive by recognising the fact that youth comprise both male and female members and as such there should not be any discrimination based on sexual differences. The National Youth Policy declares that “advancing gender

equality and equity is a fundamental prerequisite for youth development and hence constitutes the cornerstone for the Youth Policy in Zimbabwe". It has also been credited for recognising that youth have responsibilities in need of fulfilment. These include "participating in the social, cultural and economic development of the country; developing, appreciating and respecting national cultural norms and values; taking an active involvement in decision making at all levels affecting their lives; and to upholding as a priority the protection of the environment" (National Youth Policy, 2013). These demonstrate the concern that the policy places on total development of the youth and the sustainable management of resources.

In addition to the above, the National Youth Policy is progressive in that it sets out to create an enabling environment for youth empowerment. It is important to build a base for the establishment of self-help projects through supportive policies. The document also spells out "marshalling the resources necessary for undertaking programmes to fully develop youth's mental, moral, social, economic, political, cultural, spiritual and physical potential in order to improve their quality of life" (NYP, 2013: 7). Strength of the policy is also seen in the goal aiming "to contribute towards the participatory eradication of poverty and all forms of social and economic exclusion of the youth since poverty is one of the most formidable enemies of choice". This resonates with the Agenda for Sustainable Development which advocates for the poverty free society by the year 2030. Participatory approaches are also in sync with the sustainable livelihoods approach as well as critical social empowerment theory underpinning this study.

Some key objectives of the National Youth Policy also espouse ideas of empowerment which is central to this research. It is given that the policy "seeks to systematically integrate youth issues into all policies, plans, programmes and strategies at all levels and within all sectors and institutions of government, NGOs and the private sector" (National Youth Policy, 2013: 9). This is meant to create some opportunities for the youth who are generally marginalised in the communities. The other objective is to "develop and implement programmes and interventions on all national youth concerns". Ideally, this reflects an attempt to improve the youth socio-economic status in Zimbabwe.

- **Weaknesses of the policy**

There are some loopholes in the current National Youth Policy and implementation of the policy. Some objectives seem to be rather too ambitious and out of reach of the capacity of the government. Objective five and six spell out that there is need to “provide opportunities for youth employment and initiatives and promote the value and development of vocational and skills training for the youth” (National Youth Policy, 2013). This has been more rhetoric than practical especially in rural Zimbabwe.

Providing youth with opportunities for employment and initiatives has been a major policy challenge for the Zimbabwean government and the current unemployment statistics are deplorable. The nation has degenerated into a nation of vendors (Newsday, 8 April 2014) and this is out of necessity rather than choice. The government has also violently descended on the flea market operators thereby contradicting the ideas of black economic empowerment through retailing. A statutory instrument (SI 64) banning the importation of some commodities has also impacted negatively on youth engaging in cross border trade. Thus, this demonstrates a weakness in the policy environment.

State autonomy has arguably influenced the implementation of youth empowerment policy in Zimbabwe. Migdal (1988: 6) defines state autonomy as when the bureaucracy can act upon its own preferences. This kind of decision-making by the bureaucracy is encouraged by rules and practices that insulate, not isolate, bureaucrats from the rest of society (Du Toit, 1995: 52). In this instance, the policy makers and implementers will insulate themselves from the intended beneficiaries, the rural youth. Consequently this leads to what Gellner (1983: 15) refers to as ‘gelding’, a tactic used to destroy the linkages between leaders and particular social groups, like the youth. Exclusive, selfish and narrow individual interests are pursued in a bid to satisfy personal gains rather than national interests. This can be done through constitutional rules, legislation and policy which create the conditions for gelding.

- **Opportunities in the policy**

As a key strategic area specified in the youth policy, youth employment creation and their ability to access and control livelihood resources is seen as broadening livelihood opportunities among the young people. The incorporation of young people is seen as enabling

them to exhibit their natural talent thereby ensuring youth development. The document notes that the government encourages and develops “specific youth-oriented programmes that improve the skills, productivity and experiences of young people through a range of institutions, including schools, vocational training centres, community organizations and NGOs” (National Youth Policy, 2013). This is in sync with the quest to create opportunities for the rural youth in the country.

The policy is also explicit in recognising the importance of young people despite their age or gender. It therefore “encourages equal employment opportunities for the youth that have attained the age of majority, with particular attention to reducing gender inequities and inequalities” (National Youth Policy, 2013). Attaining eighteen years is significant in Zimbabwe because at this age youth will be employable and independent from their parents or guardians. This however is affected by the opportunities found in the economy. The economic challenges being experienced in Zimbabwe are seen as a threat to the youth. One can argue that the policy provisions are not enough in promoting the welfare of the youth as the limited resources and opportunities continue to impact negatively on the youth. To cushion the youth from the vagaries of unemployment, the state has laid down the strategy of establishing a youth empowerment fund encouraging youth access to capital.

- **Threats to the policy**

Whilst there are some critical opportunities in the policy environment, the threats are also notable. The National Youth Policy has sought to “encourage enterprises to play an active role in the provision of continuous training to young employees” (National Youth Policy, 2013). This idea is not viable given the limited resources especially in the rural areas where such enterprises are virtually non-existent. There is also an attempt to “establish/encourage training programmes for promoting self-employment activities” (Mambo, 2010; Murinda 2014). Youth training centres have been set up across the country but the enrolment rates have continued to dwindle due to both negative attitudes among the youth as well as lack of opportunities for the youth graduates.

It is noted that youth empowerment facilitates active participation among the young generation in community development. Participation is also critical in that it has a

democratising effect. The strategies outlined in the National youth policy to promote youth empowerment include “involving young people during the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of youth programmes” (NYP, 2013: 9). This has not been implemented on the ground despite the fact that the policy was crafted more than seventeen years ago. The government through the ministry of youth also aimed to “facilitate establishment of youth groups and youth NGOs, led by the youth themselves and ensure their participation in decision-making processes at all levels.” Few examples have been noted but they are only found in towns and this has some negative implications on the organisations.

Rural youth have been excluded in the national programmes covering youth issues. This is happening despite the country having strategies “to promote the creation of a national youth forum for all youth and youth organisations as well as facilitating the direct involvement of youth in national issues”. Such forums have been “manipulated by the political elites” to spearhead their political agendas at the expense of the plight of the rural youth whose voice continues to be suppressed, repressed and oppressed (Newsday 29 April, 2014). Direct involvement of youth has been dealt a major blow by the battle for political survival among the politicians who are the main actors in policy formulation and implementation.

3.5.6.3 Overall assessment of the National Youth Policy

Despite the numerous misgivings expressed by critics of the National Youth Policy, it is important to point that it is a step in the right direction. The Policy is meant to cover needs and aspirations of all the youth of the country. However, it has special targets understood to be worse off compared to their counterparts since they are “in a more disadvantaged position than the overall youth population. These groups include adolescent girls, unemployed youth, HIV positive youth and orphans, street children/youth, young single mothers and youth with disabilities” (National Youth Policy, 2013: 28). Whilst this is an indication of progressive programming, it is one thing to identify a priority group, yet it is certainly another thing to implement the priority. The evidence on the ground does not tally with the evidence presented in the policy document.

Implementation of the National Youth Policy and how that translates into socio-economic empowerment of youth in rural areas in Zimbabwe is the major thrust of the study. The need

for coordination and cooperation in bringing about effective policy implementation has been noted in preceding studies. Addressing youth concerns also demands that stakeholders work together to ensure that their demands are adequately addressed. The Zimbabwean youth policy has highlighted the need for a multi-stakeholder approach. The government, private sector, religious organisations and NGOs should forge together efforts to address the needs of the young generation. It is the submission of policy researchers that comprehensive outcomes are not possible where the interests of one organisation per se are advanced.

The argument above suggests that where there are multiple partners working towards the common goal of youth emancipation, the results are certain. In Zimbabwe, “despite having many organizations that purport to advance the concerns of the youth, the majority of youth remain vulnerable to manipulation by politicians” (Magede, Nehanda Radio 14 November 2012). The literature indicates that power dynamics appear to interfere with the genuine strategies being implemented by the private sector and NGOs among other partners. According to Magede (in Nehanda radio 14 November 2012) “a telling example is the OLD Mutual Youth Fund that was politicized from the beginning. To date many youths still live under false hope that their projects are still being considered”.

As an indication of the weakness in the implementation of the National Youth Policy, there is little follow up made on the beneficiaries and their use of funds allocated by the government (Magede in Nehanda Radio 14 November 2012). Accordingly, Livingston Dzikira, the Zimbabwe Youth Council Director laments that “70% of the people who have benefited have diverted the funds” (Nehanda Radio, 2012). Loans have been used to pay lobola revealing serious levels of corruption and graft. Analysts have lambasted the secrecy of the process of accessing the funds. Besides, wide consultation across the country to assess the projects was not done. This reveals that there is little commitment at monitoring and evaluation of the fund.

Although there are some reservations and disquiet about what the government is doing in promoting youth self-help projects, the aspect of funding is notable. According to Mambo (2010: 22) “the Youth Development Fund is providing loans to youth for self-employment initiatives. It is also used as a Guarantee Fund for loans provided by banks and selected micro

finance institutions (MFIs). There has been increased expenditure of the fund from 5.5 percent in 2009 to 92.6 percent in 2010". This is the evidence of resource allocation that shows commitment to the development of youth. However, general reflection is that rural areas have been left out of these programmes because of information gaps as well as deliberate neglect by the office bearers.

3.6 Lessons for Zimbabwe to be learned from other countries

The Organization of American States' Youth Agenda acts as a guide for increasing youth participation in politics and increasing access to skills, training and employment. The Youth Agenda focuses on three pillars: increasing dialogue with youth and youth participation in OAS policy formation, capacity building for youth, and supporting youth leaders within member states (Glassco and Holguin, 2016: 17). This agenda represents a good starting point for including youth and drawing attention to the issues they face.

El Salvador and Nicaragua's youth departments successfully consulted and involved youth in policy formulation and implementation. It is given that they listened to youth and captured their opinions during contributions to national plans (World Bank, 2003: 60). The integrationist model of policy implementation suggests that "at a minimum, governments should solicit feedback on policies and laws that will affect them prior to implementation" (Marume et al., 2016).

Ghanaian government instituted one of the most comprehensive youth employment and skills-training policy agendas in Sub-Saharan Africa. A number of agencies including dedicated organizations are now in place, seemingly to tackle this problem head-on (Ackah-Baidoo, 2016: 255). This impressive record is much in keeping with the regional spirit of promoting the welfare of youth through self-help projects. The implementation of youth empowerment policies in African countries will certainly help the majority of youth who face the challenge of unemployment.

In Botswana, responses to the plight of the youth have always taken the form of policy and programme formulation. The interventions were meant to respond directly to the problems facing the youth in Botswana (Diratsile, 2017: 76). This resonates with Anderson (2004)'s

assertion that public policy is aimed to confront the challenges in the community. Nthomang in Diraditsile (2016: 78) asserts that “many government policies in Botswana suffer from the absence of in-built monitoring and evaluation”. This inhibits attempts to track progress in terms of impact against set objectives and targets.

Elsewhere, in Uganda the policy promotes “equal access to socio-economic and employment opportunities commensurate with ability, potential and needs of youth” (Okiring, 2011: 13). It is lamented that the youth in rural areas have been left behind in many programmes that are concentrated in urban areas. Critics have also pointed out that the Ugandan government is failing to support youth doing vocational jobs. Besides, Okiring (2011: 14) is sceptical that “there is no policy in place to give them tax subsidies and the government has also failed to control inflation which negatively affects youth enterprises”.

The Nigerian government has also initiated a number of programmes to emancipate its young generation. According to Oduwole (2015: 31) “in spite of the myriad policies and programmes initiated by Nigerian government” they have failed to have a positive impact on the country’s youth. Oduwole concluded that the programmes give a false impression of being laudable thereby reflecting the lacuna between policy formulation and implementation.

In Swaziland the government tried to implement youth support programmes through funding. According to Mavundla, Dlamini, Nyoni and Mac-Ikemenjima (2015: 95) “the attempt to address the gaps in relation to access to capital saw the establishment of the National Youth Enterprise Fund (NYEF)”. Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania have pursued “a systemic approach to youth entrepreneurship development using several strategic approaches and components” (ILO, 2012: 43). The intervention strategies adopted include supporting the training of youth in vocational skills and creating a conducive environment for entrepreneurship development. Zimbabwe can draw some lessons from these countries in order to implement pro-poor youth policies that can enhance youth socio-economic empowerment.

Chigunta (2002) and Muthee (2010) concur that “there is a lack of comprehensive youth policies that are integrated with national development plans and broad macroeconomic policies”. They further suggest that “lack of adequate human and financial resources devoted

to youth issues has resulted in the so-called Cinderella ministries for youth, ministries that exist but have very little functionality” (Gyimah-Brempong and Kimenyi, 2013: 21-22). In such a context, youth empowerment is dealt a severe blow due to lack of coordination and consistence.

According to Muthee (2010: 4) “state-driven policies have the potential of integrating youth in the mainstream development processes”. This is however contrasted to the fact that “they also have the potential to create tensions and conflict, and fail to change the circumstances of youth”. This observation is very critical in assessing the Zimbabwean youth empowerment policy implementation.

3.7 CONCLUSION

The chapter sought to capture the theoretical framework of the study. It discussed the essence of critical social empowerment, both as a theory, and as a practical guide for intervention strategies that can be used to empower youth in their communities and under the prevailing policy environment. Additionally, the sustainable livelihoods framework has been assessed in relation to the understanding of policy implementation and youth socio-economic empowerment through self-help projects. The chapter further looked at the youth empowerment through the use of the SLF. In so doing, the chapter further provided a SWOT analysis of the National Youth Policy. The Chapter indicates that the policy provides for the social and economic transformation of youth in Zimbabwe. This chapter argued that youth need an environment where they can become assertive, gain self-esteem, implement their entrepreneurial projects and improve their livelihoods in a sustainable manner. The next chapter looks at research methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The conceptualisation of what methodology implies is contested. Kothari (2004: 8) suggests that research methodology can be defined as “a way to systematically solve a research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically”. This definition suggests that research is undertaken to solve a problem through the way in which it is designed. Research design is understood as “a comprehensive plan for data collection in an empirical research project. It is a blue print for the empirical research aimed at answering specific research questions or testing specific hypothesis, and must specify the data collection, the instrument development process and sampling process” (Bhattacharjee, 2012: 35). Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2006: 71) understand it as “...operations to be performed, in order to test a specific hypothesis under a given condition”. It is upheld that the research problem “determines the methods and procedures: the types of measurement, the sampling, the data collection and the data analysis to be employed for the proposed research” (Zikmund, Babin, Carr and Griffin, 2010: 66).

Creswell (2007) notes that a research methodology is the process used for data collection for the body of research. A particular methodology adopted in a research should describe how the data was collected and analysed. This study used a qualitative methodology which is interpretive and analytic in nature. The approach enabled the researcher to make sense of why youth participants responded in the manner they did to policy implementation. It is argued that the choice for a particular methodology is critical in that it articulates the reasons for choosing a particular technique or procedure in the research (Kothari, 2004). This is critical because it enables readers to understand the research process adopted. It is noted that research involving people basically falls into two principal categories which are quantitative and qualitative research. This chapter looks at the methodology and procedures used to collect and analyse the data. The thrust is to outline the methodology adopted in seeking to respond to the research objectives and research questions.

4.2 KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study investigated the implementation of the National Youth Policy in promoting socio-economic empowerment of youth in rural Zimbabwe. To achieve this aim, the following objectives were identified:

- To explore the link between public policy, development and youth empowerment.
- To determine the current status of policy frameworks that promotes empowerment amongst youth in Zimbabwe.
- To analyse youth self-help projects in rural Zimbabwe within a Sustainable Livelihoods Framework.
- To determine the perceptions of youth in Mwenezi District engaged in self-help projects, towards the implementation of the National Youth Act.
- To identify the challenges in achieving youth socio economic empowerment, through the implementation of the National Youth Policy in Zimbabwe.

4.3 KEY QUESTIONS ANSWERED IN THIS RESEARCH

The study answered the following research questions;

- What is the link between public policy, rural development and youth socio-economic empowerment in rural Zimbabwe?
- What is the current status of youth policy guiding self-help projects and empowerment in rural Zimbabwe?
- What contribution is being made by youth self-help projects towards realising sustainable livelihood in Mwenezi District?
- What are the perceptions of youth engaging in self-help projects towards the implementation of the National Youth Policy in Zimbabwe?
- What challenges are being faced in an attempt to achieve youth empowerment through the implementation of the National Youth Policy in Zimbabwe?

4.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher was involved directly in the research in an attempt to understand the dynamics of youth empowerment policy implementation through self-help projects. The entrepreneurial activities and their manifestation as livelihood strategies for youth socio-

economic empowerment were examined. Such a study was limited by several obstacles that needed to be dealt with. These include the sensitivity of youth empowerment issues and the marginalisation of the youth by the elite. This posed hindrances for the researcher to access some study participants. An additional issue, was that some youth participants assumed that the researcher was a political activist doing consultancy work for the opposition parties.

The researcher obtained clearance from the authorities to introduce himself to the population under study. This assisted in establishing contacts with the local traditional leaders, Ministry officials at the district, the NGOs working with youth self-help initiatives among other officials, and in turn facilitated the process of gaining access to the respondents. It must be noted however, that the political disturbances during the month of November, during a miniature coup that deposed long-time leader Robert Mugabe, affected the level of participation, and in some cases responses from the youth.

It is important to note here that, Mwenezi District is polarised on political affiliations and this posed a challenge to freely carry out the study during this tenuous period. Whilst permissions were granted from the Provincial Minister's office, the District Administrator's office, Ministry of Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment, Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises, and Ministry of Women Affairs (Gender), the researcher acknowledges that the environment may have affected some of the responses.

Audio-recording was done for the interviewees who consented to be audio-tapped. This ensured that actual words spoken by the interviewee were captured. Six interviewees declined to be audio-tapped and the researcher sought to record accurate responses soon after the interview in order to be able to report as much information as possible based upon field notes and memory.

4.5 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

4.5.1 Understanding Research Philosophy

Research is informed by a particular philosophy that guides how data is gathered, analysed and interpreted. The research philosophy adopted contains important assumptions about the

way one views the world. Therefore, the assumptions determine the research strategy and the methods chosen as part of that strategy. It is also argued that the philosophy is partly influenced by practical considerations although the major factor is one's world view and the relationship between knowledge and the process by which it is developed. Research philosophy is divided into epistemology, ontology and axiology.

Research philosophy is also known as research paradigm. A paradigm is understood as "a pattern, structure and framework or system of scientific and academic ideas, values and assumptions" (Olsen, Lodwick, and Dunlop, 1992: 16). Weaver and Olson (2006: 460) also add that "paradigms are patterns of beliefs and practices that regulate inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses, frames and processes through which investigation is accomplished".

4.5.1.1 Positivism

Researchers who subscribe to this school of thought suggest that reality is something that can be studied objectively. It is upheld in this school of thought that what is real is stable and observable scientifically giving an objective description. This implies that the observer or researcher does this without interfering with the research phenomenon. The rationale behind the philosophy is that researchers should be independent and objective in their research work (Pierce, 2008: 23). This would allow replicability of the observation from different researchers. The philosophy is mainly employed by researchers seeking to generalise their findings and form some relationships in the social world between independent and dependent variables.

This research philosophy is commonly applied in quantitative researches that seek to give predictions based on previous experiences in the social world. It has also dominated research over the years as its proponents argued that it is consistent, valid, reliable and predictable.

4.5.1.2 Interpretivism

This philosophy upholds the view that reality can only be interpreted through subjective perspectives held by the one who is looking at a particular situation. Some scholars use the word constructivist to refer to the philosophical ideas in interpretivism. The philosophy argues for studying particular phenomena in their natural setting. Besides, it is recognised in this philosophy that the researcher has a bearing on the research setting and participants. It

is also admitted that multiple perspectives arise from interpreting the reality in a given research setting. It is however claimed that interpretations are in themselves a part of the scientific knowledge pursued in the research endeavour.

4.5.1.3 Approach Adopted by this Study

This study adopted the constructivist (Interpretive) view which is an insider perspective. The view called the interpretive paradigm “supports the idea that there are many truths and multiple realities” (Mertens, 2009; Creswell, 2014). Additionally, “the interpretive paradigm is associated more with methodological approaches that provide an opportunity for voice, concerns and practices of research participants to be heard” (Cole, 2006: 26). Researchers using qualitative methodologies are “more concerned about uncovering knowledge about how people feel and think in the circumstances in which they find themselves, than making judgements about whether those thoughts and feelings are valid” (Cole, *ibid*). In this particular research, the thrust was to understand how youth feel about the National Youth Policy implementation and its effectiveness in promoting socio-economic empowerment for the rural youth in Zimbabwe.

In this research, the words interpretive and constructive are used interchangeably as they seem to convey the same meaning. This paradigm is very much associated with qualitative researchers. However, it is claimed that it goes beyond ordinary research interests of gathering research evidence. According to Hackley (2003: 10) interpretive research “entails an intellectually critical engagement with that data in order to go beyond mere anecdote or reportage and satisfy the criteria for advanced studies”. That interpretive research does not aim at generalised findings is widely shared by its proponents. It is also advanced that ‘interpretive’ study “seek insights built on a careful and well-informed reading of a particular issue in a given social context”.

The study employed the interpretive approach noting its strength in understanding youth perceptions and experiences in the implementation of self-help projects. The approach is commensurate with the desire to comprehend why youth choose their livelihood strategies and how they conceive policy influence on their activities. It is noted that interpretivists “focus on human beings and their way of interpreting and making sense of social reality” (Bevir and

Rhodes, 2004: 130). The respondents are critical in this approach as their beliefs and preferences shape their world view. These shape youth actions and practices. Interpretivists argue that “human experience is a process of interpretation rather than sensory perception of the external phenomena” (Winch in Jones, 2004: 4).

According to the interpretive paradigm, knowledge is not static and is continuously created. Researchers using the approach “use qualitative data to generate insight into the ways in which social reality is constructed by people in interaction with others. The reality lies in the language and meanings of research participants (such as interviewees), not in assumed causal relations which can be implied from qualitative data” (Hackley, 2003: 74). The approach is used to answer how and why questions so as to understand the respondents’ worldview. In this study questions revolving on how youth are empowered and why the youth empowerment policy is generating particular results in rural Zimbabwe were emphasised.

Alveson and Deetz (2000: 33) suggest that, in interpretive research, “people are not considered to be objects . . . but are active sense makers like the researcher”. In this light, youth respondents and the key informants dealing with youth self-help entrepreneurial projects are the active sense makers. The researcher’s part in the interpretive process is openly acknowledged. Researchers seek to use this involvement to deepen their understanding of the research process and they express it in their research reporting through a *reflexive* research reporting style that is open to self-criticism, honest about influences and biases and frank about limitations.

This paradigm “believes that the reality consists of people’s subjective experiences of the external world; thus, they may adopt an inter-subjective epistemology and the ontological belief that reality is socially constructed” (Hackley, 2003: 114). This perspective is shared by Willis (in Antwi and Hamza, 2015: 218) who argues that “interpretivists believe that there is no single correct route or particular method to knowledge”. The arguments shared by the two emphasise the subjective nature of what some see as the reality.

The interpretive paradigm is meant to refine the theories used in making various interpretations. This is done within a particular context where participants are drawn.

According to Yeboah (2012: 107) “researchers are therefore urged to understand the socially constructed nature of the social world and realise that values and interests become part of the research process”. In this light this study looked at the rural context and how youth have managed to draw livelihoods in the obtaining policy environment. Individual perspectives and activities of the youth were given much attention. According to Halloway (in Ponelis, 2015: 540) “interpretivists argue that human behaviour must be observed and interpreted according to the individual’s meaning or reasons for action. The interpretive approach therefore basically employs qualitative methods in the collection and analysis of data”. In this study qualitative interviews were used to gather the data from youth involved in self-help projects.

Although an interpretive approach is a useful paradigm in policy and development studies, and is appropriate in increasing understanding of various studies, it has its own challenges. Complexities of the approach demand trained researchers who can interpret the social experiences of the participants in their own frame and “reconciling the differences without injecting personal bias or preconceptions into their inferences” (Hackley, 2003: 73). The other challenge is that “contextualised inferences drawn from interpretive research do not lend themselves well to replicability or generalisability” (Hackley, *ibid*). Moreover, “interpretive research may sometimes fail to answer the research questions of interest or predict future behaviours”. It is also noted that interpretive investigation tends to be more time and resource consuming as compared to the positivist studies during data collection and subsequent analysis.

4.6 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.6.1 Research Methodology in Social Sciences

Research methodology is defined as a way to systemically solve or answer the glaring questions in a particular research problem as discussed above. It entails a process of studying how research is done in a scientific manner. According to Bhattachajee (2012: 5) this “refers to a standardized set of techniques for building scientific knowledge, such as how to make valid observations, how to interpret results, and how to generalize those results”. Through the methodology, researchers study the various steps they adopt in studying a particular

research problem and the underlying logic behind such steps. As has been highlighted above, the selection of a particular research method is crucial in making research findings for a given study phenomenon. It is argued that the methodology determines what the researcher would say about the cause and factors influencing a given phenomenon. Methodology can be either qualitative or quantitative or both (where a mixed methodology is adopted).

4.6.2 Quantitative research methodology

This is understood as “an inquiry into an identified problem, based on testing a theory, measured with numbers, and analysed using statistical techniques” (Pierce, 2008: 42). The approach is commensurate with natural science model of inquiry as the preeminent model in policy studies (Rist, 1983: 10). This approach dominated policy studies such that it was frequently referred to as “the scientific method and the only available route to cumulative progress” (Rist, *ibid*). It is observed that “the greatest strength of quantitative method lies in its general acceptance by others as being rational, logical, planned and systematic. The findings are regarded as credible” (Pierce, 2008: 42). Quantitative research can be classified into three categories namely experiments, quasi-experiments and surveys. According to Pierce (2008: 42), “experiments randomly assign subjects to experimental conditions and the use of experimental controls. Quasi-experimental studies involve non-randomized assignment of subjects to experimental conditions. Surveys use questionnaires or interviews for data collection with the intent of estimating the characteristics of a large population of interest based on a smaller sample from that population”. This suggests that the results will be generalised on the broad population although based on a smaller segment of respondents.

In addition to the above, “the researcher is seen as dispassionate, objective and, therefore, trustworthy” (Pierce, 2008: 42). Employing large samples that are designed to reflect and represent the population being studied is common. Using questionnaires standardises the research as “every member of the sample is asked the same question in the same manner” (Pierce, *ibid*). Supporters of the quantitative approach argue that attitudes can be measured by using scales, e.g. the Likert scale of strongly agree, agree, etc. Face-to-face contact is seen as not necessary and may contaminate the data. Research objects in this approach are best kept at arm’s length. The basic assumptions underlying quantitative research are that “reality is objective, “out there,” and independent of the researcher; therefore reality is something that can be studied objectively” (Pierce, 2008: 44). In this light, there should be a clear separation between the researcher and the research subject and participants to avoid bias. This implies that preconceived ideas held by the researcher do not significantly taint the research process and outcomes to ensure a value-free outcome.

A quantitative method makes use of computers and other new technology forms. The quantitative research design uses inferential, experimental or simulation approaches in data collection and analysis. This is seen as an advantage as data is quickly and efficiently analysed. This shortens the duration of studies and ensures early publication of research findings. The quantitative research is based “primarily on deductive forms of logic and theories and hypotheses are tested in a cause-effect order. The goal is to develop generalizations that contribute to theory that enable the researcher to predict, explain, and understand some phenomenon” (Pierce, *ibid*). It is notable that geographically remote or immobile people can be contacted through postal surveys or using telephone.

It should be quite obvious that unobservable things such as people’s thoughts and attitudes are not accepted as valid evidence in quantitative research. It is upheld in this approach that scientific knowledge is arrived at through the accumulation of verified facts (Bryman, 2005: 15). The aspect of verification suggests that the evidence is accessible and comprehensible in the same way to everyone who so wishes to access it. According to Bryman (2005: 15) “these facts feed into the theoretical edifice pertaining to a particular domain of knowledge. Thus, theory expresses and reflects the empirical research. Such findings are often referred to as laws pertaining to a particular field, namely empirically established regularity”.

It is upheld by the researchers who subscribe to this discipline that the research findings are objective, repeatable, predictable and scientific. Besides having large samples, data analysis is less time consuming as it uses the statistical software such as SPSS. It is also advanced that the approach enables studying of the relationship of a dependant and independent variable. Thus, the researcher has a solid ground on which to claim validity of the research findings. For policy researchers, the findings begotten from the quantitative approach are more readily accepted by the policy formulators who regard the findings as more appealing and generalised (Finch, 1986: 10). This is because policy makers usually want to formulate policies that are applicable to the generality of the population paying little regard to contextual differences. The National Youth Policy in Zimbabwe is a perfect example.

Disadvantages of Quantitative methods

Whilst the discussion above shows the merits of using quantitative methods, Pierce (2008: 4) cautions that “the necessity for measurable concept indicators means that quantitative research is confined to researching measurable variables rather than more important issues”. It is further maintained that we cannot really weigh an iceberg by measuring its tip. Understanding youth socio-economic empowerment and policy implementation is a task that needs to go beyond what is provided in statistical data.

According to Seiber (in Rist, 1983: 19), “statistical data can often lead to mathematically correct but socially ludicrous conclusions”. Therefore, an attempt to portray how youth respond to policy driven programmes in Mwenezi demands that one goes beyond using a statistical definition of the situation. This is because such a definition can in the words of Rist “badly miss the mark if the statistics obscure or miss important dimensions of the setting” (1983: 19). Indeed, it is upheld that qualitative research is well placed to dissect the “human dimension” that pervades the political milieu in which policymaking occurs.

Critics of the quantitative research approach also find fault in its underplaying of context. By ignoring the context, the approach seems to objectify the study participants as if they are not thinking human beings. The paradigm leaves out the common meanings of social phenomenon (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). It also fails to ascertain deeper underlying meanings and explanations. Multiple perspectives cannot be captured using a quantitative approach because it does not study things in their natural settings and has no room for diverse perspectives that are characteristic of the society. The approach finds justification in large samples yet in some researches the sample might not be readily available. The fact that the research is done in highly controlled settings implies that respondents are not given an opportunity to share their experiences. The fact that not everything that counts can be counted illustrates the limitation of objectively verifiable quantitative methods. This is the reason why this research adopted the qualitative methodology which is able to access the thoughts, knowledge and experiences of the youth involved in self-help projects and their evaluation of policies.

The following discussion gives an alternative to the quantitative methods.

4.6.3 Qualitative research methodology

This research paradigm was born out of the desire to understand culture as well as society (Kirk and Miller, 1986). This view is also shared by Denzin and Lincoln (2003: 18-19) who said this “methodology has come to be perceived as a major tool in the quest for a deeper understanding of social and cultural meaning”. The approach is appropriate for exploratory research because it seeks to answer questions on how people experience certain phenomenon. The approach enables researchers to go beyond asking questions to do with aspects such as what, who and where. One can even understand the reasons for certain behaviour and explain outcomes of such behaviour if they adopt the strategy.

Qualitative researches are usually thorough in giving the depth of the phenomenon. According to Creswell (2007: 249) “it focuses more attention on smaller rather than large samples to enable in-depth analysis. A qualitative research project constantly builds a comprehensive, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting”. It is further noted that “underlying meanings attached to everyday lived experiences by people” are explored based on the research subjects’ world view. This makes an understanding of human actions easy as the researcher comes closer to the research participants.

It is the conviction of qualitative researchers that “human experiences, feelings, opinions and their very existence are too complex to be presented and represented in numerical terms as portrayed in a quantitative, positivist paradigm” (Creswell, 2007: 250). Qualitative research therefore gives the thick descriptions that are necessary for an understanding of human experiences (Sacks, 2015). Elsewhere, it is argued that “qualitative enquiry addresses meaning centred questions that are difficult to quantify” (Gysels, Shipman and Higginson, 2008: 2). Questions on how youth perceive government policy on youth empowerment are better tackled using qualitative interviews rather than putting pre-meditated answers on the likert scale of strongly agree to disagree.

It is also believed that political as well as socio-economic factors determine what the social reality of individuals becomes. Besides, the researcher’s values can influence the interpretation of research findings. According to Silverman (2013: 38) qualitative research intends “to understand a particular social situation, event, role, group, or interaction”. The researcher using this approach has to contrast and compare evidence in order to understand the research participants and their experiences (Miles and Huberman, 1984). The researcher needs to be immersed in the participants’ community to enhance a clear understanding that comes after constantly engaging with the participants (Marshall and Rossman in Flick, 2009: 16).

Emphasis is placed on the fact that “this research tradition relies on the utilization of tacit knowledge (intuitive and felt knowledge) because often the nuances of the multiple realities can be appreciated most in this way” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). According to Lincoln and Guba (in Creswell, 2014: 206) “the researcher in the qualitative dimension seeks believability, based on coherence, insight and instrumental utility and trustworthiness that come through a process of verification rather than through traditional validity and reliability measures”.

According to Pierce (2008: 45) the method avoids distance and objectivity by seeking *verstehen* (empathetic understanding). Qualitative researchers “are also (critical)

activists seeking to expose exploitation and to improve the lives of their subjects through policy change". Therefore, they expose their respondents to alternative ways of understanding their circumstances so that they change their situation. They seek to empower their subjects through the research process.

The research method provides the only means by which overlooked or concealed minorities can be studied. In this way, their needs for special recognition can be addressed by policy-makers before continued rejection leads to outright dissent (Pierce, 2008: 47). Thus, studying the youth circumstances and policy implementation using qualitative methods is in sync with the research traditions that have been classified as normative. The acknowledgement of the researcher's role is realistic rather than pretending that the researcher has no influence on the research.

This research method makes research thorough by studying the subjects in greater detail. According to Denzin (1989) qualitative research approach "produces the thick (detailed) description of participants' feelings, opinions, and experiences and interprets the meanings of their actions". The approach is also critical in that it can provide room for researchers to understand different people's perspectives. There is an opportunity to understand underlying assumptions informing a particular opinion expressed by the participant in the research. This approach also provides for effective interaction between the researcher and the participants thereby bringing detailed and subjective findings. There is room for flexibility during data collection and adjustments are effected to suit the particular environment and research phenomenon under study.

Disadvantages of qualitative research

Whilst the discussion above demonstrates the merits of using qualitative research, it is critical to note that the approach has some limitations. Silverman (2010) argues that qualitative research approaches tend to be affected by the bias of emphasising meanings and experiences at the expense of the research context in a particular study. The other disadvantage of qualitative research is that its findings are not given as much importance as the quantitative studies especially in the discipline of public policy (Flinch, 1986: 10). Studies adopting a qualitative approach usually use a small sample thus limiting the generalisability of the findings. Lastly, the approach is more expensive and takes more time than a quantitative study.

The third design used in Social Sciences is a compromise between the two designs above and is known as the mixed research design which combines both the qualitative and quantitative research designs.

4.6.4 Methodological pluralism

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches are critical in carrying out research. The approaches complement rather than compete with each other. It is also noted that qualitative and quantitative “are not absolute terms, as numbers are used in qualitative research, and quantitative enquiry includes measurements of quality” (Pierce, 2008: 47). Research presentations can be presented in a positivist or non-positivist frame, aim or direction thereby belittling the supposed differences. Besides, Crotty (1998: 41) suggests that “it is a matter of positivism versus non-positivism rather than qualitative versus quantitative”. Indeed, researchers sometimes employ the two methodologies, “to gain a variety of information, to illuminate a particular problem from different angles, or to look at different aspects of a phenomenon” (Crotty, *ibid*). The Table below indicates the advantages of each method.

Table 4.1: Comparative features of Qualitative and Quantitative Research

	Qualitative	Quantitative
Survey size	Small (30- 200)	Large (100+)
Sampling method	Quota or purposive, non-random	Random
Coverage	Modal	Arithmetic average
Data collection techniques	Unstructured or flexible	Structured or rigid
Enumeration	Interviewer perception and initiative crucial	Interviewer precise, discipline crucial
Questionnaire	Adaptive; responsive	Rigid, inflexible
Enquiry method	In depth	Uniform, formal
Analysis process	Innovative, exploratory, individual, varied research techniques	Established, deductive, standardized
Report content	Soft, impressionistic data	Hard, precise
Report style	Interpretive narrative with illustrations	Comparative, but non interpretive

		commentaries on statistical tables
Focus and approach	Multidisciplinary, but only a few well – specified objectives	Single and multi-disciplinary, more general
Perceived uses	Understanding and insight of prescriptive value	Facts of descriptive value
Characteristics	Normative/ implicative, different investigatory tools	Positive, wide ranging, general purpose scope, relatively unselective in terms of narrow objectives, expensive, usually time and resource consuming
Advantages	Enables people to investigate problems outside traditional boundaries of enquiry. Important where direct measurement of characteristics and understanding of behaviours and attitudes is difficult.	Precise quantification with estimates within defined limits. Makes easy for comparisons. Visible techniques. Representative (and thus enables estimation at population level)

Source: adapted from Bulmer & Warwick (1993: 137 -138)

According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004: 14), “the goal of mixed methods research is not to replace either the quantitative or qualitative approaches to research, but rather to draw from the strengths of these approaches and to minimise possible weaknesses”. Elsewhere, Nau (1995: 1) suggests that “blending qualitative and quantitative methods of research can produce a final product which can highlight the significant contributions of both”. Besides, Henderson and colleagues (1999: 253) highlight the fact that “the linking of

data provides a way to use statistics, the traditional language of research. The driving motivation behind mixed methods is the desire to get the whole story (picture), as much as possible”.

4.6.5 Methodology Adopted By This Research

In this study a qualitative research design was used. Creswell (2007: 11) declares that “qualitative enquiry represents a legitimate mode of social and human science exploration, without apology or comparisons or quantitative research”. It has been argued that qualitative research design “values people’s knowledge, values, and experience as meaningful and worth of exploration” (Bryrne, 2009: 182). The design is commensurate with the intention to “understand complex relationships and orientation to everyday events that are occurring in natural settings” (Flick, 2007). This coincides with the current study’s thrust to comprehend the everyday experiences of the youth in rural communities as they try to eke out a living from self-help projects. Thus, qualitative research design was seen to be appropriate as it enabled the researcher to understand processes, interactions and events that contribute to the understanding of youth self-help projects and the contribution they make towards youth socio-economic empowerment in rural Zimbabwe.

According to Mason (2002: 1) “through qualitative research we can explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of research participants” (youth involved in self-help projects). In the same vein, the design also enables exploration of “the way social processes, institutions, discourses or relationships work, and the significance of the meanings they generate” (Mason, *ibid*). Qualitative research design is considered to be context sensitive, flexible and empathetic (Sarantakos in Antwi and Hamza, 2015: 220). With a study which is context bound like the current research on the experiences of rural youth engaging in self-help projects in Zimbabwe’s Mwenezi District, qualitative research was considered very appropriate by the researcher.

A qualitative methodology allowed the researcher to explore the experiences of youth engaging in self-help projects in rural Zimbabwe. The fact that the study aimed to gain contextual insights and reflections from the youth meant that a quantitative methodology

was inappropriate for this study. The researcher acknowledges that using quantitative methods “primarily uses postpositive claims for developing knowledge” (Bhattacharjee, 2012: 37). The researcher chose to adopt the qualitative approach in order to reach conclusions based upon interpretations from the individual experiences of the research subjects. This is done using multiple lenses that consider respondents’ experiences as well as socially constructed meanings. The intention was to develop conclusions based on the context of the study. Qualitative researchers also use “strategies of inquiry such as narratives, phenomenology, ethnographies, grounded theory studies, or case studies. The researcher collects open-ended, emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data” (Creswell, 2014). For this particular research, open ended questions were used to solicit information from key informants and youth through a semi-structured interview schedule.

This approach helped the researcher to carry out the investigation into the youth experiences in the rural communities of Mwenezi District. The participants narrated their engagement with the self-help projects as well as the various government programmes. This gave the researcher some basis to interpret the respondents’ worldview and how they relate with policy. Interpretations could be drawn as and when the participants articulated particular points that allowed the researcher to understand the impact of both NGOs and government programs among the youth in the district. It is important to note here that the researcher is a resident of the District, and as a result has insider knowledge regarding the socio-economic conditions of the district. This insider view, allowed the researcher to interpret participants’ economic and social experiences. This insider’s view further allowed the researcher to easily relate with the research subjects’ perceptions as they expressed sentiments that the researcher was familiar with (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 10). All interviews, the translations as well as transcriptions were done by the researcher thereby ensuring uniformity and consistency in analysis. This made interpretation interesting as particular incidences experienced during the interviews strongly rung in the back of the mind.

4.7 THE STUDY AREA

4.7.1 Introduction to the Mwenezi District

Before beginning this discussion, it is important to note that this section was compiled through an extensive review of literature and reports. This discussion on the study area is extensive, as it gives credence to the context of the investigation, and rationalises the need to investigate the research questions within this District found in rural Zimbabwe.

Mwenezi is a district situated in the southern part of Zimbabwe. The district falls under Masvingo Province and borders with Midlands Province and Matebeleland South Province. It is found on the southern part of Masvingo town, which is approximately 100km from the closest end of the district, called Lundi. Mwenezi is one of the driest districts in Masvingo Province (Musanga in Chazireni, 2015: 191). Mwenezi lies in regions four and five of Zimbabwe's natural farming regions. The district is vulnerable to droughts (Kurebwa, Ngwerume and Massimo 2014: 3), which impacts on the livelihoods of the inhabitants. Crop cultivation is undermined but livestock production is one of the mainstays of the economy in the district. According to ZIMSTAT (2012: 2), the population of Mwenezi was about 166 993.

Ethnic composition in the district comprises the Karanga, Venda, Pfumbi, Shangani, Lemba, Ndebele and Chewa. The Shangani and Karanga people constitute the majority in the district. Current poverty levels are deplorable and the concern is known even at national level. According to Manungo (Permanent Secretary Ministry of Finance), Mwenezi is the poorest district in Masvingo Province. Besides, "Masvingo Mirror reported that Mwenezi tops the household poverty prevalence rate with 79, 4 % of its inhabitants being poor, while 26,2 % of them are extremely poor" (Bulawayo 24, 20 May 2016).

Youth socio-economic activities have largely been determined by the agro-ecological factors such as low rainfall pattern and high temperatures. The fact that rainfall is unreliable and low is affecting agriculture driven self-help projects that depend on rains. Indeed, the district suffers from occasional droughts with major ones having been experienced in 1992, 2002 and 2008. These droughts virtually depleted the cattle herds of many families relegating them to extreme poverty and squalor. Despite the dry spells experienced in some cropping seasons that undermine farming activities, local people basically survive on subsistence farming (Mutopo 2012: 5), related largely around livestock farming (Muchara, 2010: 2).

Using both the Welfare Monitoring Survey System (WMS), and the Participatory Poverty Ranking Method (PPRM), over 70 percent of households were classified as poor or very poor” (Kurebwa et al., 2014: 3). This observation is critical in illustrating the vulnerability conditions of the inhabitants. It is unfortunate that earlier researches have rarely focused on youth and their socio-economic activities aimed to realise empowerment.

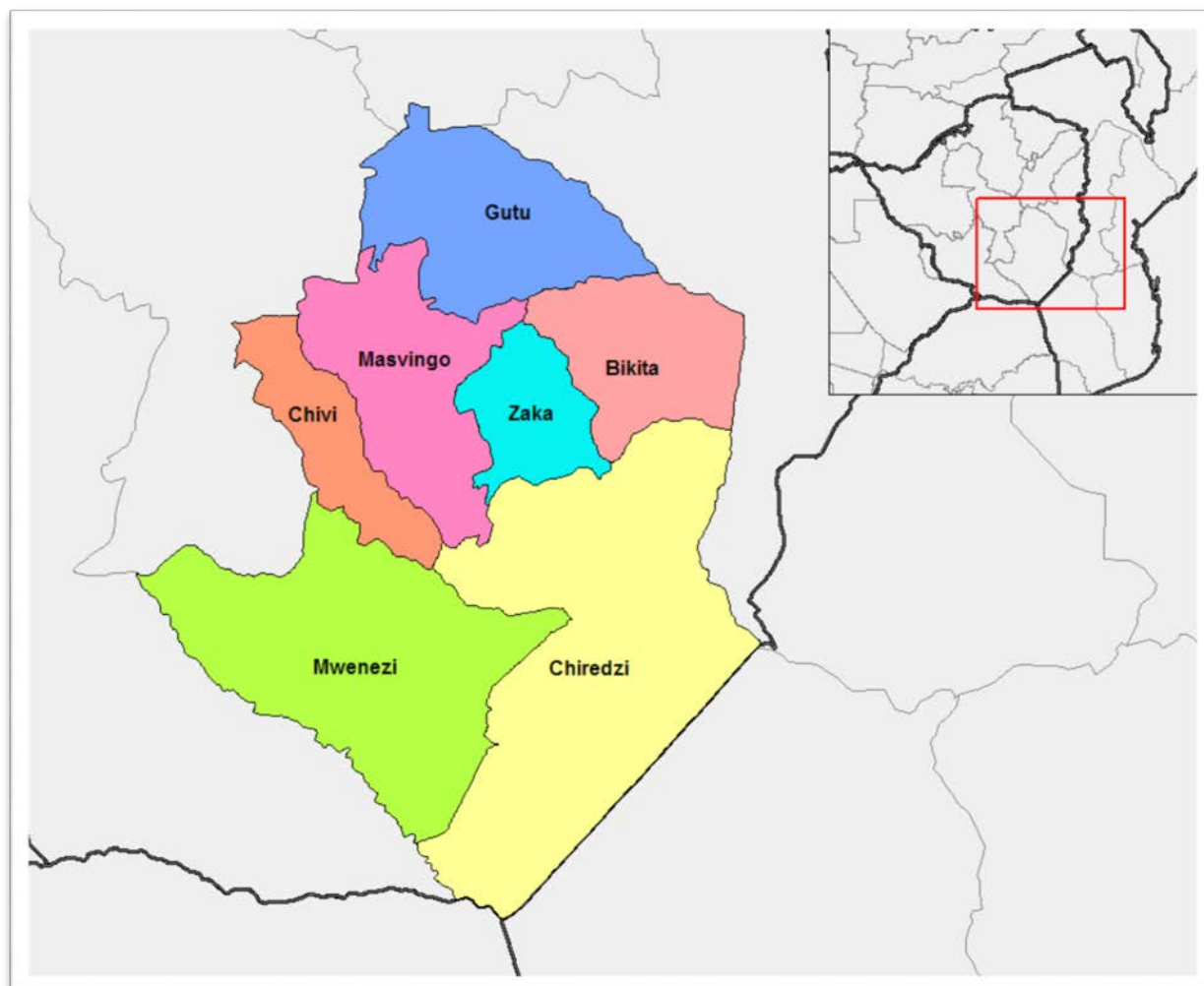
Mwenezi District’s proximity to South Africa and Mozambique provides opportunity for the youth to cross the border in search of jobs, or engaging in informal trade. According to Mutopo (2012: 6) livelihood niches in the district “are also carved through circular migration to South Africa, Botswana or Mozambique”. Besides, alluvial gold panning has also become common along Lundi River in the district. This has diversified the livelihood opportunities that youth in the district can undertake.

The importance of agriculture among the inhabitants of the district is shown by the fact that even if one gets very little income, they buy agriculture related items. It is noted that “remittances from international trips enable the men and women to buy farming implements, purchase food and pay for school fees” (Mutopo, 2012: 6). Scoones (in Mutopo) observed that “livelihood portfolios in southern Zimbabwe are dichotomised along gender lines. Women are mainly involved with vegetable gardens, while men are engaged in livelihood options that require more capital”. Their study did not however shed light on youth experiences; hence this research aims to give a reflection on youth self-help projects.

The attempt to obtain current youth unemployment figures in the district was fruitless. There is no documentation of the findings pertaining to Mwenezi as a district. The only relevant data found is the 2012 census, which reported that Mwenezi District has 18 wards with 166993 people. The Zimbabwe statistical agency’s 2014 Labour Force Survey produced in March 2015 is the latest data source, but again it gives provincial statistics which do not clearly show the levels of unemployment for the 18-35 years category of the population. The data in the district offices of the Ministry of Youth are not updated. Overall, the percentage of unemployment is very high in rural areas. This is because rural areas are more deprived than urban areas as measured by the distribution of household wealth index by area of residence

(ZimStat, 2016: 24). Again, absence of industries explains the high incidence of unemployment in the rural areas. Fig 4.1 below shows the study area of Mwenezi District.

Figure 4.1: Mwenezi District (in Masvingo Province)



Source: http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Mwenezi_District.

The district is located on the fringes of Masvingo Province bordering Matebeleland south and Midlands Province.

4.8 Target population

Total population has been defined by Parahoo (1997: 218) as “the total number of units from which data can be collected, such as individuals, artefacts, events or organisations” (also, Burns and Grove, 2003: 213). Whilst the youth population aged between 18 and 35 years in the district is estimated to be around thirty thousand (ZIMSTAT, 2012: 18), the Ministry of Youth data at the Mwenezi District Office, has five thousand registered youth (Youth Register

of Youth in Mwenezi). This is possibly because some youth are reluctant to register their names with the office and others may have migrated to towns to look for jobs. In addition to the registered youth, the Ministry of Youth Development Mwenezi District has a database for the number and types of projects youth are engaging in. Accordingly, these figures provide the study the statistical data upon which to determine the Total Population. These figures reveal that 75 projects were being undertaken by the youth (Ministry of Youth: Mwenezi District Report: 2016). Added to the 75 different projects, the study also targeted five key informants giving the total of 80. Of the 75 projects, there are twenty individually funded projects; thirty projects done by single individuals who are self-financed; ten group based projects which are funded; and, fifteen self-help groups, who are using their own resources. The researcher acknowledges that it is possible that some self-help projects are not registered, as they are done in the remote parts of the district. The District Office also indicated that the number of projects changes over time, some falling away and some being introduced.

Table 4.2: Total study population

Category	Total number
Individuals running funded projects	20
Individual running self-financing projects	30
Group funded projects	10
Group self-financing projects	15
District Ministry Officials	3
Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)	2
TOTAL	80

Source: adapted from Mwenezi District Youth Database 2016 August.

4.9 Sampling

This is understood as a “statistical process of selecting a subset (called a “sample”) of a population of interest for purposes of making observations and statistical inferences about that population” (Bhattachjee, 2012: 65). Any realistic study needs to sample because “social science research is generally about inferring patterns of behaviours within specific populations”. According to Burns and Grove (2003: 31) sampling refers to “a process of selecting a group of people, events or behaviour with which to conduct a study”. Due to deterrent costs both in terms of money and time, researchers can hardly study the entire population. This justifies the selection of samples from the population one will be interested in. Bhattachjee (2012: 6) argues that “it is extremely important to choose a sample that is truly representative of the population so that the inferences derived from the sample can be generalized back to the population of interest”. Polit et al. (2001: 234) confirm that “in sampling a portion that represents the whole population is selected. Sampling is closely related to generalizability of the findings”. For this study, it was impossible to interview all youth in rural Zimbabwe aged between 18-35 years and therefore sampling was critical in selecting critical respondents.

4.10 Sample Size

This is understood as the subset that is selected from the given population. It is emphasised that “the research sample encompasses various elements of a population subset that is considered to be included in a scientific study; a sample can be seen as a subset of measurement that is drawn from a population of interested parties for a study” (Unrau, Gabor and Grinnell, 2007: 279). This is also shared by Barker (2003: 380) who states that a “sample represents a small portion of the total set of objects, events or individuals of a selected representative”.

In addition to the above, Holloway and Wheeler (2002) have explained the relevancy and practicality of sampling in qualitative studies. They assert that “sample size does not influence the importance or quality of the study and note that there are no guidelines in determining sample size in qualitative research” (Holloway and Wheeler, 2002: 128). It is noted that “qualitative researchers do not normally know the number of people in the research beforehand; the sample may change in size and type during research. Sampling goes on until

saturation has been achieved, namely no new information is generated” (Holloway 1997: 142).

In spite of the arguments made above, a sample size of thirty respondents was targeted to gain a wide range of perspectives in order to make valid conclusions and recommendations. The rationale for this number was based upon the conclusion by Grinnell and Williams (1990: 127) that “a 10% sample is sufficient for sample error control in a quantitative study, and that for qualitative studies, at least 30 cases are needed”.

This study was projected, in the research proposal to interview thirty participants as follows:

Table 4.3: Projected Sample Size

Category of interviewee	Research method	Participants
Individual funded	In-depth interview	5
Individual self-financing	In-depth interview	5
Group funded	In-depth interview	8
Group (self-funded)	In-depth interview	7
District Ministry Officials	Key informant interview	3
NGOs Officials	Key informant interview	2
Total	Interviews	30

It is important to note here that, there was a number of anomalies that affected the data collection process. These include the political situation, the achievement of saturation amongst some respondents, and unintended findings from other respondents that rendered further investigation of similar respondents. The result was that the number of respondents for some categories was amended. It is important to note that the amendments did not require further ethical clearance nor gatekeepers’ permissions, as these were already in place. The study sample was as follows:

Table 4.4: Actual study participants.

Category of interviewee	Research method	Participants
Individual funded	In-depth interview	9
Individual self-financing	In-depth interview	9
Group funded	In-depth interview	3
Group (self-funded)	In-depth interview	4
District Ministry Officials	Key informant interview	3
NGOs Officials	Key informant interview	2
Total	Interviews	30

The result was that the researcher engaged stakeholders who are involved in the running of youth self-help projects in Mwenezi District, to gain insight from these policy implementers, including the Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Gender as well as Ministry of SMEs. The research study also solicited a sample of responses from the Non-Governmental Organisations that support various income generating projects amongst the youth population in Mwenezi District. Such NGOs are Mwenezi Development Training Centre (MDTC) and Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED).

4.11 Sampling Techniques

4.11.1 Probability Sampling

According to Sarantakos (2005: 166) probability sampling gives every unit an equal chance to be considered in a survey. This will enable researchers to generalise their findings. Probability sampling is defined as “a technique in which every unit in the population has a chance (non-zero probability) of being selected in the sample, and this chance can be accurately determined” (Bhattacharjee, 2012: 67). Although this study did not use probability sampling, it is critical to understand its characteristics. Sample statistics produced in probability sampling “such as sample mean or standard deviation, are unbiased estimates of population

parameters, as long as the sampled units are weighted according to their probability of selection” (Bhattacharjee, 2012: 67).

The rationale for probability sampling technique is that “the selection of the respondents is strictly determined by chance yet it is important that every member of the population is known” (Grinnell and Unran, 2005: 155). This sampling strategy is also popular for its precision. Cooper and Schindler (2008: 380) state that “it provides precise estimates and research outcomes that can be generalised to the entire population”. It is also possible for the researcher to exercise control on the sample although this can bring flaws due to increasing human element (Cooper and Schindler, 2008: 397).

4.11.1.1 Simple Random Sampling

This approach “involves randomly selecting respondents from a sampling frame, but with large sampling frames, usually a table of random numbers or a computerized random number generator is used” (Bhattacharjee, 2012: 67). It is believed that the method is cheap and simple because the “sampling frame is not subdivided or partitioned, the sample is unbiased and the inferences are most generalizable amongst all probability sampling techniques” (Bhattacharjee, *ibid*). On the other hand Neuman (2006: 227) states that “the researcher can develop an accurate sampling frame and select specific elements from the sampling frame using mathematical calculations to determine the exact elements that must form part of the research sample”.

4.11.1.2 Stratified Random Sampling

This is a strategy of subdividing the research participants according to some distinct variables, for example, gender, age, or geographical region. These strata will be applied during the research process. In essence, the researcher identifies a set of mutually exclusive subgroups and divides the sample frame by the subgroups before the research is carried out. According to Neuman (2006: 231) “the sampling frame is divided into homogeneous and non-overlapping subgroups (called “strata”), and a simple random sample is drawn within each subgroup”. Elsewhere, the approach is credited as effective “in minimising research errors by the application of stratified samples assumed to be homogeneous and sufficiently representative when the various strata are put together” (Salkind, 2006: 91).

4.11.1.3 Cluster Sampling

This sampling technique involves sampling elements from the same cluster which is defined as one geographical region. According to Alvi (2016: 22) “this sampling technique is used when the elements of population are spread over a wide geographical area. The population is divided into sub-groups called as clusters on the basis of their geographical allocation”. The technique is cost effective but needs to be representative enough to avoid bias by capturing the heterogeneity in the population.

4.11.2 Non Probability Sampling

This is defined as “sampling technique in which some units of the population have *zero* chance of selection or where the probability of selection cannot be accurately determined” (Bhattajerchee, 2012: 69). Non-probability samples limit the research’s generalisability but are often chosen to minimise costs in research. They are also ideal where the researcher does not have a complete list of the members of the study population (Alvi, 2016: 13). Non-probability samples can be purposive, quota, convenience or snowball based (Sarantakos, 2005). The selection of respondents is deliberately determined rather than random. This could be based on convenience or satisfaction of some quota. The approach is weak in that “it does not allow the estimation of sampling errors, and may be subjected to a sampling bias. Therefore, information from a sample cannot be generalized back to the population” (Bhattajerchee, *ibid*).

Whilst the point above illustrates the weakness, it is important to note that the technique is used “provided it meets the sampling objectives. It is also used when there is no need to generalise the research findings to include the total population” (Bhattajerchee, 2012: 69). It is used because it is cost-effective and saves a lot of time. In this light, it is also cheaper when compared to the probability sampling technique. Some argue that non-probability sampling is a feasible option in cases where the overall research population is not known.

4.11.2.1 Volunteer Sampling

This implies that the research participants avail themselves on their own volition to participate in a study. The research is normally done after some advertisements in the media

where opinion is sought from the members of a particular community. Another example is a programme where viewers are asked their opinion over the television. The fact that viewers or listeners phone giving their opinions illustrates the fact that the researcher makes little effort to gather the data. This technique is less representative and the findings reflect the perception of a limited sample that cannot be generalised.

4.11.2.2 Convenient Sampling

This sampling involves choosing research participants that are easily accessible to the researcher. Some call it accidental sampling whereas some call it opportunity sampling (Alvi, 2016: 14). The approach is viewed as suitable where the research subjects are clearly defined for example a research on girls, boys, rich or poor. The challenge with this approach is that it is subject to bias and systematic errors. It is critical to note that the approach is not mutually exclusive and can be adopted in other sampling techniques involving non-probability sampling.

4.11.2.3 Quota Sampling

In this type of sampling, heterogeneous elements in the population are used to put the study participants in respective categories. An element of heterogeneity arises from the fact that an element selected in the population does not match the characteristics of the predefined criterion. Quotas are derived from the nature of the topic under investigation. Common criteria used for quota based sampling are gender, age and ethnicity. It is imperative that the researcher needs to identify the variable which makes the target population heterogeneous. This ensures that each and every sub group is represented in the study.

Other non-probability sampling techniques include snow-ball sampling, matched sampling and genealogy based sampling. It is generally upheld that they share the same merit of being cost effective yet they are also blamed for being non-representative of the general population.

4.11.3 Sampling Procedure Adopted in this Research

Purposive sampling was used to include only youth involved in self-help projects. It is emphasised that the procedure “allows researchers to select a sample based on special

criterion such as available knowledge on subjects of the study. The purposive approach ensured that the study has rich information sources and key informants who have a great deal of knowledge” (Nastasi, 2014: 6). Babbie (2012) commented that “purposive or judgmental sampling involves the selection of a sample on the basis of knowledge of population, its element and purpose of the study”. Given the very low literacy levels in the study area, a self-administered questionnaire could not be used. Therefore, the researcher employed semi-structured interviews to capture the perceptions of potential youth respondents in the study. Involvement in self-help projects was a critical factor that was considered for one to qualify as a participant or respondent in this research. Key informant interviews were used to gain insights from three Ministry officials and two Non-Governmental officials.

Parahoo (1997: 232) understands purposive sampling as “a method of sampling where the researcher deliberately chooses who to include in the study based on their ability to provide necessary data”. The reason for adopting this approach was that the researcher sought knowledge about the youths’ perception of policy implementation and its effectiveness in promoting youth socio-economic empowerment among rural youth engaging in self-help projects in Zimbabwe. The participants provided the information by virtue of their experience, thus, they were purposefully selected to participate in this study.

4.12 Data Collection Techniques Adopted

Specific techniques are used to collect research data depending on their appropriateness and relevancy to a particular context. Parahoo (1997: 52, 325) suggests that “a research instrument is a tool used to collect data, it is a tool designed to measure knowledge, attitude and skills”.

Interviews are critical in eliciting information from respondents as they bring the researcher and respondent closer to each other. It is argued that they represent “a social relationship designed to exchange information between the participant and the researcher” (Bhattachajee, 2012: 72). It is emphasised that “the quantity and quality of information exchanged would depend on how astute and creative the interviewer is at understanding and managing the relationship” (Monette, Sullivan and Dejong, 2008: 178). This implies that the researcher has a critical role to play in steering the discussion to extract rich data from participants.

In keeping with the ideals of constructivism discussed earlier on, interviews should help the researcher to understand and interpret perspectives of the research participants from their own world view. King (1994: 14) substantiates this argument by saying that, “the goal of any qualitative research interview is to see the research topic from the perspective of the interviewees, and to understand why they have a particular perspective”. This can only be attained if the researcher using qualitative interviews imposes a low degree of structure, gives preponderance to open questions and focus on specific situations and action sequences in the world of the interviewee (King, *ibid*).

In addition to the interviews, the researcher obtained relevant information from document reviews of public documents like newspapers and official reports. Data was also collected from a range of secondary sources including, government documents (policies), relevant books, journals and ejournals, research reports, newspaper articles as well as web materials. The aim here was to explore the efficacy of youth empowerment policy in the context of self-help projects in rural Zimbabwe.

This research used the in-depth interviews involving use of a semi-structured interview guide to gather youth’s accounts and experiences. The interview schedule also covered youth’s thoughts and perceptions with regard to policy implementation and self-help projects. According to Nastasi and Schensul (2005: 184) “variations in interviewing method include key-informant interviews, focused group interviews, and structured surveys or questionnaires. Key-informant interviews are relatively unstructured informal interactions with knowledgeable stakeholders who can provide general information about the context, population, or culture”. In this study there were no focus group interviews but key informants were targeted, derived from NGOs and Ministry officials implementing youth empowerment policy in Mwenezi District.

According to Seidman (2006: 9) “interviewing provides access to the context of people’s behaviour and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behaviour”. It is further argued that “a basic assumption in in-depth interviewing research is that the meaning people make of their experience affects the way they carry out that

experience” (Blumer in Seidman, 2006: 33). It is believed that youth have particular meanings they attach to the self-help initiatives they are engaged in. This information could be accessed through face to face interviews with the youth respondents.

4.13 Data collection using Personal Interviews

The key informant as well as semi-structured schedules were used in this study because the researcher intended to access broad insights, feelings, attitudes and experiences of youth participants and officials involved in youth empowerment policy implementation in rural Zimbabwe. Babbie (2007: 306) defined interviews as “an interaction between an interviewer and a respondent in which the interviewer has a general plan of inquiry, including the topics to be covered”. In this study the interactions were direct encounters involving the researcher and the respondents and focused on the individuals’ perspectives and experiences on the contribution of youth self-help projects towards socio-economic empowerment in the prevailing policy environment. These interviews involved purposively selected youth participants and key informants from Mwenezi District.

Advantages of Interviews

Personal interviews are effective in accessing the not-so obvious aspects of life of the respondents. The response rate is high in this form of interview as there is direct contact with participants. Neuman (2011) avers that they enable researchers to ask questions perceived as complex and probe where they need further clarification. This study is built on the interviews held by the researcher and probing and clarifying of questions and responses was used during the study. The interview is flexible in that if a respondent does not understand the question, the researcher can easily explain, (Babbie, 2007). In this study respondents frequently needed clarification on what is meant by policy. During probing, the researcher realised that participants could open up and share more of their experiences.

Disadvantages of Interviews

The research process using interviews is very expensive. The researcher travelled to meet respondents and this was found to be too demanding. Time is also another handicap of this approach because setting up appointments and the interview process itself need to be prepared for. This observation is congruent with Neuman (2011) ’s observation that “the

biggest disadvantage of face to face interview is that, the training, travel, supervision and personnel costs for interview can be high". Besides, interviews are prone to bias that is the "interviewer's appearance, tone of voice; question wording may affect the respondent" (Neuman, 2011).

4.14 Description of the interview schedule

For the purposes of the current study on policy implementation targeting youth empowerment through self-help projects in rural Zimbabwe, the semi-structured interviews and key informant interviews were designed as shown in Appendix 1, 2A and 2B. The semi-structured interview questions included the following topics:

- Government initiatives and programmes to support youth self-help projects.
- Provisions of the National Youth Policy promoting youth empowerment through IGPs.
- Social and Economic benefits of engaging in self-help projects.
- Challenges faced in implementing self-help projects among the youth in rural areas.
- Sustainability of the self-help projects in the current policy environment in the district.

The key informant interview questions focused on the following areas:

- Government legislation seeking to promote youth empowerment.
- Roles of policy implementers in ensuring the sustainability of empowerment projects among the youth in Mwenezi District.
- General awareness among the technocrats on the provision of the National Youth Policy.
- Implementation challenges in achieving youth empowerment through the National Youth Policy.
- Monitoring and evaluation of youth empowerment projects in the district.

4.15 Types of questions

Questions can be categorised into two distinct types, that is, open ended and close ended questions. These seek to satisfy a different range of aims in research and conform to different data collecting methods. Pierce (2008: 118) avers that "the most widely-used type of interview especially in elite interviews is the semi-structured interview where one uses a

schedule of a limited number of topic-related questions and, pre-determined, alternative supplementary questions". This implies that there is flexibility especially where the interviewer further questions aspects of the answer received. Pierce says, "one may ask: '*and how did you feel about this?*'" The format of the semi-structured interview is essentially one of question-and-discussion" (ibid). This approach was utilised in this study where the researcher discussed with youth respondents various issues related to policy.

4.15.1 Open ended questions

These are questions "seeking open, lengthy answers. They are concerned with *why and how, beliefs, opinions, forecasts and narratives* that is, stories, biographies" (Pierce, 2008: 118). Indeed, qualitative researchers tend to ask open questions in semi-structured interviews of a small number of people. They may ask their questions to individuals or groups. In this study open questions were asked to the individual youth as well as key informants.

4.15.2. Close ended questions

These questions "essentially seek and or receive closed answers. Closed answers are generally short and confined to *yes, no or don't know* or specific answers, e.g. date of birth" (Pierce, 2008: 118). The author (Pierce) further argues that, quantitative researchers are more likely to ask closed questions in highly-structured interviews of large numbers of respondents, one-at-a-time. The most common type of quantitative interview uses questionnaires which may be administered (carried out) directly (face-to-face), indirectly (voice-to-voice) or remotely (by self-completion questionnaire via post or email).

4.16 Planning the Interview

Carrying out qualitative interviews needs some planning because the process is complex. A plan was drawn for the interview sessions that began on the 23rd of August 2017. The recording instruments, field note books, informed consent forms and the interview schedules were properly assembled. The process did not go smoothly as has already been highlighted. Key informants kept rescheduling the interviews and this derailed the original plan to finish data collection by mid-October. However, the interviews were successfully completed, translated and transcribed.

4.17 Conducting an Interview

The researcher personally conducted interviews with thirty respondents. The youth respondents were mainly interviewed in Shona. Some agreed to be audio-taped and some interview notes were taken where possible. It was difficult to write some notes in certain instances where the respondents were found on their project sites. It is given that “planning in advance whether a transcription will be used is important” (Creswell, 2007: 21). Key informant interviews were difficult to direct and the respondents gave very detailed accounts. In one case, interviews took more than forty-five minutes.

4.18 Coding, data processing and editing

Coding involves the process of organising and sorting data. This is done to refine the data during analysis. Inductive data analysis was used in this study because it is “characteristic of qualitative inquiry” (Nastasi and Schensul, 2005: 182). The authors further suggest that “hypotheses, meaning, and theoretical/conceptual models are generated from the data with the objective of representing the emic rather than etic perspective. To accomplish this, the interpretation of data involves a process of negotiation with the research participants to ensure accurate representation of their views”. The intention in this study was to represent the youth perspectives of policy implementation and self-help projects.

4.19 Validity, Reliability and Objectivity

It is upheld that these terms are mainly used in quantitative studies. However, quality and plausibility are traits that can be found in qualitative studies. Bloomberg and Volpe (2008: 72-73) have suggested that “validity can be achieved and enriched using triangulation commonly known as multiple methods”. This entails approaching social issues using different viewpoints. This assertion is also shared by Wicks and Whiteford (2006: 3) who say “triangulation is used in qualitative research to answer certain intriguing research questions”. Although this study used interviews, the data was corroborated with document reviews especially the policy documents of the Zimbabwean government. According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2004: 9) “the essence is to produce a more comprehensive description of the social phenomenon and to achieve an in-depth understanding of the subjects under investigation”.

Reliability is also given emphasis in the qualitative researches despite being akin to positivism and quantitative studies. According to Neuman (2007: 24) “reliability in qualitative research depends on the researcher’s insight, awareness and questions; when social events are critically evaluated from different angles”. It is the conviction of this researcher that the interviews were astutely carried out with a desire to explore youth’s perspectives on policy implementation in rural Zimbabwe. Another aspect that is linked to the creation of reliable studies is the participant’s credibility. Neuman, (2007: 294) declares that “the credibility of the participants and their statements also form an integral part of reliability in qualitative research”. The author also stressed the issue of “internal and external consistencies where ‘internal consistency’ is the plausibility and accuracy of data obtained from the field work and ‘external consistency’ is obtained when observations are verified with other sources of data” (Neuman, 2007: 294). It is also argued that in qualitative research validity is determined by data analysis and its accurateness in reflecting the research problem investigated.

4.20 Research Errors

Research error implies the unrepresentativeness of the research findings to the target population. As has been highlighted on the section discussing sampling, it is impractical to target every unit in the population. But, it is prudent to get a representative sample in order to reduce the research errors. According to Alvi (2016: 41) “it is critical that the researcher adopts a large sample when carrying out a research study in order to minimise the research errors. A very large sample size decreases the level of standard error thus a narrower confidence interval is obtained. Conversely, smaller sample size means that the level of standard error increases with wider confidence intervals with lesser estimates of the total population parameter”. It is also asserted that “a small sample size will result in invalid data hence the research outcomes will be greatly affected because of a skewed sample size” (Alvi, *ibid*).

Some analysts suggest that measuring various population elements is critical. But this is “not always feasible because time and costs limit the threshold of the research” (Kent, 2007: 229). Thus, it is more realistic to draw samples from the population to represent the said population (Davis, 2005: 231). Wegner (2007: 213) concurs with Kent’s argument, emphasising that “it is difficult to gather data from every member of the research population due to time and cost constraints”.

4.21 Ethical Considerations

Steiner and Steiner (1994: 178) defined ethics as “the study of what is good and bad, right and wrong, and just and unjust”. Researching using qualitative methods has some ethical implications. Warusyznski in Van den Hoonaard (2002: 152) argues that “the relationship and intimacy that is established between the researchers and participants in qualitative studies can raise ethical concerns such as respect for privacy, establishment of honest and open interactions, and avoiding misrepresentations”. It is also critical to observe a set of measures to do with “informed consent from subjects, avoidance of any kind of harm to the subjects of research, maintenance of confidentiality and anonymity as well as abiding by the principle of reciprocity, being honest and avoiding deceiving respondents” (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 289).

This researcher took several measures to ensure that the study complies with ethical issues. Before data collection, ethical clearance approval was sought with the University of KwaZulu Natal Ethics committee. For this study to be successful, it needed to capture the experiences of the youth as well as various stakeholders working with the youth in Mwenezi. Permission to carry out this study was sought from and granted by the Ministry of Youth, Employment Creation and Development, Ministry of Women Affairs and Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises. The permission was also granted by the Mwenezi Development Training Centre (MDTC) and Ministry of Education (approving for) Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) (as attached in appendices).

The researcher negotiated with and explained to the youth respondents and key informants the nature and purpose of the research study. Informants were asked to complete the Informed consent form before they were interviewed. Both key informants and individual youth had to expressly agree to take part in the study. To avoid deception an attempt was made to give research participants hindsight information about reasons for undertaking the study. Where the respondents desired to understand aims of the study, they were given all the necessary responses by the researcher.

The researcher explained to the respondents that they were participating voluntarily and could withdraw their participation at any point in time. The researcher made sure that the information collected during the data collection will be used purely for the academic purpose and nothing else. An attempt was made to respect respondents' ethical rights and avoid harming them psychologically, physically or emotionally. Ethical considerations were also observed by ensuring that research findings are presented appropriately without disclosing the identities of the youth participants. Where necessary pseudonyms were used for individuals, groups and organisations to ensure that anonymity is preserved. Some interviewees refused to be recorded and their views were respected.

4.22 Trustworthiness and Dependability

The trust that is accorded to research is based on the value of that particular research. Holloway (1997: 161) concurs by saying "trustworthiness is the truth value of a piece of research." Elsewhere, it is argued that "a research project is trustworthy when it reflects the reality and ideas of the participants" (Krefting 1991: 214). Research has to be congruent with the situation on the ground for it to be trustworthy, thus, Streubert and Carpenter (1999: 61) add that "trustworthiness of the research depends on the extent to which it delves into the participants' experience apart from their theoretical knowledge". Trustworthiness is also based on credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability (Krefting, 1991: 161).

Credibility

According to Polit et al (2001: 32) "credibility refers to the confidence of the data. Credibility is similar to internal validity in quantitative research. Credibility exists when the research findings reflect the perceptions of the people under study". They further affirm that "validity and reliability are justifiable in research although qualitative researchers use different procedures to establish validity and reliability. Internal validity is important in qualitative research, as researchers are able to demonstrate the reality of the participants through detailed description of the discussion" (Polit et al. 2001, *ibid*).

Strauss and Corbin (1990: 160) hold that "theoretical concepts should have generalisability and transferability, meaning that concepts should be applicable to other similar situations.

This stresses the significance of thick description so that the reader has the knowledge on which to base judgment". Thus, researchers should observe the following for credibility:

- **Prolonged involvement:** understood as "investment of sufficient time to learn culture, test for misinformation, and build trust and generally repeating the procedure central to the case study" (Creswell and Miller, 2000: 127).

- **Triangulation:** This refers to the use of multiple referents to draw conclusions. It involves evidence from different sources; different methods of collecting data and different investigators (Creswell and Miller, 2000). The use of triangulation enables the researcher to present true information. The researcher conducted a literature review to familiarise himself with the content of the phenomenon under investigation, collected data by means of in-depth interviews to get in-depth information regarding the youths' perceptions on policy implementation regarding youth empowerment in rural Zimbabwe.

Dependability

According to Polit et al (2001: 315), "this refers to stability of data over time and over conditions. Dependability can be likened to reliability in quantitative studies". According to Lincoln and Guba (1985: 161), "a dependable study should be accurate and consistent. Two methods of assessing dependability of data include stepwise replication and inquiry audit. Stepwise replication is an approach involving several researchers who can be divided into two teams to conduct separate inquiries with a view to comparing data as well as conclusions". This study attempted to be accurate and consistent in reporting the findings from the research participants.

Confirmability

According to Polit et al (2001: 315), "confirmability refers to neutrality or objectivity of data. This means that the research findings are the result of the research and not the researcher's assumptions and preconceptions. The issue of confirmability focuses on the characteristics of data being dependable". According to Holloway and Wheeler (2002: 255), "inquiry audit can be used to trace the data to their sources. In this way the researcher's path of arriving at the constructs, themes and their interpretation can be followed". This study made sure that the

voice of the participants was respected and preconceptions of the researcher were disregarded as much as possible in giving the thick descriptions.

Transferability

According to Holloway and Wheeler (2002: 255), “transferability means that findings of the research project can be applicable to similar situations or participants. The knowledge acquired in context will be applicable in another and researchers who undertake research in another context will be able to apply certain concepts that were originally developed”. Transferability is seen as synonymous with generalisability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that “as the naturalist cannot specify the external validity of an enquiry, she can only provide a thick description necessary to enable someone interested in making transfer to reach a conclusion about whether a transfer can be contemplated as a possibility”. The findings in this research were seen to be congruent with similar studies carried out by other researchers and hence some resemblance was seen.

Strategies to ensure rigour

Holloway and Wheeler (2002: 251) define rigour as “the means by which we show integrity and competence”. Burns and Grove (2003: 391) “associate rigour with openness, scrupulous adherence to philosophical perspective, thoroughness in collecting data and consideration of all in the subjective theory development, strategies to ensure rigour include member checking, searching for negative cases and alternate explanations, peer review, triangulation, audit trail, thick description and reflexivity”.

4.23 Data Analysis and Presentation of the Research Findings

According to Bhattacharjee (2012: 113) “qualitative analysis is the analysis of data such as text data from interview transcripts. The emphasis is *sense making* or understanding the phenomenon, rather than predicting or explaining”. The author further says that “a creative and investigative mind-set is needed for qualitative analysis, based on an ethically enlightened and participant-in-context attitude, and a set of analytic strategies” (Bhattacharjee, *ibid*).

Interpretative data analysis involves “observation of phenomena from subjective perspective of participants and understanding the meanings that participants experienced” (Bhattacharjee, 2012). The process involves synthesising the views of the participants with those of the researcher. Data analysis is iterative and begins during collection of qualitative data. Pickard (2007) and Creswell (2009) concur that “analysis of qualitative data is flexible, inductive, interactive and recursive”. This was realised during the data analysis stage in this study.

According to Hackley (2003: 75), “in interpretive research the researcher seeks to arrive at insights for which he or she will offer as much evidence and reasoning as possible”. They do this in order to make their reasoning transparent and to try to make their interpretation persuasive. Given all this, the selection of data for analysis must be purposive rather than randomized. What is important is to understand why particular data sets were chosen given the aims of the research. It is also important to qualify findings to the researched environment.

In this research, data gathered using semi-structured interviews was firstly transcribed and typed using Microsoft Word package. The data was then analysed and coded manually into themes. Themes emerging in the research guided the coding and subsequent analysis. It is important to note that the terms thematic and content analysis are sometimes used interchangeably by researchers (Sandelowski and Leeman in Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas, 2013: 400). Content involves “words, texts, transcripts of speeches or conversations, pictures, ideas, themes or messages” (Pierce, 2008: 264). It is claimed that “content analysis is concerned with the bits and pieces words of communication rather than the generality” (Pierce, *ibid*). Moore and McCabe (2005) posit that this entails a process “whereby data gathered is categorised in themes and sub-themes, so as to make comparisons. A main advantage of content analysis is that it helps to reduce and simplify data. Content analysis also enables researchers to structure the qualitative data collected in a way that satisfies research objectives”.

Thematic analysis is mainly described as “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 79). This is the approach used in this

study. Analysis was done to allow for the themes to emerge based on frequency. Flick (1998: 178) regards coding as “the core of qualitative research as it directly influences the interpretation and analysis of data”. This enabled the researcher to have a full analysis of data.

The following themes were analysed;

- Public policy, rural development and youth empowerment in rural Zimbabwe.
- National Youth Policy and youth self-help projects: the trade-off.
- Contribution of youth self-help projects to sustainable livelihoods in Mwenezi.
- Youth perceptions on the implementation of youth empowerment policy in Zimbabwe.
- Challenges faced in achieving youth empowerment through policy implementation.

Armbrorst (2017: 3) caution that “human error is highly prevalent in content analysis, since there is the risk for researchers to misinterpret data gathered, thereby generating false and unreliable conclusions”. An attempt was made to interpret data objectively in this research study. The findings are presented in narrative perspective, episodes and cases supported by quotations where necessary. In some cases, tables and figures were used to present findings of the study on youth self-help projects in Mwenezi District. According to Bhattacharjee (2012: 115) “content analysis is the systematic analysis of the content of a text (for example, who says what, to whom, why, and to what extent and with what effect) in a quantitative or qualitative manner”.

4. 24 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research methodology adopted for this study. The discussion outlined that the investigation was based on qualitative research methodology using in-depth semi-structured interviews. The chapter described the study population, sample, and data collection techniques used. It outlined the reasons for adopting various research strategies used in the study. An outline of the steps taken to ensure the efficacy of the research has also been elaborated. The chapter further described the procedures taken to code, analyse, and present data. This chapter further described the measures taken to ensure ethical compliance. The next chapter presents the research findings from the participants in Mwenezi District.

CHAPTER 5: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research findings obtained from the fieldwork which started on the 23rd of August 2017 and ended on the 13th of March 2018. In carrying out the research on youth socio-economic empowerment through policy implementation in Zimbabwean rural areas, the research was guided by the following objectives:

- To explore the link between public policy, development and youth empowerment.
- To determine the current status of policy frameworks that promotes empowerment amongst youth in Zimbabwe.
- To analyse youth self-help projects in rural Zimbabwe within a Sustainable Livelihoods Framework.
- To determine the perceptions of youth in Mwenezi District engaged in self-help projects, towards the implementation of the National Youth Act.
- To identify the challenges faced in achieving youth socio-economic empowerment, through the implementation of the National Youth Policy in Zimbabwe.

5.2 CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED DURING DATA COLLECTION

The researcher encountered a number of challenges in the data collection process. Long distances were travelled in order to meet the respondents by public transport, resulting in very high costs. The district has some wards which are very remote, resulting in a situation where horse drawn scotch-carts were used to meet the interviewees. The key informants (Ministries) were generally busy with the election preparations to be held in the country in 2018. The District Heads of the two ministries (Youth and Women Affairs/Gender) were not available as they were supervising the voter registration and voter education exercises. More than five trips were made to their offices, without success. The interview with the Ministry of Youth and Ministry of SMEs took place two months after the initial scheduled dates.

Interviewing the Ministry of Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) head could not be done in his office as he was unreachable all the time. The researcher travelled to Rutenga several times and could not locate the officer whose mobile phone was unreachable. The fact that the officer is the only employee in his department compounded the situation. No one could

provide information on his behalf, nor was there someone to advise the researcher of his whereabouts. The officer was finally met at Neshuro Growth Point and an interview was held behind a bottle store which was quite inconvenient. The researcher however understood the importance of obtaining his responses to the overall study, and endeavoured despite the challenges faced.

As indicated in the previous chapter, the Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) interviewee indicated that they were not allowed to give audio-recorded information to researchers. She highlighted that their national office does not allow them to divulge any information pertaining to the Organisation and its activities. She reminded the researcher that her participation should be viewed as a privilege for the research.

The interview with the Mwenezi Development Training Centre (MDTC) Business Development Officer was held after more than ten attempts to meet the respondent between August and October. The officer finally agreed to be interviewed during the evening after completing his fieldwork. Despite the busy and hectic schedules, he managed to give critical responses in line with the questions asked to him.

Individual interviews with the youth participants were also characterised with various challenges. Sometimes individuals would betray the promise to be available, and would fail to turn up. For example after travelling sixty kilometres to meet a group doing beekeeping project at Tsungirirai, the respondent was not available. Negative attitude from the respondents was also evident, as some respondents simply pulled out at the indication that the interviewees were not being paid. Five interviews were not audio recorded as they insisted that they were not comfortable with that arrangement. However, measures were taken in order to report the information as accurately as possible, as indicated in Chapter 4.

5.3 FINDINGS FROM THE KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Ministry officials and Non-Governmental officials are the key informants in this study. These are considered to be key informants in the research because of their expertise and direct influence in the policy implementation matrix. The presentation of the research findings is in the form of themes which emerged during the study investigation. The following themes were analysed;

- Public policy, rural development and youth empowerment in rural Zimbabwe.

- National Youth Policy and youth self-help projects: the trade-off.
- Contribution of youth self-help projects to sustainable livelihoods in Mwenezi.
- Youth perceptions on the implementation of youth empowerment policy in Zimbabwe.
- Challenges faced in achieving youth empowerment through policy implementation.

Interview findings from the Mwenezi District Ministry Officials are presented separately from the findings gotten from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). This is because two different interview schedules were used to elicit information from the two groups. The presentation is categorised according to the group under which the respondent fell and similarities as well as differences in the responses are delineated.

5.3.1 Data Collected From Key Informants in the Three Ministries

5.3.1.1 Biographic Details

Table 6.1 provides a breakdown of the biographic details of the key informants from the three ministries.

Table 5.1 Biographic information of key informants

Name	Position	Date and Time of the interview
Mutume T (Miss)	Community Development Officer (Women Affairs)	04 September 2017 (0930-0952)
Makore (Mr)	District Head (Youth)	15 November 2107 (07:05-0752)
Mabaso L (Mr)	District Head (SMEs)	15 November 2017 (12:22-12:52)

Two of the key informants from the three ministries were male and one was female. The female informant was assigned by her boss to take part in the interview when the District Head lamented that he had a busy schedule. On average the interviews took about thirty minutes each and they were audio recorded. The interview with the District Head (SMEs) was

held behind a bottle store at Neshuro business centre. The officer chose to be interviewed in both Shona and English as he insisted that he was not prepared to take the questions in English. However, the informant cooperated well throughout the interview.

There were some notable differences in the sentiments expressed by the three key informants from different ministries. The variations stemmed from how their respective ministries perceive and implement policies. The following themes emerged from the three separate interviews.

5.3.1.2 Youth empowerment policy provisions targeting rural youth in Zimbabwe.

5.3.1.2.1 Training of youth in vocational skills

The three informants largely concurred that the National Youth Policy provides guidelines for the training of youth in various vocational skills. The respondents indicated that the government however lacks capacity to fund the training. This has seen intervention from NGOs, like Plan International, coming on board to assist financially. Although the National Youth Policy identifies the need to marshal resources necessary for undertaking programmes and projects, evidence in Mwenezi is that the youth are obtaining donor sponsorship to undergo vocational training. The three respondents in the three ministries applauded the role NGOs are playing, to ensure that training becomes a reality. The execution of the trainings is facilitated by the policy environment created and supported by the central government which approves the operation of non-state actors in the districts like Mwenezi.

The three reiterated that the training of youth in different life skills in the district is part of the drive to unlock opportunities for the rural youth in Zimbabwe. The three however had divergent views on how to go about the process, as they represent different ministries with different thrusts. For example, the Women Affairs (Gender) representative emphasised the aspect of women emancipation with little regard to age, thereby leaving out the male section of the society as well as the age category of 18-35 emphasised in the study. Additionally, the SMEs informant said their main thrust is on capacity building of Small and Medium Enterprises and not youth per se. He however acknowledged that, the bulk of their clients are people who fall under the category of youth (18-35 years).

5.3.1.2.2 Funding Of Youth Projects

Different views were expressed by the three key informants on this aspect. The three ministries have different sources of finance (Youth Fund, Women Development Fund and SMEs fund). The ministry of women affairs respondent highlighted that 41 groups had benefitted up to November 2017 from the Women Development Fund. For example the Rutenga Quarry Group got equipment worth US\$10000. The Ministry of Small to Medium Enterprises respondent highlighted that the Oil Producing and Exporting Countries (OPEC) Fund for International Development (OFID) gave them US\$7.8 million for three poverty stricken provinces, Masvingo, Manicaland and Matebeleland north. The fund will be disbursed to both cooperatives and individuals doing projects such as livestock production to ensure development in the community. The respondents shared the view that the introduction of self-help projects funded by the government and NGOs is indeed part of the youth empowerment policy. The Ministry of Youth respondent indicated that they give loans from the funds allocated by the ministry of finance as well as other stakeholders like Old mutual. These loans are supposed to be repaid to ensure that they revolve and benefit others.

5.3.1.2.3 Youth Empowerment Programmes Implemented By Ministries in Rural Zimbabwe

The study found that the three ministries are coordinating their activities, in their attempt to implement government programmes. However, the emphasis and targets are varied as the ministries have different key result areas. The major highlights were:

- Training in various vocational skills (building, motor mechanics, welding, hotel and catering, dress making, cosmetology, driving and agriculture);
- Entrepreneurship training with courses like book-keeping (record keeping), stock taking, marketing and finance sourcing;
- Funding of youth income generating projects;
- Youth advocacy and leadership development implemented by the Zimbabwe Youth Council;
- Awareness campaigns on health and well-being coordinated by National Aids Council and Ministry of Health;
- Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment implemented under the community share ownership trusts; and

- Youth clubs and associations registration under the Zimbabwe Youth Council.

5.3.1.2.4 Activities carried out to implement National Youth Policy

Findings from the Ministry officials indicated that they mobilise the youth, train the youth, source funding for the youth and make follow-up programmes to ensure effective implementation. They also coordinate their activities with the NGOs supporting income generating projects among the unemployed youth. The research findings also confirm that the three ministries have teamed up with Plan International in the training of approximately three hundred youth in 2017.

According to the training officer in the ministry of youth there were 300 trained youth in the district in 2017. She provided the following details on training done in Mwenezi District from January to October 2017:

Table 5.2: Training of Youth in Mwenezi

Type of project training	Ward	Number of beneficiaries
Building	1,2 and 5	62
Motor mechanics	5	21
Cosmetology	1,2 and 5	73
Hotel and Catering	5	25
Dressmaking	1,2 and 5	69
Agriculture	2	20
Driving	1,2 and 5	30

Source: Ministry of Youth Mwenezi District

Some of the activities implemented were not readily available but the respondents mentioned that cumulative statistics are recorded in reports to capture the daily routine of work done. The Ministry of Youth representative had this to say:

“Alongside vocational skills training, once the youth is trained, we can issue loans if the funds are available. We have loans as the government from the ministry of finance. We also have

loans and start up kits from other stakeholders like non-governmental organisations who also help us a lot in the training exercise so that these youth can start their own business”.

The other two respondents indicated that they do not work with the youth per se and therefore, could not be expected to have finer details. They however indicated that amongst their clients, there are individuals whose age falls under the youth category. The Women Affairs representative said:

“In 2017, we have managed to do eight training programmes. Each training programme had forty participants training at a time. The ministry has also trained the beneficiaries in Income and Savings Lending Schemes (ISALS)”.

The above statistics suggest that approximately 320 people were trained (by the Ministry of Women Affairs). The figures were also documented in the files at the district office and they captured number of people trained up to the 16th of November.

The SMEs district head said in implementing the government programmes, they are not limited by the age categories:

“We don’t have that limitation as a ministry; there is the ministry of youth dealing with that. However, the ministry of youth refers its clients to us for training. We deal with capacity building; we do training, business management which covers entrepreneurship development (being implemented right now in partnership with Plan International)”.

Overall, the three respondents gave key insights into the government programmes for the youth in Mwenezi. Business formalisation was also highlighted as a new thrust emphasised by the government to ensure registration of individual entrepreneurship ventures. The statistics on business formalisation were not readily available however as the officers concerned hinted that they needed time to assemble evidence.

5.3.1.2.5 Policy and Youth Socio-Economic Empowerment in Mwenezi District

Although the respondents acknowledged the sound phrasing of the policy documents, they said it is deplorable that the potential to empower youth is limited by a myriad of challenges to be discussed in the coming sections. Despite the misgivings shown and articulated, the respondents said the policies are enhancing youth socio-economic empowerment through:

- Providing an opportunity for training in vocational skills;
- Supporting youth projects with funding modalities;
- Guaranteeing a conducive operational environment for project implementation;
- Awareness campaigns and information dissemination;
- A sound institutional framework and active political administrative and technical support; and
- A number of programmes running out of these policies e.g. youth advocacy and leadership development.

However, the respondents said the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act is not yielding much result for the youth in Mwenezi. The visibility of the Act is almost non-existent as most of the youth in the district do not even know about its existence. The Ministry of Youth respondent lamented that the amount realised from the Mwenezana Estate (a sugar cane plantation in the district) was too little to bring significant changes. Similar sentiments were echoed by the Ministry of SMEs interviewee, who added that the programme implementation is politicised. In essence the three respondents were sceptical of the policies and how they suite the local environment which has unique features of its own. Whilst the officers acknowledged that the policy is clearly worded, they said the government should be more serious especially on the allocation of funds for the execution of self-help projects in the district. They lamented the interference of politics and lack of resources in the effective implementation of programmes.

5.3.1.2.6 Monitoring and Evaluation of the Youth Policy in the District

A recurring theme on monitoring and evaluation tools was the ministries' emphasis laid on the writing of monthly, quarterly and annual reports tracking the projects being done by the youth. Monitoring and evaluation is also done through outreach and on-site observations by the ministry officers. Ward development coordinators and youth officers also write and submit weekly reports. The ministries carry out periodic field visits to the beneficiaries making assessments on whether projects are still operational. The district head (SMEs) respondent said:

“What we do especially if we fund you we make a follow up, looking at the trends in the project...that is, you were at this level before funding, and then we want to establish that after funding where are you?. That’s what we do”.

A summary of the M & E strategies assessing implementation of youth policy in the district is given below:

- ❖ Periodic field visits to projects;
- ❖ Reports (monthly, quarterly and annually);
- ❖ Formative and Summative evaluations for funded projects;
- ❖ Workshops with youth concerned discussing challenges faced;
- ❖ Community outreach programmes for evaluation; and
- ❖ Bank officials’ visits to the projects funded.

5.3.1.2.7 Measures ensuring Promotion of Youth Sustainable Livelihoods in Mwenezi

The three respondents concurred that there were strategies aimed at ensuring that the self-help projects, being implemented, become sustainable and that they promote sustainable livelihoods among the youth. They said this was done to mitigate challenges associated with abandoning of projects implemented previously. Again, they highlighted that youth previously lacked requisite skills to sustain viable projects. As a result, the following measures were introduced:

- ✓ Selecting people or mobilising people to engage in projects which they have skills in and can implement.
- ✓ Training workshops on entrepreneurship and business management.
- ✓ Encouraging youth to do projects which they have interest in.
- ✓ Done away with the idea of giving cash to the self-help projects (giving cash might tempt the beneficiaries to use the cash for other unrelated purposes; hence giving equipment was seen as an alternative).
- ✓ Supporting beneficiaries who have running projects rather than those in need of start-up capital.
- ✓ Feasibility studies are done before the projects are given some funds.

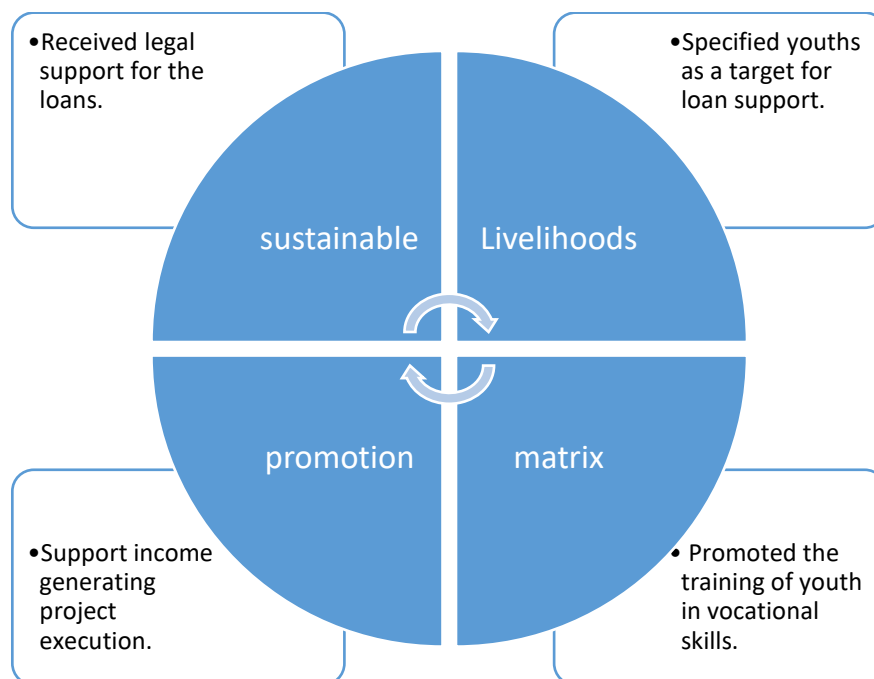
The respondents indicated that since the adoption of such measures, the number of projects being abandoned has significantly reduced. In a sense, they said promoting the marketing and diversification of activities reaped benefits for the youth to sustain their lives as well as helped in acquisition of livestock, immovable property and income. Training also equipped the youth with critical skills, increased their self-esteem, critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.

5.3.1.2.8 National Youth Policy Role in Facilitating and Sustaining the Livelihoods of the Rural Youth in Mwenezi District

The National Youth Policy is understood to be providing support for the establishment of projects and programmes targeting the youth. It was gathered that the policy pronounces that the youth have to be supported by means of training. The youth from Mwenezi District are receiving training at Mushagashe Training Centre, which is a college under the youth ministry. The acquisition of skills enables the youth to initiate income generating projects that promote sustainable livelihoods. Again, the policy also pronounces that the youth have to be funded and, as a district, there is evidence that youth are receiving the financial support. The following are some of the major highlights respondents emphasised:

- Received legal support for the loans.
- Specified that loans should be accessed by the youth.
- Supporting income generation project execution.
- Promoting the training of youth in vocational skills.

Figure 5.1: How policy sustained Self-Help Projects



Source: Author

The evidence from the Ministry of Youth district files indicates that, the ministry operates various projects funded by partners such as Industrial and Development Bank of Zimbabwe (IDBZ), Central African Building Society (CABS) and Commercial Bank of Zimbabwe (CBZ). In 2016, IDBZ funded ten projects and out of the ten projects, nine got US\$1000 (One thousand United States Dollars) each and one project was given US\$500 (Five hundred United States Dollars). This means the bank managed to disburse a total amount of US\$9500 (Nine thousand five hundred United States Dollars) for the youth projects in Mwenezi District.

Under the IDBZ loan facility, the beneficiaries received a revolving fund after submitting project proposals through the Ministry of Youth. It is given that the types of projects that were funded include hair salon, dressmaking, welding, poultry and takeaway. The distribution of the projects in the district is as follows: ward 5 (Five projects), ward 1 (One project), ward 6 (One project) and ward 8 (Three projects).

The Kurera/Ukondla Youth Fund from CABS funded a total of 15 (fifteen) projects in the district. The total amount distributed is \$13 380 (Thirteen thousand three hundred and eighty United States Dollars). The fund was mainly given to assessed projects found in the district.

According to the interviewee (ministry of youth), ward 18 (eighteen) got the lion's share of the fund. This could be as a result of the setup of the ward, which is mainly composed of Rutenga growth point. Other wards which benefited are Ward 4, 5, 7, 10, 13 and 14. The allocation of funds was based on the project proposal budgets submitted by the applicants. It is given that the largest amount given was US\$1500 (One thousand five hundred United States dollars). The least beneficiary received US\$600 (Six hundred United States Dollars).

Another loan fund was given by the Commercial Bank of Zimbabwe (CBZ). The bank distributed a total of US\$7000 (Seven thousand United States Dollars). The fund was distributed between and among Ward 1, 5, 10 and 18. Again the main project beneficiaries were doing poultry production, welding, dressmaking and salons.

This evidence resonates with the government pledge in the National Youth Policy to fund youth projects. This is despite the fact that the beneficiaries represent a very small section of the youth population in the district. The majority of the interviewed youth expressed disgruntlement on the way the funds are distributed. They claimed that they have previously submitted proposals numerous times without any success.

5.3.1.2.9 Government strategies to deal with implementation risks

Study findings indicate that the ministry respondents shared similar sentiments that many projects have been previously affected by several risks and had to be abandoned with many youth failing to pay back the loans given under the revolving funds. The interviewees said the following strategies have been put in place to deal with implementation risks:

- No longer fund projects based on project proposal per se without thorough scrutiny;
- One has to be skilled in the project they will be undertaking;
- If one is not skilled, they train them equipping them with some vocational skills;
- Visit project sites to assess the level of commitment and preparation before loan disbursement;
- Viability assessments to ascertain the capacity of the project (inputs availability, market base, competitors, etc.);
- Market creation research and feasibility studies;
- Carry out needs assessment in the community first before vocational skills training;

- Value addition in the projects under threat (drying vegetables when there is an oversupply in the market);
- Supporting youth with operational projects rather than amateurs;
- Forming youth groups to share ideas, experiences and risks; and
- Giving machinery and inputs instead of cash.

The effects of these strategies have been positive according to the informants. They were confident that now they are dealing with proper and committed entrepreneurs and not chancers. Evidence supporting these claims was limited in the fieldwork findings though.

5.3.1.2.10 Positive changes realised among youth engaging in self-help projects in Mwenezi

Respondents highlighted a variety of positive changes which they attributed to different self-help projects. The ministry officials indicated that the positive changes range from small things to very big and substantive outcomes. Findings from the key informants are summarised as follows:

- Acquisition of movable property such as beds, furniture and some household goods.
- Paying of school and medical fees for siblings, and supporting families.
- Buying of livestock (cattle, goats, sheep, chicken etc.)
- Improvement in water and sanitation, health promotion as well as general income.
- Become skilled, doing own projects, and earning a modest living.
- Enjoying interactions with other citizens from various corners of the nation.
- Self-actualisation and improved self-esteem.
- Mentally empowered individuals who are self-reliant.
- Attitude change and being assertive.
- Become self-employers as well as employing fellow youth.
- Problem solving skills mastered.

It was noted by the researcher that some of the changes outlined by the respondents are not easily recognised but the fact that these officers deal with the youth regularly suggests that they are more informed to make the said claims. Evidence from individual interviews partly reflected the above observations.

5.3.1.2.11 Improvements to policy implementation to give maximum benefits to rural youth

The respondents indicated that the policy needs to be supported by resources. The resources singled out include material, financial and human resources. The researcher noted that the personnel might be qualified in their job but do not have the resources to implement the policy provisions with regards to the rural youth. Therefore, resource provision will improve the effectiveness of the policy as well as enhance awareness among the beneficiaries. The hindrances to the policy implementation will be presented in the next section.

5.3.1.2.12 Challenges faced by the Ministries staff in implementing self-help projects

Three key informants from different ministries reported similar challenges inhibiting effective execution of youth self-help projects. They lamented the interference of politics and inadequate resources in ensuring effective implementation of youth programmes. The other challenges noted are related to communication, transport, and resources as well as understaffing. This makes the policy initiatives impractical. It was reported that all the district offices have mobility challenges since they do not have cars as summarised in the table below.

Table 5.3 Implementation Challenges Faced By Ministry Officers

Challenge	Min. Youth	Min. Women Affairs	Min. SMEs
Human resources	✓	✓	✓
Transport		✓	✓
Communication (airtime)		✓	
Resources (stationary)	✓	✓	✓
ICT (computers and printers)	✓	✓	✓
Political interference	✓	✓	✓
Clashing Programmes			✓
Accessibility of some areas	✓	✓	✓
Youth Illiteracy			✓
Budgetary constraints	✓	✓	✓
Coordination of work			✓

The respondents said sometimes they would spend the day seated in the office doing nothing because there is no transport to ferry them to various project centres. This negatively affects the operationalization of the policy because the officers are supposed to frequently monitor activities done by the youth.

5.3.1.2.13 Coping strategies by the Ministry officials

The researcher sought to understand the coping strategies adopted by the government officials in the face of adverse challenges noted above. Respondents indicated that they depend on the goodwill of NGOs whom they accompany to various wards (especially when they are coordinating the same projects). The NGOs mentioned by the respondents include Plan International, CARE International, Lutheran World Development Services and Msasa Project. They have also partnered with Ministry of Education which has a car at the district office at Neshuro business centre. The district head in the Ministry of SMEs indicated that he engages the provincial office whenever he feels overburdened with entrepreneurship trainings. He also said he has raised the issue of clashing programmes (where they clash with NGOs) with the District Administrator (D.A).

The coordination of the three ministries in implementing empowerment policies has been affected by the duplication of roles. The ministry of youth has a business and entrepreneurship unit which imparts skills to the youth identified by youth officers in different wards. The Ministry of SMEs also offers training workshops (although no age restrictions are emphasised) to people doing self-help projects. This has generated some conflicts among the concerned officers. The ministries were once merged but cabinet appointments have not been consistent over the years leaving the district officials tussling for the same clients.

5.4 Findings from the Non-governmental organisations

This part of the thesis presents data collected from the set of interviews with the two NGOs implementing youth self-help projects in Mwenezi District. Interviews were held with two NGOs officials, Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) and Mwenezi Development Training Centre (MDTC), both located at Neshuro Growth Point. The biographic information of the respondents is given in the table below:

Table 5.4 (NGOs officials' biographic information)

Name	Organisation	Age	Qualification	Date and Time of the interview
Mr A Chirasvure	MDTC	35-40	Degree	11 October 2017 (1820-1855)
Miss T Chauke	CAMFED	30-35	Certificate	11 October 2017 (1605-1654)

The following is a summary of the discussions held during the interviews with the two NGOs implementing youth self-help projects in Mwenezi District.

5.4.1 Self-help projects implemented in line with the National youth policy

The CAMFED respondent indicated that they are implementing several youth self-help projects across the 18 wards in the district but she said the projects are not necessarily in line with the National Youth Policy. Indeed, she indicated that if the projects are reflecting the ideas expressed in the policy this could be just coincidental. The projects include:

- Poultry production
- Hairdressing
- Buying and selling (tuckshop)
- Making detergents
- Baking
- Cosmetology
- Dressmaking
- Piggery

These projects are being done by out of school female youth who are CAMFED Association (CAMA) members. The records in the organisation indicate that they are currently working with 41 out of 45 secondary schools in the district. The MDTC respondent highlighted that they are into vocational skills training and self-reliance. The thrust (for the MDTC) being to equip the beneficiaries with skills to initiate their income generating projects. Their organisation trains people in courses such as dressmaking, welding, building and carpentry.

5.4.2 Addressing the concerns of the rural youth in Mwenezi

Findings on how the concerns of the rural youth are being addressed by NGOs' projects indicate some differences. The CAMFED respondent revealed that the concerns of the rural youth are being addressed to a large extent. The organisation helped the beneficiaries with capital. This has positively impacted on the female youth who have been facing financial constraints in implementing their self-help projects. One beneficiary is actually running an Early Childhood Development centre employing other fellow unemployed female youth. It can be deduced that youth concerns have been addressed through:

- ❖ Accessing start-up capital through loans which are not charged any interest.
- ❖ Financial independence and emancipation gained.
- ❖ Freedom from the masculine oppression and dominance.
- ❖ Increased self-esteem among female youth beneficiaries.
- ❖ Voice to speak their minds within their villages and other social gatherings.
- ❖ Business expansion and employment creation.
- ❖ Critical thinking and problem solving skills.

Mr Chirasvure (MDTC) indicated that there are some limitations with regard to meeting the concerns of the youth. He said most of the implemented projects need markets e.g. dressmaking. He also highlighted the challenge of funding especially start-up funding saying that capital needed for the procurement of material has been found to be a challenge. These challenges leave many youth with skills remaining idle.

The two respondents expressed that they did not know anything about the government policies promoting youth empowerment and they referred the researcher to the ministry of youth.

On the aspect of modifications to the policy environment with regards to the full participation of youth in self-help projects, the two respondents concurred that there is need to embrace the rural youth as an independent section with its special interests different from those in towns. They also said training should be widened for the unemployed youth in the rural communities so that they catch up with the trends in the contemporary world. More so, they highlighted the need to include critical thinking and problem-solving in the training curriculum

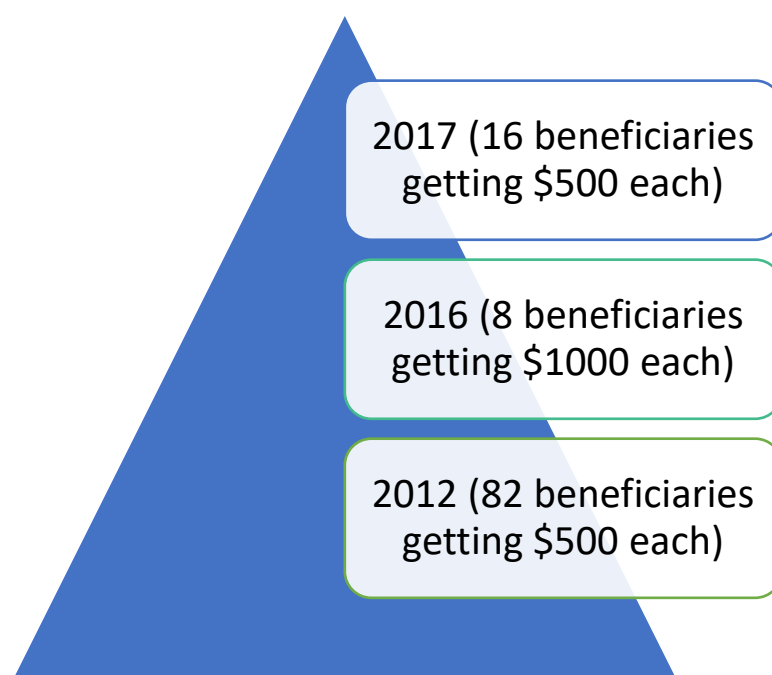
of the youth. Further, the research established that the practical subjects at school need to be emphasised so that when leaving formal school, the youth will be in a position to implement some self-help projects even without any funding.

5.4.3 Types of self-help projects supported amongst youth in Mwenezi District

The respondents mentioned that youth are being supported in poultry production, baking, piggery, dressmaking, cosmetology, business management as well as buying and selling projects. Most of these projects need prior training for one to be effective and the current crop of beneficiaries is being trained to ensure that their entrepreneurial activities are sustainable. Those trained in polytechnics are encouraged to share their skills, knowledge and experience with their fellow learner guides during workshops arranged for them.

The interviewee from CAMFED indicated that they offer loans to their beneficiaries to be paid back after three months at zero percent interest. This means the female youth undertaking the projects have a better chance to realise profits since they are not charged interest. She could not give the statistics for 2013-2015 but gave the following evidence.

Fig 5.2 showing the loans given to learner guides in Mwenezi



Mr Chirasvure from MDTC indicated that their organisation has supported youth groups doing fishing projects at Manyuchi dam in Mwenezi District. They supplied them with a boat and

they monitor their projects to ensure that they comply with the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) rules. Fishing is seen as a viable project because it requires little start-up capital and the beneficiaries do not constantly need inputs. Besides realising cash, the youth participants also supplement their diet with the protein rich fish.

5.4.4 Monitoring the sustainability of NGO implemented projects

The MDTC respondent (Mr Chirasvure) said they have a database of the students who completed training with the organisation. Their monitoring and evaluation officers and business officers execute the monitoring and evaluation duties on the implemented projects by:

- Visiting the projects of these ex-students time and again.
- Discussing issues regarding sustainability and challenges which they face.
- Writing evaluation reports and making recommendations.

On the other hand the CAMFED respondent said monitoring and evaluation is done through:

- Monthly reports written and submitted by the learner guides.
- Assessment reports from CAMA members, ministry of Women Affairs (ward coordinators) and Ministry of Youth (ward officers).
- Supervision by the CAMFED district office on the beneficiaries.
- Site visits are also carried out to ascertain the reality on the ground.
- Quarterly reviews that are made to ensure that the implemented projects are sustainable and enhancing youth empowerment.
- Review meetings with different stakeholders.
- External evaluation of the projects being implemented.

Both respondents said that if there are challenges identified, they will be discussed and proper solutions will be given to the concerned beneficiaries without reprimanding them.

5.4.5 Adaptation mechanisms for unemployed youth in rural areas

The CAMFED respondent highlighted several adaptation mechanisms that can help the youth to cope with several challenges confronting them. She suggested that youth need to:

- Engage in less demanding projects in terms of skills.

- Engage in small projects which are not financially demanding.
- Diversify their projects (avoid putting all their eggs in one basket).
- Venture into “traditional” commodities such as making mhasa (traditional mats), misero (winnowing baskets), and matengu (harvesting baskets).
- Grant matching.
- Studying one’s competitors’ strength and weaknesses and exploit them accordingly.
- Market research and assessment before and after project has begun.
- Training should be done to raise the capacity of unemployed youth engaging in entrepreneurial projects.
- Refresher courses need to be continuously held to tackle emerging challenges and embrace new trends in the market.

The respondent emphasised that small items give small but quick returns, for example selling sweets could be more rewarding compared to big but less viable projects. There is need to look at feasibility of the business, identify competitors, strength and weaknesses. She said this is critical because lack of knowledge hinders growth and development, forcing the youth to give up. This also increases chances of implementing sustainable projects that can withstand competition from established businesses and fellow youth entrepreneurs.

Mr Chirasvure emphasised the need for the rural youth to use local resources in pursuing their businesses. For carpentry he said they can use locally available indigenous trees which reduce costs of doing their projects. He further elaborated that this will help them to cope with and probably go around the problem of capital funding.

5.4.6 Suggestions to those responsible for developing and implementing youth policies

Both interviewees suggested that the policies developed should be relevant to the particular environment where they were to be implemented. They bemoaned that they had no finer details of what obtains in the National Youth Policy. They however stated that the target beneficiaries of the policies should be involved in the development and implementation of the policy. In this way, they said, the views and aspirations of the youth will be captured.

5.4.7 Key challenges faced in implementing youth self-help projects in Mwenezi district

The interviewees mainly highlighted economic challenges as the main impediments that hinder smooth implementation of the youth self-help projects in Mwenezi District. The two concurred that the cash crises were a serious challenge in the attempt to execute various projects. Other challenges identified are illustrated in the following table:

Table 5.5 showing SHP implementation challenges (Source: Author)

Challenges	CAMFED	MDTC
Liquidity crunch	✓	✓
Inhibitive competition	✓	✓
Location(rural areas)	✓	✓
Manpower (staff shortages)	✓	
Political interference		✓
Lack of skills among youth	✓	✓
Natural disasters	✓	✓

The CAMFED respondent said the liquidity crunch currently being experienced has rendered activities like Ecocash (mobile money transfer) very redundant. Oversupply of commodities from other suppliers is reducing the economic opportunities for the youth trying to establish their businesses. Limited manpower is also hampering their efforts to closely monitor the learner guides' projects. Mr Chirasvure concurred that the liquidity crunch currently experienced in the country has negatively affected the implementation of youth self-help projects. He also said the market in rural areas is limited and the youth are forced to walk long distances to find markets and the cost becomes a deterrent because of reduced profits.

5.4.8 Challenges' impact on the sustainability of youth projects

Mr Chirasvure said the challenges are adversely affecting the projects of the youth. This is because importing raw materials is difficult in the absence of hard cash. Besides, the cash shortage is forcing youth to restrict their businesses as they have to buy local expensive inputs. He noted that sourcing from outside might have expanded their business. The flooding

of the markets has also forced prices downwards and therefore the youth have been significantly affected with some pulling out completely.

CAMFED representative said that their clients have been experiencing decline in business and some were forced to abandon their projects especially those doing transactions in cash. She however mentioned that they have never faced defaulters in loan repayment. The resilience amongst the youth has been singled out as a factor that is keeping them in projects in spite of the formidable challenges. The researcher noted that the projects have been significantly affected as revealed by the drop-outs and downsizing in various projects. For example those in poultry production have been struggling to keep the momentum.

5.5 Findings from youth participants doing self-help projects in Mwenezi District

Individual youth interviews were relatively smoothly held and many respondents complied. Initially, the targeted number of twenty-five interviews could not be met as some interview categories like the individual funded and groups resisted (from August-December 2017). Indeed the political turbulence witnessed in Zimbabwe in the month of November 2017 had a bearing. The situation was so polarised that carrying out and recording an interview was not easy. The other reason for not reaching the figure was because there was no new emerging data after the twelve interviews done. However, the outstanding interviews were held in February and March 2018 to meet the initial target of twenty-five youth respondents.

Table 5.6 Demographic information of individual youth (Source: Author).

Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Marital status	Qualification	Ward	Project type	Date
IY1 (Edith)	20-25	F	Single	ZJC	5	Motor mechanic	31 Oct
IY2 (John)	25-30	M	Single	A LEVEL	2	Cash loaning	31 Oct
IY3 (Itai)	25-30	F	Single	O LEVEL	18	Hairdressing	14 Nov
IY4 (Nyas)	20-25	M	Single	O LEVEL	1	Diesel selling	14 Nov
IY5 (Joe)	25-30	M	Married	A LEVEL	5	Cattle fattening	15 Nov
IY6 (Chit)	25-30	F	Married	O LEVEL	1	Poultry	16 Nov

1Y7 (Mun)	30-35	M	Married	DIPLOMA	13	Cattle fattening	21 Nov
IY8 (Ton)	30-35	M	Married	GRADE 7	16	Goat Keeping	21 Nov
IY9 (Mut)	25-30	F	Married	DIPLOMA	16	Trading	22 Nov
IY10 (Chi)	20-25	F	Married	O LEVEL	8	Tuckshop	23 Nov
IY11 (Pw)	25-30	F	Married	DEGREE	3	Farming	24 Nov
IY12 (Dav)	30-35	F	Single	O LEVEL	4	Poultry	13 Nov
IY13 (Ess)	20-25	F	Single	O LEVEL	10	Buy & Sell	6 Mar
IY14 (Pre)	25-30	F	Single	O LEVEL	10	Groceries	7 Mar
IY15 (Sib)	20-25	F	Single	O LEVEL	10	Poultry	7 Mar
1Y16 (Jan)	20-25	F	Single	O LEVEL	12	Hairdressing	11 Mar
IY17 (Ku)	30-35	M	Married	O LEVEL	9	Fuel dealer	4 Mar
IY18 (Ras)	30-35	M	Married	Diploma	9	Welding	11 Mar
IY19 (Mh)	30-35	M	Married	Certificate	11	Welding	8 Mar
IY20 (Mu)	30-35	M	Married	O LEVEL	11	Carpentry	12 Mar
1Y21 (Mf)	30-35	M	Married	O LEVEL	9	Welding	12 Mar

The demographic information in the table shows that a total of twenty-one interviews were held with youth doing self-help projects. Eleven participants were female and ten were male. The interviewees were drawn from thirteen different wards in the district and they are doing different self-help projects. These projects include livestock production, cash crop farming, trading in various commodities as well as loaning cash. The marital statuses of the

respondents are also divided into married and single categories. Their educational qualifications also reflect that some have primary level, some secondary level and some tertiary level qualifications.

The major highlights from the youth participant interviews focused on government interventions, role of NGOs, National Youth Policy awareness, socio-economic benefits realised from projects, challenges encountered and resilient strategies used by the youth. The aim here was to engage the respondents on the key themes of this investigation.

5.5.1 Government interventions on the youth unemployment problem in Mwenezi

A number of respondents indicated that they are not receiving any assistance from the government. They indicated that they were using their own resources (financial and technical) to implement their self-help projects. Some even pointed out that they are not sure if the ministries have programmes to help people like them. A minority among the respondents said that the government has helped them to have farming implements and capital to initiate their projects.

Individual youth have varying perceptions and experiences with regard to the initiatives and actions that are being carried out by the government in addressing challenges related to youth unemployment. Only two interviewees (IY5 and IY11) testified that they received government financial and material support in starting their projects. Twelve respondents said they owe their project initiatives to NGOs who offered them training as well as start-up capital. The majority said they only hear of government loans given to youth as well as training in vocational skills especially at Mushagashe training centre.

Respondent IY5 mentioned the existence of the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act as well as the financial benefits coming to the youth through the Community Share Ownership Trust (CSOT), as some critical government initiatives. He also pointed out that there was a bank launched on the 5th of October 2017 to give loans to the youth as a way of empowering them financially. Respondent IY11 said she received some farming inputs (fertilizers and seeds) courtesy of the government's Command Agriculture. The respondents IY3, IY13 and IY14 said they just heard of youth training programmes implemented by the ministry of youth supported by NGOs which they could not identify.

5.5.2 Impact of government actions on Self-Help Projects

Interviewees who responded to this question said that the government actions are not effective particularly the issuing of loans. Some interviewees (IY17 and IY19) fumed that they are not seeing anything on the ground adding that the government statements are just rhetoric especially towards elections. IY2 respondent said that giving someone a loan without training them on business management was wasteful. He also said there is need to constantly monitor the beneficiaries as there are some who divert the money received. Again, using proposals as a base for giving loans was seen as weak in that some had their proposals written on their behalf by some experts. Only respondent IY5 indicated that initiatives by the government are facilitating the establishment of self-help projects and therefore effective in dealing with youth unemployment.

5.5.4 National Youth Policy Provisions awareness

Eighteen respondents out of twenty-one were ignorant of the existence of the National youth policy. One respondent (IY5) mentioned that he knew of the government's objective to assist youth in getting loans as well as training in vocational skills. IY2 and IY13 said that they only knew it is something to do with the ministry of youth but they could not state exact provisions in the policy document. A random survey conducted by the researcher among youth in the district (not forming part of the study sample) indicated that they know virtually nothing about the policy. At Number 1 business centre in Maranda, youth indicated that they only see youth officers once in six months asking them about their projects.

5.5.5 Public policy initiatives and youth Self-Help Projects

On the aspect of public policy initiatives helping youth to sustain individual youth projects, the respondents were again uncertain. IY11 mentioned the farming input scheme by the government (seeds, fertilizers); IY5 mentioned that President Mugabe (former head of state) gave them the Youth Fund to start income generating projects. He also said Mugabe even allowed makorokoza (fuel dealers) at Lundi to operate without police harassment. Contrary to this evidence, IY17 said the government harasses them taking away their goods like fuel which they sell illegally. IY4 said he only applauds the government for creating and maintaining a peaceful environment which makes doing his business possible. IY1 said that

allowing NGOs to operate was the only positive thing she realised coming from the government. All the other respondents mentioned that they knew no public policy initiatives implemented and had received nothing from the government to sustain their projects.

5.5.6 Socio-economic benefits realised by participants

A wide range of social and economic benefits were revealed by the interviewees. Common benefits shared among most youth respondents are presented below:

Table 5.7 Youth socio-economic benefits from projects

Social benefits	Economic benefits
Improved living standards	Regular income
Increased self-esteem and being assertive	Ability to pay rentals and utility bills
Leading an independent life	Paying schools fees for siblings at school
Respect in the family and community	Buying food, clothes and household property
Improved diet and health	Employment and employing others
Recognition in the community	Making sound budgets

Responses of the interviewees revealed that the benefits were varied but all pointed to a quantitative and qualitative change in their well-being. IY6 said that she was a miniature breadwinner as her husband is at college. She also indicated that a significant shift is seen in the way she is being treated in the family ever since starting her project. She indicated that she is now respected and consulted in the family. Decisions in the family are being made after consulting her indicating the utility role she now plays.

IY9 respondent highlighted that her project reduces stress and she now interacts with a lot of people in the community. Respondents also valued recognition as some indicated that “*tava kutoonekwawo sevanhu pane vamwe*” literally translated to mean (we are now recognised as worthy beings among others). IY11, IY13 and IY18 respondents stated that the projects improve problem solving skills and critical thinking especially during hard times.

5.5.7 Notable Changes in the lives of project participants

Interviewees mainly highlighted material gains as fundamentals pointing to the changes in their lives. IY1, IY3, IY14 and IY16 said they managed to improve the quantity and quality of their clothes. IY12 indicated that she now competes with the teachers at the local school in terms of hairstyle and dressing as she now embraces the fashion trends. Some managed to renovate their houses, drilled boreholes and bought livestock like cattle, donkeys, sheep and goats. There were also respondents (IY18 and IY21) who said the projects opened opportunities for them to be hired to offer services and expand their businesses. IY6 said she was now an active decision maker in the family and IY2 said his image in the community had significantly improved. Prominently, the theme of self-reliance was commonly shared by the youth especially IY17, IY20 and IY18.

5.5.8 Self-help projects and critical skills among the youth

Respondents mentioned that engaging in self-help projects enhanced and perfected their skills. Some mentioned that before training, they had no practical skills to talk about. Now they have an entrepreneurial mind-set, improved financial literacy and business management skills. IY2 and IY14 said they could now handle and deal with large sums of money and have developed sound finance management. The respondents also highlighted that they perfected their public relations. IY3 said she could make detergents, candles and any hairstyle required by her clients. IY4 said his negotiating skills were remarkably improved through interacting with international truck drivers at Lundi. IY11 mentioned that her project enabled her to develop problem solving and risk assessment skills. She also highlighted that cash crop farming increased her knowledge in the farming skills, harvesting, packaging as well as marketing of *Runinga*, a crop she hardly knew before. Interviewee IY12 stated that she could now train fellow youth in project implementation and management since she has the experience especially in poultry projects stretching for 13 years.

5.5.9 National Youth Policy and opportunities for the youth

The youth respondents felt that the policy created an environment where they could implement their self-help projects without being harassed. Some of the key highlights from their responses on the opportunities include the following:

- Training opened avenues for self-employment.
- Funding ensured that projects can be implemented.
- Youth with poor backgrounds can also access funds to undertake projects of their choice.
- Youth now actively participating in various activities and no longer idle.
- Risk associated with idleness significantly reduced (delinquency behaviour/anti-social behaviour now eradicated).
- Youth now employment creators and not employment seekers.
- Equal opportunities for both male and female youth.

5.5.10 Access and control of resources for youth projects through legislation

The majority of respondents were not aware of the youth empowerment legislation. They indicated that they were ignorant of the laws dealing with youth empowerment. Only IY2, IY5 and IY11 had something to say on the legislation. IY5 and IY11 said the laws helped them to access inputs for their respective projects. Through the command agriculture programme IY11 managed to access seed and fertilizers. She also said that the laws protect them from being exploited by the illicit dealers (cash crop buyers) who always want to take advantage of them in the farms. IY5 said the Indigenisation laws enabled them to have access to cash and land which help them in resource mobilisation. Ignorance of legal provisions affected the responses on this section. Even those who answered the questions were uncertain about their responses.

5.5.11 Tangible and intangible benefits youth derive from the Self-Help Projects

Respondents mainly repeated answers listed on the social and economic benefits already alluded to. Only two respondents (IY17 and IY19) indicated that they managed to buy cars from their projects. Some of the key highlights mentioned for tangible benefits are:

- ✓ Livestock e.g. cattle, goats, donkeys, sheep and chicken.
- ✓ Buying farm implements such as mouldboard ploughs, hoes etc.
- ✓ Income (cash coming from sales, payments, profits etc.)
- ✓ Household property (furniture, laptops, solar panels, batteries, beds, wardrobes etc.)
- ✓ Infrastructure (houses, tuckshop, fowl run, workshop etc.)

Under the intangibles, the respondents mentioned the following benefits:

- ✓ Knowledge in carrying out the projects (skills like hairdressing, mechanics, detergents making etc.)
- ✓ Self-esteem and confidence boosted.
- ✓ Exposure (meeting and socialising with different people from different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds etc.)
- ✓ Feeling emancipated to confront challenges in life.
- ✓ Self-reliance and ability to lead an independent life.

5.5.12 Challenges faced by youth in Self-Help Projects implementation

Youth who participated in the interviews share some common challenges in their attempt to initiate entrepreneurial projects. The respondents mentioned the following:

- Competition from other established businesses/service providers (mainly those into buying and selling, loaning cash and poultry projects etc.)
- Liquidity crunch (cash shortages affecting input acquisition, ordering new stock as well as selling as customers fail to pay in cash).
- Council harassment (mainly because they have no operating licences and they operate from undesignated places).
- Communication challenges (network is weak or non-existent in remote areas).
- Natural disasters (droughts, floods etc. mainly affecting agriculture related projects).
- Outbreak of diseases such as foot and mouth, anthrax etc. (mainly raised by livestock producers and poultry projects).
- Insufficient knowledge on business management (stock control, marketing etc.)
- Inflation (price hikes deterring buying of inputs, tools and stock)
- Thieves (raised by those doing buying and selling).
- Remoteness of the district.

5.5.13 Effects of challenges on Self-Help Projects sustainability

Respondents said that the challenges are affecting the sustainability of their projects as they cannot realise the maximum profits. They said that their colleagues who are no longer in business could not cope with the challenges. IY3 and IY16 mentioned that three weeks can lapse without any client coming for hairdressing. They said this is because of the economic hardships in the country. IY8 said that the disease outbreaks have derailed plans to expand his business. He said he lost eighty guinea fowls to an unknown disease. IY11 said that crop production is under severe threat from the unpredictable weather they experience. This has forced her to downsize her project to reduce the risk.

5.5.14 Efforts to overcome challenges faced

The findings reveal that youth respondents have adopted largely similar strategies to try and overcome the challenges they face in self-help project implementation. A summary of the strategies is given below:

- Diversifying the projects implemented (spreading the risk by doing different initiatives).
- Working in partnership with other youth to share ideas and the risks in the projects.
- Enrol in short courses on finance management and stock control.
- Engage the veterinary department for prevention and treatment of animal diseases.
- Using traditional herbs to cure diseases (use of aloe).
- Increasing security and reporting to the police (problem of theft).
- Growing drought resistant crops and short season varieties (problem of drought).
- Starting low capital projects like waste collection.
- Smuggling chicken birds from South Africa to counter shortages from local suppliers.

The interviewees indicated that they continue to engage in the self-help projects because there is no other viable alternative. Formal employment prospects continue to dwindle as colleges and universities continue to produce more and more graduates who are also

unemployed. The respondents said if there is any option leading to formal employment they would adopt it. This suggests that they are not impressed by the benefits gained from self-help projects.

5.6 CONCLUSION

The chapter presented research findings gathered in Mwenezi District among the government officers implementing youth related policies, NGOs supporting the youth self-help projects and the youth participants carrying out projects. This presentation managed to demonstrate that the ministry officials are aware of different programmes and they are making efforts to execute their duties following their different key result areas. It is also clear that in doing their day to day activities; they face huge constraints impacting negatively on their targets. One can conclude that the members are betrayed by the operational environment which is not supportive. The NGOs have provided some form of restitution on the implementation of the empowerment related programmes but the impact is not being felt by most youth. This is because the mission of the organisations is to complement the government rather than compete with it. A gender bias in the implementation is also visible as female youth receive support from various corners.

A cross-sectional overview of the youth self-help projects demonstrates that most of them are just beginning and participation is not so popular. Besides, one can conclude that the majority of these self-help projects are facing a viability challenge due to a number of factors. This is a view which the youth participants themselves do not deny. The interviewees among the youth participants mainly identified financial constraints, lack of government support and competition from established projects as causes for their underperformance.

It was also apparent that females were more enthusiastic about their projects compared to males who did not shy to mention that if job opportunities in the formal sector opened they would rather drop the project idea. The perception of the youth towards the government was mainly negative as they said that it has abandoned its role as a duty bearer. Being largely ignorant of the policy and other laws supporting youth empowerment, the youth in Mwenezi denounced and blamed their situation on “uncommitted” government which only remembers them towards elections.

The chapter has shown that youth in Mwenezi do engage in various self-help projects in an attempt to sustain their livelihoods. However, the self-help projects have provided them with limited opportunities beyond hand to mouth survival. Policies exist but the implementation is facing critical challenges punctuated by poor resourcing. The next chapter provides a critical analysis of the empirical data collected and considers the implications for youth socio-economic empowerment in rural Zimbabwe in general and Mwenezi District in particular.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this study, youth socio-economic empowerment through policy implementation in rural Zimbabwe focusing on Mwenezi District was investigated. The research was guided by the following research questions:

- What is the link between public policy, rural development and youth socio-economic empowerment in rural Zimbabwe?
- What is the current status of youth policy guiding self-help projects and empowerment in rural Zimbabwe?
- What contribution is being made by youth self-help projects towards realising sustainable livelihood in Mwenezi District?
- What are the perceptions of youth engaging in self-help projects towards the implementation of the National Youth Policy in Zimbabwe?
- What challenges are being faced in an attempt to achieve youth empowerment through the implementation of the National Youth Policy in Zimbabwe?

This chapter provides a discussion and interpretation of the findings obtained through semi-structured interviews. Parallels are also drawn with the surveyed literature that is discussed in previous chapters. The research findings are interrogated in line with the related policy implementation strategies as well as the sustainable livelihood framework and critical social empowerment theory.

This chapter is organised based on the following sub-themes: the nexus between public policy and youth socio-economic empowerment and rural development; youth self-help projects and government policy; self-help projects and sustainable livelihoods in Mwenezi; youth perceptions towards policy implementation; and the challenges in achieving youth empowerment through the implementation of the National Youth Policy in Zimbabwe.

6.2 PUBLIC POLICY, RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN RURAL ZIMBABWE

This discussion is based on the findings from the stakeholders responsible for the implementation of the National Youth Policy. These include ministry officials and Non-Governmental Organisation officials. A link between policy provisions and programme activities among the stakeholders, as well as the demands and aspirations to realise socio-economic emancipation among the youth, has been established in earlier chapters. The principal implementers of the National Youth Policy are government employees in the ministries of Youth, SMEs and Women Affairs (Gender). The “distinctive and complementary roles of all Government Ministries, the Non-Government Sector and Youth Groups in youth development” (ZYC) are underscored in the National Youth policy. This was also noted in the findings. The NGOs respondents indicated that they complemented the efforts by the government to empower youth.

6.2.1 Targets

It was noted in the study that, despite working towards the common goal of youth and rural development, the bureaucrats and field officers from both the government and NGOs have different targets. Policy instruments and rules binding them are not synonymous. The Women Affairs (Gender) officers prioritise women, the SMEs officer highlighted that they are not restricted by age and therefore the thrust of their department is not solely focussed on rural youth socio-economic emancipation. This raises concerns over coordination and conflicting interests. This revelation resonates well with findings published in the youth manual in Europe, which indicates that ensuring a successful inter-ministerial cooperation is difficult. In this case, it is given that “it can be hard to develop a strong ownership for the same strategy across several different government institutions” (Denstad, 2009: 19). This is because all would want to be leading in the process, yet they would have different working cultures and competing interests.

6.2.2 Policy Implementation

In the same vein, policy implementation is being crippled by the contestations on who should be doing what in the ministries. The entrepreneurship department in the Ministry of Youth is there to equip the youth with skills towards effective business execution and cost effective

projects. Overlaps arise when the target group is also under the jurisdiction of the ministry of SMEs. Here is an excerpt from one key respondent in the ministry of SMEs:

“I am with the Ministry of SMEs and there is the Ministry of Youth, there is an issue of secrecy and self-seeking behaviour amongst officers. Because they really know that if an NGO comes it needs only one facilitator from one ministry. If there is a program targeting the ministry of youth...we know that entrepreneurship development is in the ministry of SMEs but they want to play hide and seek with us. This is the case with many programmes which have something to do with entrepreneurship development and are within our arm pit”.

The sentiments expressed by the respondent point to the lack of harmony in the government ministries and their departments. This lack of coordination is felt and seen in the way policy implementers compete between and among themselves to gain recognition and material benefits in the different projects. Cross reference can be made to the findings made by the UNCTAD in its 1997 Report. The Report observed that policy implementation in such initiatives as “poverty alleviation, basic needs, growth, equity; social justice and development were rendered redundant by such personal gratification actions”. This clearly rationalises cooperation and consistency among policy makers and implementers so that effective policies are instituted.

Theoretical underpinnings informing this study highlight the importance of policies sensitive to the sustainable livelihoods of the youth. Despite the glaring need by the rural youth in Mwenezi District to be empowered socially and economically, there seems to be unequal distribution of resources in the country. The Youth Forum urged the “central government to ensure that there is implementation of all models developed for economic empowerment and sustainable livelihoods”. They also advocated for “equitable, fair and transparent distribution of resources among the Zimbabwean youth” (Dura, Newsday 29 April 2014). This reveals that concerns expressed by the youth respondents are also shared nationally.

6.2.3 Policy Impact and Access to Funding

Regrettably, the adopted policies have been seen as the beginning of real reforms with no deliberate policy for job creation. This implies that the policy can only go far but not further.

The impact on youth has been minimal with the majority still languishing in poverty. It is also given that the Youth Fund in the Ministry of Youth has been insignificant. Some blame the beneficiaries who failed to return the funds for the programme to continue. The District Head of SMEs indicated that the situation had become unworkable. He said:

“Youth are a bit problematic and they don’t avail themselves. Last time they were provided with these funds but they didn’t pay back. It was 86 percent defaulters, i.e. the Youth fund disbursed through CABS”.

Similar revelations were made by the business and entrepreneurship officer in the Ministry of Youth at Neshuro who said:

“Vanongodya mari havadzosi, kana uchida izvezvi enda unovabvunza mazita acho ndinawo awa”. (Literally translated to...they just squander the money without paying back. If you want you can go and ask them. I can give you the names of the defaulters).

Dura, of the Youth Forum, concurred with the evidence above and said that: “the Youth Fund has not been impressive with many grantees failing to return the loans nor making any meaningful impact in terms of entrepreneurial development. Moreover, the fund has been shrouded in controversy and there are allegations of corruption” (Newsday, 14 April 2014).

Hence, one can conclude that although programmes to help the youth exist, they are not benefiting these youth equally. Policy in this light is ineffective in promoting equitable youth socio-economic empowerment especially in rural Zimbabwe.

Efforts to interview some of the defaulters named, in order to be able to consider their perceptions and experiences, were not successful. In some cases they denied having received the money, whilst in others, they threatened the life of the researcher. However, the records are still in the District Office of the Ministry of Youth which confirm that they received some funding. Allegations of corruption shrouding the youth fund were also revealed in the interviews held by the researcher (respondents IY17 and IY19). The District Head of the Ministry of SMEs said that political affiliation rather than capacity and need influenced access to the funds being distributed. Parallels can be drawn to the various government programmes

such as the inputs scheme for agriculture, the land redistribution and other such programmes where beneficiaries have been selected on the basis of political affiliation (Charumbira and Chituri, 2013).

As part of rural development enhancement, the government through the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act, empowered communities to be given a stake in the shares of companies extracting mineral resources. The study established that the initiative which work under a tag called Community Share Ownership Trusts has also benefited the rural district of Mwenezi. Tongaat Hullets, the owners of Mwenezana Estates, gave the Mwenezi Trust US\$60 thousand in 2016. The effectiveness of the initiative is doubted even by the implementers. The amount is too meagre to service the whole district's 18 wards given that it lags behind a great deal in infrastructural development and has many other pressing needs. The District Head in the Ministry of Youth said:

“Yaah this policy of IEE in as far as socio-economic emancipation is concerned, I think yaah...it's not much...it's not so visible. I think because of the amount being disbursed. The amount is so small...now things are not clearly seen by the community that something is shaping”.

Notwithstanding these reservations, they managed to support three primary schools (Neshuro, Rinette and another one in Maranda). He also said they are in the process of erecting a clinic in ward 16. This information was corroborated by an interviewee (IY5) who mentioned that, as youth, they are realising social and economic benefits through the community share ownership trust funds and the cattle fattening project they are running in ward 5. Therefore, one might conclude that rural social development is being promoted by the policy interventions like the Indigenisation Act (Chapter 14:33 of 2007). It is important to note here that Matyszak (2016: 20) concluded that “Zimbabwe's indigenisation requirements appear to depend upon statements by the President, his choice of Indigenisation Minister (determined by ZANU PF's factional politics and not the particular Minister's approach to his or her portfolio), that particular Minister's whims, and whether an election is pending”. This demonstrates that policy implementation is shaped by personality interests in the country rather than the needs of the beneficiaries in the community.

Overall, the IEEA has been roundly criticised for worsening unemployment for the youth and other groups in Zimbabwe. Bloch said “the manner in which indigenisation has been carried out has intensified business closures and downsizing, fuelled unemployment within the formal sector, worsened widespread poverty, hardships and suffering that afflict most Zimbabweans” (The Independent 15 March, 2013). Therefore, policies are a double-edged sword in as far as youth socio-economic empowerment is concerned. Negative and positive results are evident from both the research findings and the literature.

6.2.4 Training

The most recurring idea shared among all the key informants interviewed, is the aspect of training. The National Youth Policy “affirms that education and skills development are lifelong processes that are relevant to the holistic and integrated development of youth”. As presented in the previous chapter, training of the youth in vocational skills has been on-going in the district, with over 300 youth having been trained between January 2017 and November 2017 (Ministry of youth Training Department File, 2017). The indispensable need for training is supported by Murinda (2014: 23), who suggests that vocational training improves the youth skills and prospects to meet the needs of the labour market. Jacobs and Hart (2012: 5) also posit that education, training and the development of necessary skills was vital to achieving a post-apartheid South Africa that is based upon equality. This is a point for consideration in the case of Zimbabwe.

Evidence of youth training in various vocational skills corresponds with the drive to equip the young people who are economically active with hands on skills. The African Development Bank (AfDB) 2016 Report indicates that, the bank “is focusing its investments on education, vocational training and skills development. They are embarking on innovative programmes and financing approaches to accelerate job creation and allow Africa’s greatest demographic asset, its young people, to contribute to its economic prosperity”. This is done to enhance the capacity of the African governments to meet the challenges of improving the welfare of its people. Sally Dura, chairperson of Youth Forum in 2014 applauded the move by government to “increase the enrolment of youths in vocational training centres from the current figure of 7 300 to 50 000 by the end of 2014 as it drives towards its target of 500 000 by 2018” (Newsday, 29 April 2014).

Vocational skills training, entrepreneurship development and mentorship have been identified by the government of Zimbabwe as key vehicles to achieve sustainable youth economic empowerment (Ministry of Youth Interview, 15 November 2017). This is in contrast with Kabeer's (1994: 265) assertion that "the poor do not need to be 'trained' by outside instructors since they can manage their own process of skill formation through their own efforts. It is emphasised that they are experienced and knowledgeable managers of their local environments in need of material assistance from governments rather than top-down 'education' instructions". Findings in the current research revealed that training is one of the government initiatives to equip youth with necessary skills to confront unemployment challenges.

In addition to the above, money spent, laws passed and regulations formulated are part of policy implementation. This is mainly done by the executive. The Ministry of Youth respondent said that they work under instruction from the head office, following and executing circulars from the Permanent Secretary and Directorate in all the activities they engage in. One may argue that this top-down prescriptive policy implementation has a bearing on the effectiveness of government projects on the youth. However, it must be noted, as mentioned earlier in this thesis, that there are varying perceptions. Marume et al. (2016) argued that "the fact that public policies are sanctioned by legislations and promulgated in legislative acts of one or other kind, does not necessarily lead to their automatic implementation". Various factors exert an enormous influence on public policy implementation. In Mwenezi, officials have little power to alter the policy as they follow the linear model of policy implementation.

6.2.5 Participation by the Youth

The logic of the theory of "critical youth empowerment (is) based on the contributions made by young people to community development and socio-political change sees young people as important in their respective communities" (Martínez et al., 2017: 412). This is in sync with the contents of the National Youth Policy, where the youth are seen to be "active citizens, taking part in the construction of stronger, fairer communities on a daily basis". The policy states that the "youth should participate in the social, cultural and economic development of the country and take an active involvement in decision making at all levels affecting their

lives” (National Youth Policy, 2013: 8). Evidence from the interviews with the youth indicates that the majority are feeling excluded in the socio-economic development. This contradicts with the claims from the District Head of the Ministry of Youth who suggested that:

“...communities are quite aware of some of the good things that are happening in terms of projects provision, in terms of advocacy and leadership development for the out of school and the youth in school. I think haaaa...most of the citizens of the district are quite aware of the proceeds that come with these policies”.

The fact that youth failed to identify any single provision in the National Youth Policy (even some with post-secondary school qualifications) might suggest that the ward youth officers are not adequately carrying out their responsibilities. Edwards and Sharkansky (in Marume et al., 2016) state that “the first requirement for effective implementation is that those responsible for carrying out a decision must know what they are supposed to do”. Therefore, youth officers in the Ministry are required to possess the necessary qualifications in order to be able to understand policy implications and to be competent with the necessary skills in order to be able to implement policies.

It has been noted in this study that, despite having a clear policy with clearly laid down objectives and strategies to achieve those empowerment ideals, sustainable development will continue to elude the youth. The contact between unemployed youth and policy implementers is compromised by the fact that both sides do not trust each other. The youth interviewed expressed dissatisfaction at the level of inaction being witnessed. IY1 said, “Look...we have the skills but there is really nowhere to find the work”. This view was shared by IY17 and IY18 who said that, despite the policy being in place, the ruling party is anti-youth and views them as opposition supporters whose agenda is fixed on regime change. On the other hand, the District Head of the Youth Ministry said that the youth in and around Neshuro only visit the office when they hear that there are some loans being given. He alluded to the idea that the youth are opportunistic in their efforts rather than being focussed on attending to real grievances.

6.2.6 The “Benefits” Trap

Development, conceptualised as the improvement of quality of life, should see rural areas being transformed and youth being emancipated. The quality and quantity of loans being

availed to the youth through both government and NGOs, appear to be yielding limited results. The number of beneficiaries of these revolving funds is just a small percentage of the youth population. Despite this, responses from the Ministry of Women Affairs (Gender) seem to suggest that there are monumental benefits. According to the Community Development officer in the Ministry of women affairs, a number of notable changes are seen among the beneficiaries of the program. Some have managed to buy properties such as beds, furniture and some household goods. Paying of school fees has also been made easier by the project uptake. Other socio-economic changes include the buying of livestock, improvement in water and sanitation, health promotion as well as general income. This could not be independently assessed by the researcher but it suggests that policy is contributing to the welfare improvement among beneficiaries.

Evidence gathered in previous research demonstrates that generalising the impact of livelihood interventions is faulty at best (Chigunta, 2005: 23). What the NGOs and Ministry officers assess and use as a measurement of well-being, may not reflect satisfaction attributes and demands among the youth. An external evaluation is tainted by the background, worldview and preconceived ideas of the evaluator (Jupp and Ali, 2010). For example, Frost (in Scoones, 2009: 189) “presents a highly pessimistic vision of livelihood sustainability in a study from rural Zimbabwe. They argue forcefully that livelihoods interventions in their study area have made no difference, and that people are stuck in a more fundamental trap which palliative, and very expensive, measures are not geared up to deal with the challenges”. This argument reflects the ideas expressed by some of the youth respondents interviewed in Mwenezi, specifically IY1, IY9 and IY11. Despite having these views, the same interviewees said they see no other option except doing what they are engaged in, which is to continue with the current projects as livelihood strategies.

It can be deduced that people can be trapped in an activity despite its obvious non-benefits. Absence of a viable alternative shuts the exit door for the youth who could be conscious of the limitations in their projects. The policy is arguably failing to recognise such differences between and among the youth engaging in self-help projects. The training received by the youth through both the government ministries and NGOs has not helped many of them to unlock new opportunities in other areas. The other possibility could be that the youth themselves are not prepared to take risks venturing into other livelihood opportunities or

strategies. This research could not establish any valid reason as respondents facing the challenges simply stated that they had no alternative. Thus, the researcher has labelled the “benefits” trap, describing a situation where individuals pursue development in activities that generate very little, if not no benefit at all. They continue to participate under the illusion of change.

6.3 NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY AND YOUTH SELF-HELP PROJECTS: THE TRADE-OFF

This theme is built on the premise that the research sought to unravel the status of the National Youth Policy and how it undermines the initiatives by the youth to make a living through self-help projects. The policy was promulgated in 2000, at a time when the economic fortunes of the country were on a free fall. Zhou and Zvoushe (2012: 220) observed that “a tense socio-political environment existed. They argued that this situation inspired the adoption of regressive and repressive legislation which largely sought the political survival, and overall control over the citizenry’s various liberties by the ruling elite”. The citizenry include the youth who were mainly used to commit acts of violence against the opposition during the same period (Mude, 2014: 108). Legislation passed during this period manifested a strong regulatory bias (Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act as well as Public Order and Security Act). The policies made during the period “seem hastily done; by reason of their gross inherent gaps and irregularities that even pose so many contradictions and clashes with other established policies” (Zhou and Zvoushe, 2012: 220). This study established that the National Youth Policy also came out during this. It must be noted that the contradiction identified by Zhou and Zvoushe (2012) was not observed by the researcher.

It is important to reiterate here that the self-help projects are being engaged in by youth who may not necessarily be aware of the existence of the policies. Indeed, a sizeable number of the respondents initiated their projects in the absence of knowledge related to the youth empowerment policies. This is not to suggest that they did not benefit from the policies, but rather, it is a question of consciousness. For example, youth benefitted from the conducive environment created by government through legislation which provides for the establishment of small to medium enterprises. This is even acknowledged by one respondent (IY4) interviewed in September 2017 before the November 15 coup who said the peace and tranquillity in the country is helping youth to implement their projects.

The first two objectives under the first goal of the current National Youth Policy in Zimbabwe, point to the critical idea of participation. The objectives are:

- To provide opportunities for sustainable livelihoods and decent work for all young men and women;
- To assist youth in attaining the knowledge, skills and experiences required to enable them to effectively participate in national development and society as a whole.

This means youth are to be actively involved in the execution of projects and that the implementers of the policy are aware of these objectives. The findings of this study show that they are indeed cognisant of their role to ensure that youth are provided opportunities, however, some youth are unfamiliar with the roles and responsibilities of the implementers. In ward 16, ward 13 and ward 15, the interviewed youth expressed ignorance of both the policy as well as the government programmes to assist them. Although the authenticity of such claims could not be easily verified by the nature of this study, the evidence from the three district officials that they are under-staffed and struggle to cover the length and breadth of the district seems to confirm the sentiments expressed by the respondents. Lack of enthusiasm among the interviewed youth suggested that they are ignorant of the policy supporting establishment and running of their projects. Some were visibly surprised that there are policy provisions that say they should get support. The resultant impact is that in the absence of the awareness, the youth are unable to approach the implementers for support or even further assistance to expand existing projects.

Participation in national development presupposes that one is involved in some productive work (National Youth Policy, 2013). Objective three of the National Youth Policy supports “involving youth at the planning, decision making, and implementation and evaluation levels of all youth development programmes”. For the rural youth in Mwenezi, the research failed to establish how this is happening. Zhou and Zvoushe (2012: 212) suggest that “soundly crafted national policies provide feasible channels through which governments communicate and respond to citizen demands. They enable society to read and interpret the mind-set and priorities of the national leadership”. Results from this study show that this kind of

communication is non-existent for the majority of the youth. Without this communication, one also wonders how the government responds to the concerns of youth whose feelings, aspirations and challenges it is unaware of.

Despite there being differences in the way countries developed their policies, it is ideal to involve the youth in the process. For example the “national youth policy in Panama was developed by youth organisations affiliated with the National Youth Council of Panama in 1999 in cooperation with the Government’s Ministry responsible for Youth in both national and provincial youth meetings in all parts of Panama” (Angel, 2005: 53). The effect of involving the youth could be, that they relate well with the policy, knowing its provisions as well as its application in their day to day lives. Angel (2005: 58) noted that “young people favour a youth policy more focused on the provincial and local levels of their country and prefer decentralized youth policies and programmes planned by and with youth than by bureaucrats sitting in the capital city”. This was also echoed by the respondents when they were asked what could be done to improve the National Youth Policy in Zimbabwe. The Mwenezi Development Training Centre respondent said it is imperative to have a decentralised policy:

“...because being rural, being urban, eeheh, yaah, we have different ways of understanding life...and I feel each of these elements are better done differently rather than have a general policy which suits everyone, because what feels to be essential for an urban resident and his rural counterpart might not tally at all. These people are facing different economic, social situations”.

One youth respondent (IY5) also shared the same sentiments saying that youth from Mwenezi have different needs compared to other districts. He implored the central government to consider level of development, local needs as well as number of people before parcelling out government programmes. IY12 also indicated that the fact that they were given soya-bean seed in a semi-arid area, is an indication that no regional or contextual considerations are being made for each particular area.

The evidence above resonates well with propositions that a bottom-up implementation approach is more effective in addressing the needs of the ordinary people like unemployed youth. According to Johnson (2001: 522) “a defining feature of any democratic system is that decision-makers are under the ‘effective popular control’ of the people they are meant to

govern". In this case, rural youth should be able to contribute to the decision making process which is currently dominated by central policy actors. The critical social empowerment theory also supports the idea of involving youth, as individuals, or in partnership with adults in the self-help projects. The findings of this study indicate that the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act is being implemented through a cattle fattening project in Ward 5 at Chipiri feedlot in a partnership involving youth and adults. According to IY5 the:

"...community share ownership trust (composed of the seven chiefs in the district, the District Administrator (DA), Rural District Council Chief Executive Officer (CEO), District Head of the Ministry of Youth, Council Chairman and the youth representative (who happens to be myself) are implementing the project".

The respondent who is also the ZANU PF's Youth Chairperson and Provincial Secretary in the same party, had relatively more access to government projects and programmes, compared to other youth respondents. It is therefore important to recognise that his experiences may not necessarily reflect what other ordinary youth feel about the policy implementation. This reality reinforces the idea that policy implementation is influenced by political affiliation.

The fourth objective of Goal number two, of the National Youth Policy, talks about "systematic integration of youth issues into all policies, plans, programmes and strategies at all levels and within all sectors and institutions of government, NGOs and the private sector". The integration of youth in all government programmes is easier said than done. This is according to the youth respondents who said they have only benefitted from the NGOs. Mwenezi Development Training Centre, Plan International, Campaign for Female Education, Lutheran World Service and CARE International are some of the NGOs that have spearheaded the implementation of self-help projects in Mwenezi (Key Informant Ministry of Gender, 04 September 2017). Document evidence corroborated with the key informant interviews support the fact that youth issues have been included in these organisations' plans. Effectiveness of the initiatives cannot be generalised, but there is evidence to support that some projects being implemented by the youth owe much to the NGOs support.

Funds from international donors are being used to implement policies in the district (Key Informant, Ministry of SMEs 15 November 2017). Evidence from the interview with the head of department in the ministry of SMEs sheds light on how poverty stricken districts like

Mwenezi are benefitting. He said that they were given US\$7.8 million to be disbursed to cooperatives and individuals doing projects which benefit their respective communities. The fund from the Oil Producing and Exporting Countries Fund for International Development (OFID), was given to Masvingo, Manicaland and Matebeleland north provinces. Although the researcher could not ascertain the authenticity of this claim from either individual youth or youth cooperatives, it was established that the launch for the programme was done at Mwenezi Development Training Centre on 15 September 2017 (Key Informant, Ministry of SMEs 15 November 2017).

A study undertaken by Chitongo (2013: 129) established that NGOs play an important role in supporting the efforts of poor people, in Zimbabwe, to tackle the causes and effects of food insecurity. Supporting youth self-help projects is understood in this study as a strategy to enhance sustainable livelihoods among the project participants and their families. Elsewhere, the government has also received support from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to ensure policy implementation (Newsday 29 April 2014). It is prudent to note that, in efforts to alleviate challenges like youth unemployment in Zimbabwe, the ILO and its social partners, the Danish government in particular, have contributed immensely with commendable technical and financial support through the Skills for Youth Employment and Rural Development programme (Goche, Newsday 29 April 2014). The inclusion of rural youth in such programmes, seems to be veiled in obscurity as interviewed youth, and key informants were not aware of such initiatives.

Whilst the capacity of the state to implement the policies is severely limited by unavailability of resources among other critical factors, it has attempted to distribute resources within its means to engender a transformation trajectory among the youth in the country. Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment, Justice Mayor Wadyajena, said “the intention of the IEEA legislation is to make empowerment a lasting feature of our body politic in order to guarantee meaningful participation by youths and other marginalised groups like women and the physically challenged” (Newsday 29 April, 2014). Wadyajena (MP) “urged the youth to acquaint themselves with laws that deal with their concerns in order to make informed decisions and take appropriate action where necessary”. He is quoted in the same newspaper to have said:

“As an organisation that is committed to the full participation of the youth through sustainable development, I challenge you to acquaint yourselves with the revised National Youth Policy, the Youth Council Act, the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act and the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZimAsset)”.

The question that must be considered is, how do impoverished, semi-literate, remote rural youth acquaint themselves with such laws and policies? Given a background of understaffing in the ministry of youth (District Head Ministry of Youth, 14 November 2017), where ward youth officers are not even known to some youth, the idea seems to be impractical. As a result, it becomes evident that the marginalisation and exclusion of the periphery (rural areas) by the centre (urban areas) is continuing 38 years after independence. Findings from this study support this argument as the youth respondents are not aware of many initiatives launched and implemented in Harare and other urban centres within Zimbabwe.

It is noted that although the research in Mwenezi indicates that awareness is not shared by the youth, there are some youth who are realising notable benefits. A youth, identified as Jonas, has established himself as a distinguished builder. Interview with the District Ministry of Youth Head revealed that they send their Integrated Skills Outreach Programme (ISOPs) students to him for internships. Mr Makore indicated that at one time he (Jonas) was training thirty youth. The researcher visited, the said youth on his construction site at the new stands at Neshuro business centre, and witnessed the application of vocational skills at work. The individual agreed that his projects were rewarding him handsomely and he is leading a different life ever since embarking on the project. His situation was taken as an exception, rather than a rule.

In the same vein of positive outcomes, nineteen youth doing well in entrepreneurship in Mwenezi District were included in the country's group of innovative, resilient and enterprising youth. The group, which was launched in August 2016, has 39 385 entrepreneurs throughout the country (Herald 3 March 2017). Operating under the name Zimbabwe Champions of the Economic Empowerment Revolution (ZimCHEER), the entrepreneurs are said to have created 93 692 jobs in the country (Herald 3 March 2017). The findings from this study show that the

identified entrepreneurs were called to witness the launch of the Youth Empowerment Bank on the 5th of August 2017 in Harare (Interview with the District Head Ministry of Youth). The Ministry of Youth has also embraced youth companies in the implementation of its economic blue-print called ZIMASSET. These are Youth Feed Zimbabwe, Youth Employ Zimbabwe, Youth Shape Zimbabwe and Youth Industrialise Zimbabwe. This study, carried out in Mwenezi District, revealed that each of these initiatives are unknown to the local youth in the district. Therefore, information dissemination may need to be improved to capture all corners of the country in as much as policy implementation is concerned.

The literature supports the transparent and effective implementation to validate the policy process. According to Brewer and de Leon (1983: 249), “lacking proper implementation, policy innovation and selection may end up being little more than intellectual exercises. They also note that, faulty policy implementation can invalidate the earlier, carefully considered steps in the policy process and thereby intensify the original problem”. In this light, launching programmes in Harare and not judiciously executing them in needy areas like Mwenezi, may mean that little change is achieved at the end of the day. Yet policies are initiated to solve some existing problems.

6.4 CONTRIBUTION OF YOUTH PROJECTS TO SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS IN MWENEZI

Individual experiences by the youth participating in self-help projects portray different outcomes for the youth in the district. Generalising these outcomes may not be the best thing to do, as each narrative shows its own peculiar characteristics. According to Wallerstein (2006: 4) “successful empowering interventions cannot be fully shared or “standardized” across multiple populations, but must be created within or adapted to local contexts (e.g., culture and gender appropriateness)”. Evidence from all of the five key informants however, points towards a success story for the youth. According to the Ministry of SMEs Head in Mwenezi with regards to the participants:

“Income generation and their livelihoods have greatly benefited...because we have some success stories of individuals who were involved in these programmes and they benefited. These range from very low levels of managing to buy one’s own bed, ability to send children to school (payment of fees) and starting bigger projects”.

These revelations also align with what the researcher obtained from some youth interviewed. Material acquisition was something they quickly pointed at whenever they were asked about their successes. It is apparent that many interviewees invest their income in livestock as a fall back if they face challenges in future. Therefore, the youth bank their future in immovable property (houses and tuck-shops) as well as cattle, goats, donkeys, sheep, guinea fowl and indigenous chicken birds.

Value attached to owning cattle in the communities around the district, suggests that if someone fails to buy one, they would have failed. Both male and female youth put emphasis on buying cattle, as a sign of economic and social achievement and satisfaction. According to Ellis (1998: 4) “a livelihood encompasses income, both cash and in kind, as well as the social institutions (kin, family, compound, village and so on), gender relations, and property rights required to support and to sustain a given standard of living”. This points to an important consideration that this study took on the youth projects and how project participants perceived socio-economic benefits, as well as tangible and intangible benefits realised. For example IY1, IY4, IY6, IY8 and IY12 mentioned that they had acquired cattle after engaging in their respective projects. Their families were directly benefitting from the livestock generally kept at home. This resonates well with the idea of enhancing social institutions of the immediate as well as the extended family.

Some female youth interviewed, indicated that they have benefited through projects as revealed by improved recognition in the family, where they now contribute significantly towards the welfare of their families. This has had a positive effect on their social relations within the family. Scoones (2009: 189) explains the issue of social relations, when he notes that “they inevitably govern the distribution of property (including land), patterns of work and divisions of labour, the distribution of income and the dynamics of consumption and accumulation”. Thus, through self-help projects, some female youth are now able to engender their self-interests, indicating a shift from the previous position of being docile. Formerly domesticated, and relegated to a second tier type, without an individual name, except; daughter of, wife of, mother of, the female youth can make a bold claim to their material and status benefits through improved socio-economic wellbeing.

The ability to invest in their health and education, as well as the health and education of their families (children and siblings), is supported by the individual interviews (IY6, IY8 and IY18) as well as key informant findings. This ability to pay fees and medical bills, suggests that the self-help projects are sustaining the livelihoods of the youth. Ellis (1998: 4-5) argues that “a livelihood also includes access to, and benefits derived from, social and public services provided by the state such as education, health services, roads, water supplies and so on”. The theory of sustainable livelihood adopted in this study, reveals that these livelihood outcomes are imperative in the lives of the youth. This confirms that some youth feel that their projects are promoting a sustainable livelihood, as is revealed by the noted outcomes in paying school fees and medical bills.

Intrinsic feelings such as happiness, self-esteem and security are understood as part of the sustainable livelihood outcomes. They are intangible, but significant attributes, which point to the fact that one feels empowered. Although the researcher could not examine the authenticity of the statements made by respondents, some respondents pointed out that their activities help to reduce stress. The confidence with which they expressed themselves in the interviews also supported their claims of feeling secure against absolute poverty. Indeed, this corresponds with some previous researches which argued that one has to ask the participants if they need to know about their empowerment (Jupp and Alli, 2010). The above discussion on the impact of an external evaluation on the findings is hinged on this argument.

It is important to note that the research managed to uncover the material and non-material benefits gained by the youth in their self-help projects. These highlight the attributes one might use to indicate that, engaging in self-help projects may bring about a sustainable livelihood to the poor whose prospects of finding formal jobs are very low. According to Scoones (1998: 6) “the notions of ‘well-being’ and ‘capability’ provide a wider definitional scope for the livelihoods concept”. Using Sen’s conceptualisation of capabilities, the researcher was interested in what the youth could do as a result of their engagement in self-help projects. Besides what they could do, notable changes were also important in understanding what youth in Mwenezi had “become” with their entitlements.

The findings revealed that, youth have become skilled in various initiatives. Building, metal fabrication, dressmaking, cosmetology and driving are some of the notable skills highlighted.

Even without getting formal employment, a level of satisfaction among the trained youth implied that they valued the skills acquired. Using the skills to initiate the self-help projects increased their self-confidence. The CAMFED respondent said that the female youth were now motivated individuals. The respondent further noted that the female participants are making contributions in public forums. This observation corresponds with the tenets of critical social empowerment theory, which is the theoretical framework of this study.

Rural youth's ability to cope with shocks and stresses in their self-help projects were expressed by youth respondents. The adversities mentioned include drought, floods, political victimisation as well as harassment by local authorities. According to interviewee IY5 and IY11 they managed to pull through difficult conditions induced by the drought in their respective projects. Elsewhere IY17 and IY21 highlighted that they were subjected to political persecution especially around 2008 when they were accused of being members of the MDC. Respondent IY3 and IY17 revealed that they have previously lost their goods to the council employees who accused them of operating without licences. Despite all these challenges, the respondents demonstrated some resilience by continuing with their projects against the several shocks and stresses they face in the policy environment. Ellis (1998: 14) avers that resilience is understood to mean the "ability of the system to absorb change or even utilise change to its advantage".

Despite the above revelations, some critics contrast sharply with what interviewees (IY11 and IY5) said in terms of the capacity of their projects to adapt even during shocks like droughts and floods. A rosy picture of "local, adaptive coping to immediate pressures, based on local capacities and knowledge, may miss out on long-term shifts which will, in time, undermine livelihoods in more fundamental ways" (Scoones, 2009: 189). It is important to note that long-term temperature rises may make agriculture impossible and so are the floods. Any serious consideration needs to look at aspects like diversification of livelihood options in such a scenario.

The adaptation of youth in doing their projects was difficult to assess independently in this short study. They mentioned adaptation mechanisms like diversifying the projects, embracing barter trade to solve cash challenges as well as initiate low capital projects. Evidence in previous researches indicates that "assessing resilience and the ability to positively adapt or

successfully cope requires an analysis of a range of factors, including an evaluation of historical experiences of responses to various shocks and stresses” (Scoones, 1998: 6). The adaptation mechanisms mentioned by the key informants are, using local resources (indigenous trees for carpentry), earth brick for building and making traditional items (mats, harvesting and winnowing baskets etc.). The efficacy of these findings could not be independently verified but they illustrate attempts to implement sustainable projects.

Another intention was to look at the sustainability of funded projects and how lack of or withdrawal of funding impacted on the welfare of the youth. For the seven respondents interviewed in line with that aim (IY3, IY6, IY12, IY13, IY14, IY15 and IY16), it was established that they received a boom at the time of receiving financial support from CAMFED. The respondents highlighted business expansion as an indicator to show that they indeed benefitted from the funds. However, when they started to return the loans, they began to feel and realise that their projects were not as lucrative as they had anticipated. This realisation is supported in the literature where pulling out or withdrawal of support for projects sometimes complicates the sustenance of the project. Documented evidence of projects that were totally abandoned following the pulling out of donors illustrates how susceptible they were.

6.5 YOUTH PERCEPTIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT POLICY IN ZIMBABWE

The relationship between policy implementers and the intended beneficiaries of the policy was critical in this study. How youth perceive policy implementation is determined by their experiences with the policy. The findings as revealed in the previous chapter show that most youth are not aware of the existence and provisions of the policies dealing with their empowerment. It was established that these youth have therefore formed negative perceptions on the policy implementation. On paper, the Ministry of Youth, through the ward based youth officers, assists young people in project planning and implementation as well as various skills development programmes. This is not being shared equally as is revealed by the responses made by individual youth in the district (IY17 and IY18). Knowledge of the policy and awareness of the youth policy provisions is non-existent for the majority of the respondents. Although many variables are to blame, policy implementers are not being exonerated by the youth who feel that they are being excluded.

The above revelations are not peculiar to Mwenezi District. It is demonstrated even in previous researches that awareness levels with regards to the National Youth Policy and other statutes dealing with youth are very low. According to Charumbira and Chituri (2013: 16) “most young people were ignorant of the policies affecting them. A few indicated knowledge of the indigenization policy, the youth policy and the rights of children. Some were able to mention documents such as the National Youth Policy but were not able to mention what was contained in the document. From the survey, only 22% of the young people indicated being aware of the National Youth Policy. Analysis by gender shows that 24% of the male population as compared to 19% of the female population are aware of the youth policy”. Although this study did not aim to give a quantitative dimension of the youth perception of youth policy implementation, it was established that only two respondents had a flare of the youth policies. This figure is deplorable and demonstrates that the youth’s perception of policy implementation cannot be positive.

Perceptions given by the individual youth pointed to the weak linkages between policy formulation and implementation. Indeed, the researcher’s discussions with the rural youth in Mwenezi showed a clear lack of awareness on the policy or its contents. This could be due to the fact that very little has been done by responsible stakeholders (government ministry officers and NGOs officers) championing youth development to create platforms especially at community or local level to share such information and documents. In any case, it is not the documents that the youth want but support in their self-help projects.

It is also possible that the youth who declined to be interviewed are more informed about the policy implementation. Although that cannot be ascertained now, the fact that they had received the loans and defaulted in paying back suggests they had hindsight of the policy. The researcher only managed to get the clear perspectives of the key informants on what they think the youth perceive about the policies. In relation to the National Youth Policy and Zimbabwe Youth Council, the district head in the ministry of youth said:

“I think yaah...these ones I think ehh these have formed much of the routine of our work and good things are happening and the communities are quite aware of some of the good things that are happening in terms of projects provision, in terms of advocacy and leadership development for the out of school and the youth in school. I

think haaaa...most of the citizens of the district are quite aware of the proceeds that come with these policies”.

These revelations present conflicting evidence with what the researcher obtained in the field. Project provision as well as advocacy and leadership development are still news in the ears of many youth especially in wards 9, 10, 13, 15 and 16.

Another perception among the youth is that policy implementation favours those around the district offices. Wards in the “outskirts” of the district have hardly seen the benefits of the government programmes (Ward 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, and 17). Those around Neshuro are strategically positioned to access information about new projects, new training programmes, requirements and other benefits which may come on short notice. Despite the fact that the ministry has ward youth officers, they are incapacitated by transport problems and some of them are not qualified to do the job as was suggested by respondents (IY18 and IY21). This is despite the fact that “the first requirement for effective implementation is that those responsible for carrying out a decision must know what they are supposed to do” (Edwards and Sharkansky, in Marume et al., 2016). Thus, competent officials enhance policy effectiveness and incompetent officials dampen the prospects of effective policy implementation.

Those adjacent to the offices also claim that real benefits are given to the youth in town and those closer to Harare. During interface rallies organised by the ruling party (ZANU PF), youth information centres were opened but this happened in towns only. Respondent IY5 lamented uneven distribution of resources in the country and highlighted that those with political power always prevail. This reveals that some youth believe that politics and political affiliation determine who gets what, when and how. Evidence from previous studies also supports this assessment. According to Charumbira and Chituri (2013: 23) youth felt that “there were still some bottlenecks as some of the conditions required to access the benefits were still not met, especially by those in the rural areas. Young people also raised concerns that the funding favoured those in Harare and closer to Harare with some mentioning that allegiance to ZANU (PF) party was also considered for those that were to benefit”. In Mwenezi, the situation is compounded by the fact that the literacy levels are low, newspapers hardly reach most parts of the district and broadcasting signals are very weak. This affects information dissemination and awareness is indeed a challenge.

6.6 Challenges faced in achieving youth empowerment through policy implementation

Respondents highlighted several challenges they are facing in implementing the youth empowerment policy. Common challenges were noted among the lists of challenges presented in the previous chapter. Understaffing is affecting service delivery by the government departments as well as NGOs. The most affected is the ministry of small and medium enterprises with only one employee in the district. The ministry of youth and ministry of women affairs also share the challenge which impacts negatively in needs analysis of the youth, mobilising them for training and monitoring their self-help projects. The CAMFED representative also expressed similar sentiments. Evidence in literature also reveals similar challenges. According to Gyimah-Brempong and Kimenyi (2013: 21-22) “there is a general lack of adequate human and financial resources devoted to youth issues, which has resulted in the so-called Cinderella ministries for youth, ministries that exist but have very little functionality in Africa”. Just recently (01 December 2017), the three ministries were amalgamated to form one ministry.

Besides being understaffed, the limited staff also faces the challenge of limited resources. Lack of resources limits the effective policy implementation in Mwenezi because the execution of projects and programmes is stalled. All the key informants concurred that the quantity and quality of resources is insufficient. The youth in the district are the victims as their welfare is sacrificed whenever resources are inadequate. All the district offices visited have no computers, printers, access to internet and other basic provisions necessary in an office. Cheminais, Bayat, Waldt and Fox (1998) maintain that availability of finances, physical resources, infrastructure, equipment, buildings, technology and information may be of no consequences if there is an absence of a well-trained, efficient and effective workforce to provide the relevant service. The district is evidently missing both and the youth situation is in jeopardy.

Gyimah-Brempong and Kimenyi (2013: 22) argued that all programs to develop young people’s capabilities and opportunities require massive infusions of resources, especially financial and human. The two authors lament that generally, the full costs and the sources of funding of these programs are not completely known. Youth in Mwenezi generally feel neglected by the government and respondents pointed out that their situation is ignored by

central actors in policy implementation (IY1, IY17, IY18 and IY21). Without adequate resources, the government officers rarely monitor the youth projects.

Failure to monitor projects on time may result in the failure of business run by the youth. The challenge of monitoring was observed by the researcher in an interview with the ministry of women affairs. The respondent indicated that they end up relying on hearsay without any direct contact with the beneficiaries of the women empowerment fund. The same situation holds true for the other two ministries which are also facing the problem of understaffing. Yet it is observed that “an effective youth policy should seek to mitigate risks by setting performance measures and benchmarks that can be monitored and reported on regularly” (Gyimah-Brempong and Kimenyi, 2013: 22). The findings in this research confirm that the district officers are not able to provide such monitoring and this may explain the number of failed projects subsequently failing to repay the loans.

Other respondents said the youth are the obstacle to the policy implementation. It was noted that some youth are illiterate and cannot comprehend simple entrepreneurship courses. According to the SMEs district head respondent, the youth who formed cooperatives had serious challenges and lagged behind in their cognitive development. He lamented that:

“We deal with groups where even the treasurer signs with an X which is a sign of illiteracy meaning to say he or she cannot be the treasurer...something like that. There is a real challenge”.

This reinforces the fact that youth empowerment is affected by the broad challenges in the country where some adults are barely literate to write their names. It is emphasised that “effective youth policies require dealing with challenges facing youth that include, but are not limited to, the lack of access to a high-quality and relevant education” (Gyimah-Brempong and Kimenyi, 2013: vi). This essentially means involving the ministry of primary and secondary education, who can support youth with non-formal education.

Disharmony and lack of coordination within government departments was also mentioned in the discussion of challenges affecting effective implementation of policies in the district. Instead of complementing each other, the personnel are competing to get recognition and financial rewards. The effects of such self-seeking behaviour on the policy outcomes need not to be overemphasised. It is also noted that uncoordinated programmes also result in clashes

on the ground with both the NGOs and government personnel intending to address the same beneficiaries. This is also hampering efforts to work towards the realisation of socio-economic empowerment of the youth in Mwenezi District.

Political interference and polarisation also came up from the interviews during the research. It was suggested that some political activists use their rallies to distribute or promise to distribute resources. Loyalty to the party also takes precedence at the expense of competence or feasibility of youth projects. Against such a strange background, genuine youth programmes are sacrificed and political disciples are rewarded. As a result, 'Symbolic policy' "which are more or less meaningless government programs which neither have a chance at alleviating the underlying problem, nor are intended to do so merely seeking to satisfy public demands that government is 'doing something' are an outcome of such political expedience" (Kaboyakgosi and Marata, 2013: 314).

That socio-economic factors play a big role in effective policy implementation is well documented. It is upheld that matters extraneous to policies, such as the economy and society influence policy outcomes. It is argued that various members of the coalition bring these matters to bear in the implementation process (Kaboyakgosi and Marata, 2013: 314). The prevailing cash crises (economic influence) popularly known as the liquidity crunch is bedevilling efforts to implement policy in the district. Both claim holders (youth) and duty bearers (ministry officials) expressed concern over the issue of cash shortages highlighting that resourcing and marketing ends of project implementation have been seriously undermined.

Cross reference can be made in the SADC region on policy implementation. In Botswana challenges noted in the "policy implementation include lack of commitment to selected policy choices. It is noted that since the turn of the new millennium, the government has increasingly created and adopted policies to which it does not adhere" (Kaboyakgosi and Marata: 314). If Botswana, which is performing better than Zimbabwe is facing this challenge, it means the Zimbabwean case is even more compounded. Respondents claimed that the central government has been severely incapacitated by the economic challenges so much that it is failing to equip the few employees with the basic office requirements. All the three ministries are actually operating from sub-standard offices. This impedes even the level of confidence

and motivation in the employees. The environment observed by the researcher is deplorable and policy implementation under the prevailing circumstances is compromised.

Another challenge noted is the low uptake of programmes by the youth, especially male youth residing around the growth point. The district head in the ministry of youth said the cohort is primarily concerned about getting money without committing themselves to work for that money through self-help projects. The desire for quick money has seen most youth taking part in menial jobs around the construction sites. These jobs are not sustainable as the youth virtually survive on a hand to mouth basis. Besides, many of the male youth have decided to cross the border into South Africa to look for greener pastures. Some do that after getting trained in vocational skills like welding and building. This means the ministry will be unable to assess or make a follow up on the said youth. The researcher met some youth who are now based in South Africa and they indicated that applying their skills in South Africa is more lucrative. Although this argument is plausible and rational, it is evident that the policy evaluation and monitoring part is dealt a blow.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter discussed and interpreted data after analysing the findings from the research interviews. This discussion was done in the light of both the literature and theories informing the study. The chapter revealed that public policy has a bearing on both rural development and youth socio-economic development. What the policy implementers do determines the path that communities and individuals follow. It also showed that individual youth may not be aware of the existing government programmes although they do not take initiatives to seek information. The status of youth self-help projects in Mwenezi cannot be generalised as is revealed by the findings. However, it was highlighted that the projects face similar constraints, which reflects the earlier literature reviewed in the thesis such as lack of skills, competition, markets among others.

The Chapter noted that despite a number of challenges, the youth self-help projects are bringing important changes for the youth. Happiness, social relations, critical thinking and problem solving skills, assertiveness and raising of self-esteem are some of the noted intangible benefits which are consistent with literature on sustainable livelihoods discussed under theoretical framework of the study. Resilience of the youth participants facing

challenges was noted and it is also in-keeping with ideas of adaptation earlier on presented in the study. There are also some exceptional cases of youth expanding business and moving towards a path of business formalisation. Raising incomes, accumulating assets, livestock and employing others are the highlights in the positive trend.

The chapter further showed that existence of policy does not mean that the intended beneficiaries are aware of it. Although the National Youth Policy and other statutory instruments espouse principles of youth inclusion in planning, decision-making, implementation and evaluation of the policy, in the case of self-help project participants the evidence is minimal. This is supported by the level of ignorance of government activities aimed at emancipating the youth among the interviewees. It is noted that the top-down policy implementation model segregates and excludes the semi-literate youth located in remote rural areas.

CHAPTER 7: SUMMARIES, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This study sought to explore the link between youth empowerment, development and sustainable livelihoods in rural Zimbabwe through the National Youth Policy of 2000 (amended in 2013). The overall aim of the study was to critically examine the youth perceptions of the policy implementation and how the policy enables successful execution of youth self-help projects aimed at promoting youth socio-economic empowerment in Mwenezi District in Masvingo Province.

Chapter One of this thesis provides a background and overview of the study. The key research objectives and research questions were outlined, together with a brief overview of the methodology adopted for the study. Chapter Two provided a discussion that contextualized this study into the discipline of Policy and Development Studies. Further, the Chapter showed relevance for an investigation onto youth unemployment as a key policy intervention for effective and efficient development. Chapter Three examined the theoretical framework as well as the conceptual framework of the study putting the context of youth empowerment in rural Zimbabwe under spotlight.

Chapter Four outlined the research methodology that guided the empirical study into policy implementation and youth socio-economic empowerment. The logic for the sample choice, sample size and the rationale for a qualitative research methodology is explained. Chapter Five outlined the data collected and provides a discussion of the analysis of the data. Chapter six provided the interpretation of the data. Chapter seven provides a summary of the discussions made in the research. The summary draws on both the literature reviewed and the empirical data collected from participants engaging in self-help projects in Mwenezi District in Masvingo Province. The chapter also gives recommendations on how identified challenges can be addressed. The suggested recommendations target the government, development agents, youth organisations and researchers working on self-help projects and policy implementation. Possible research areas for future researchers are also highlighted.

7.2 PUBLIC POLICY, DEVELOPMENT AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

In investigating the research problems investigated in this study, the researcher began by examining a conceptual and theoretical basis of public policy and development. It was also important to explore the link between the two concepts. The study argued that public policy is linked to rural development and youth empowerment as revealed in the discussion in chapter two.

7.2.1 Linking policy to development

Research Question 1: What is the link between public policy, rural development and youth socio-economic empowerment in rural Zimbabwe?

There is evidence that policies designed by government have an effect on the development paths that rural areas can take. It was demonstrated that issues discussed at policy formulation are a result of multi-stakeholders' input (the importance of interest groups, power and authority). However, the power dynamics which determine the final outcome transcends the physical numbers or individual interests. It was concluded here that policy implementation is rarely a linear and coherent process, because it is an outcome of state-societal debates involving respective actors. Indeed, no single agency can manage policy implementation aimed at promoting community development.

Literature on linear policy models divides policy making and policy implementation resulting in a "disjuncture" between decision making and implementation. This study refuted this analogy arguing that policy implementers interact with policies changing them as they move through bureaucracies to the community where they are executed. Therefore, it was argued that the rational model is inconclusive in its approach. This underscores the fact that street level bureaucrats are important in determining outcomes of policy execution.

Three models of policy implementation were briefly discussed in chapter two. It was concluded that both top-down and bottom-up approaches can be adopted depending on the context. Indeed, both have their merits and demerits. It was noted that the hybrid approach came to fill the gaps of the previous implementation models. Policy implementation requires "consensus building, participation of key stakeholders, conflict resolution, and compromise, contingency planning, resource mobilisation and adaptation" (Sutton, 1999: 23). Although

policy is clear it was noted that it is failing to transform rural youth. This is supported by both research findings and extant literature on Zimbabwean youth empowerment.

The literature clearly shows that development policy and intervention, which follows a top down approach is inappropriate. The argument is that, such a modernisation inspired approach undermines the interests of communities and hinders development. The chapter concluded that top-down policies betray the independence, self-reliance and dynamism in the local development, which can be promoted through self-help initiatives. The initiatives should therefore be generated from the communities rather than for them. This research also argues for the actor perspective which champions the views, aspirations and vision of individuals, agencies and groups that have a stake in how youth empowerment evolves. Meanwhile, it is reiterated that interaction and exchanging experiences between and among policy makers and those influenced directly or indirectly, should form the basis of the whole process. This resonates well with the rights based approach to programming whereby claim-holders and duty bearers have to converge and complement each other.

7.2.2 Impact of policy on the community

The findings chapter demonstrated that youth empowerment policy creates winners and losers. This means that the policy is not representing everyone in the same way or manner. Access to information, resources and awareness to the government programmes and projects significantly determines the benefits that youth accrue. It has been shown that many rural youth are ignorant of the existence of the National Youth Policy provisions. This research concluded that the policy implementation is wrought with several irregularities and challenges. Winners are viewed as the strategically positioned, who can access the relevant information at the right time. These are reaping benefits through gaining access to training and accessing youth empowerment funds. Against such a background, these winners run relatively successful self-help projects compared with their peers, who are not as fortunate.

It was established that the government resources are neither adequate nor sufficient to run the policy effectively. Further, the evidence revealed that the funds are unevenly distributed. This poor resourcing is undermining the policy document which was crafted to solve the challenges faced by youth in Zimbabwe. Absence of support in material and financial resources has seen interventions by NGOs like Plan International, CAMFED, MDTC, and CARE

International among others. The research concluded that although not competing with the government, the level of support from these organisations is immeasurable. It can also be concluded that self-help projects implemented in line with the Youth Empowerment Policy, supported by these organisations, are more effective than others in the business.

7.3 STATUS OF THE POLICY FRAMEWORKS PROMOTING YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Research Question 2: What is the current status of youth policy guiding self-help projects and empowerment in rural Zimbabwe?

One of the objectives of the study was to determine the current status of policy frameworks that promote empowerment of the youth in Zimbabwe. To achieve this, the study reviewed existing literature on the area. It was established that several policy initiatives were made in the post-colonial period in Zimbabwe. These initiatives have culminated in a comprehensive National Youth Policy drawn in 2000 and reviewed in 2013. The evidence gathered suggests that there were some accompanying initiative to complement the policy, for example, the Zimbabwe Youth Council Act, the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act (IEEA) as well as the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZimASSET).

7.3.1 Implementation gaps in Mwenezi District

Whist there exists a favourable policy framework aligned to the principles and values of youth empowerment, the interviews revealed that implementation has failed to benefit many of the youth in Mwenezi. For instance, it was established that the youth are generally ignorant of the existing programmes and projects being done by the government for the youth. Although there are some who have some knowledge, they indicated that they only hear about the programmes through mass-media and are yet to benefit. The officers in the Ministries attributed the challenge to the understaffing which means they cannot cover the vast district. It was concluded that illiteracy among the youth is a contributing factor in the lack of awareness especially for the out of school youth.

It was strongly held by the heads of ministries in the district that there are good policies which have excellent provisions. However, the interviewees lamented the inadequate resource provision from their ministries. A classic example is that of the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) with only one employee. It was not surprising that the ministry is not

known by most of the respondents. Even though it plays a critical role in training youth on business management skills, the officer is overburdened and cannot be expected to handle such a mammoth task alone. This is further compounded by lack of transport and inaccessibility of some parts in the remote district. It was concluded in this study that, although good policies are in existence, they are not effectively implemented. Youth are scarcely involved in formulating and implementing them.

7.4 SELF-HELP PROJECTS AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

Research Question 3: What contribution is being made by youth self-help projects towards realising sustainable livelihood in Mwenezi District?

The research aimed to analyse the self-help projects in line with the sustainable livelihoods. The findings demonstrated that youth in rural Zimbabwe are engaging in several initiatives to realise sustainable livelihoods. The sustainability of the projects is hinged on many factors in the policy environment as well as the capacity of the youth to adapt to the situation. It was gathered that youth are sustaining their lives through income they get in their self-help projects. Although income generation is not an end in itself in as far as the sustainable livelihoods framework is concerned, it was one common aspect raised by the interviewees. It was concluded that in the absence of employment opportunities in the formal job market, youth are finding solace in the self-help projects. However, although projects may be effective, they are mainly survivalist supporting only hand to mouth subsistence for many individuals. Collapse and total abandonment of the projects is also common.

7.4.1 Youth experiences in the self-help projects

Both key informants from the NGOs and Government indicated that the self-help projects initiatives are indispensable in Mwenezi given the high unemployment levels. The most popular projects are Building, Carpentry, Mechanics, Dressmaking, Welding, Motor mechanics and Informal trading. With most youth engaging in the easy entry low capital types of projects, it was established that the youth are able to accumulate benefits such as small livestock, cars, food, household goods, school fees, income and also paying for utility bills. On rare cases, the participants also managed to employ fellow youth, buy cattle, diversify and

expand their businesses. It was concluded that socio-economic empowerment was being realised although the levels are not very impressive.

The ability to sustain livelihoods cannot be universalised and this research's findings are that some participants are struggling to make ends meet. This is evidenced by the existence of mediocre projects where a participant claims to be doing a hairdressing project and getting one client over two weeks. The other scenario was of youth doing buying and selling where they are facing stiff competition from established businesses. The study also discovered that there are other youth participants who got loans and failed to pay back after their projects had faced sustainability challenges. It was concluded that the youth experiences in the self-help projects varied across the type of project, location of the project, skills of the youth and competition faced in the project. Ultimately, the easy entry low cost projects were popular but less sustainable.

7.4.2 Tangible and Non-tangible benefits

Non-material benefits such as well-being and self-reliance were improved by the youth engagement in self-help projects. The interviewees, both key informants and youth participants, said the self-help projects brought about critical changes in the lives of the participants. Youth became assertive and they indicated that their minds were opened such that they no longer look for external interventions to help them solve the shocks and stresses in their livelihoods. Some female youth cherished the decision-making roles they assumed from the time they engaged in the activities. It was concluded that the vicious cycle of poverty was destroyed among the youth participants who can now bank on their projects as well as the cattle, household property and infrastructure they acquired through those projects. This veils supreme the fact that critical social empowerment was realised among the youth.

Officials from the NGOs explained that youth self-help projects had significantly reduced the poverty levels in the district. The continued increase in the number of youth consulting these NGOs on how they could train and join the projects was used as a justification to the conclusion that youth are benefitting. Having the ability to cope and recover from the challenges they encounter from the environmental challenges demonstrates the resilience of the youth in their projects. Besides the resilience, some youth managed to enhance their capabilities through training in various business management courses.

The fact that youth generally despise agricultural (crop cultivation) projects was evident. The feeling among the youth is that the projects are labour intensive and have little profits. Only one respondent indicated that she is implementing a farming project. This is despite the fact that land reform also extended the opportunity of owning land to the youth. It was concluded that youth want projects that have quick returns, hence the low participation in self-help projects dealing with agriculture. It is also notable that Mwenezi Development Training Centre has a vibrant training unit for the cultivation of open-pollinated varieties and small grains. However, their main clients are rather old farmers and not the youth.

It was gathered that males are involved in more challenging initiatives such as welding and building. The findings also confirmed that these projects were relatively more rewarding because the youth doing the projects are able to employ fellow youth as well as expand their projects. These projects also enable the youth to export their skills mainly to South Africa since Mwenezi is closer to the border, even more than it is to the capital city Harare. The fact that more income is raised through building and welding is also supported by the fact that youth engaging in such projects have managed to acquire more assets (cattle, cars, scotch-carts, donkeys and other small livestock).

7.5 PERCEPTIONS OF YOUTH ON POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Research Question 4: What are the perceptions of youth engaging in self-help projects towards the implementation of the National Youth Policy in Zimbabwe?

It is generally perceived that the government is not doing enough to enhance effective implementation of self-help projects. Youth expressed dissatisfaction with the disbursement of loans meant to cushion the unemployed youth engaging in entrepreneurial projects. The majority of the respondents indicated that they had previously applied for the loans without any response. The respondents claimed that there was lack of transparency in the whole process. Interviewees at Maranda business centre said that despite having done all the paper work needed in the application process, they did not get any response in different applications done from 2012 up to date. At Sarahuro, the respondents claimed that political inclination was given precedence rather than the needy situation among the youth. It is

alleged that the ZANU PF supporters were rewarded through these loans and their projects were approved with little or no hassles.

Youth also expressed their displeasure at the way the Ministry officials disseminate information pertaining to the youth. It was common among the youth in former commercial areas especially Ward 16 and Ward 17 that they had no knowledge whatsoever about government programmes such as vocational skills training, youth loans as well as leadership development programmes. Such ignorance could not be blamed solely on the idleness of the youth because the Ministry employs Ward Youth Officers who are supposed to mobilise the youth and make them aware of existing programmes. Therefore, youth perceive the policy implementers as either unwilling or incapacitated to support them in their entrepreneurial activities.

7.6 CHALLENGES IN YOUTH EMPOWERMENT POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Research Question 5: What challenges are being faced in an attempt to achieve youth empowerment through the implementation of the National Youth Policy in Zimbabwe?

It is prudent to highlight that the study sought to establish the missing link between policy objectives and the policy outcomes. As already highlighted, the implementation phase of the policy process is neither smooth nor linear. The contextual challenges in Mwenezi District show that the government workers face a number of challenges in their endeavour. Lack of budgetary support for these policies, corruption, political polarisation, lack of independence of the technocrats, are some of the reasons why Zimbabwe continues to grapple with policy implementation challenges.

Concerted efforts need to be made to improve policy implementation if the aims of the policy are to be achieved. Their effect is not up to scratch with the contemporary youth expectations. Indeed, a national policy must naturally have public input so that the citizens can identify the policy as theirs and not for certain individuals or State or certain political party. Earlier on it has been highlighted that policy formulation should be an outcome of a multi-stakeholder approach emphasising the need for inclusivity. The public needs to access information freely and easily without any proscription or prescription. This can happen in a free environment where equality and equity before the law is guaranteed. If the leadership

can initiate such a deliberate process, many people would appreciate the policy rationale and problems sought to be addressed by such policies.

The findings from the key informants alluded to the fact that the policies are not receiving adequate funding. This is not surprising for a country with problems of budgetary constraints. In fact, it is a challenge noted in many developing countries where funding of good ideas has let down many government initiatives. With budget deficits recorded almost on yearly basis, youth empowerment is not likely to be spared in the austerity measures to cut the government spending. Beyond and above having the policy document there must be resources to support successful implementation of such a big national youth empowerment policy. It is a fact that the youth are the majority in the population and as such, helping them would require higher commitment. It has been noted that instead of increasing the youth officers, the government has mooted the idea of abolishing such posts in the civil service.

It has been established from critics that the policies like the youth empowerment are meant for public relations and not for concrete results. The language is very promising but substantive implementation is not forthcoming. Some have likened the policies to the ruling party (ZANU PF) strategies of wooing the voters. The other challenge noted is the coordination aspect. It was concluded that some officials compete rather than cooperate or complement each other in the policy implementation phase. This affects the intended beneficiaries whose time and investments are affected by such lack of coordination.

Meanwhile, it is imperative that despite the challenges affecting effective policy implementation, the ministry officials, NGOs officials and other stakeholders are continuing to engage the youth in their limited capacity. This research established that the various stakeholders are supporting the youth in Mwenezi through loans, skills training, market research and refresher courses. This will definitely enable the establishment of vibrant self-help projects that promote sustainable livelihoods.

7.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study established that most youth are ignorant of the National Youth Policy. They are also ignorant of the provisions in the document. Respondents generally feel cut off from what happens in the higher offices even if the deliberations and programmes pertain to their lives.

Recommendation 1: Further Training

This study recommends that youth empowerment ideals be included in the school curriculum to cater for learners in both primary and secondary schools. The formal education curriculum will “catch them young” whilst in schools. The current junior parliament arrangements are not being seriously implemented and the monitoring of the activities are ineffective. This study proposes that youth who have dropped from school can also be catered for through the non-formal education. This will also help impart basic literacy skills and improve the performance of self-help projects.

Recommendation 2: Information dissemination

It is also critical that the Ministry establishes information centres in and around the country especially in rural areas (communal lands and former commercial farming areas). These areas are largely inaccessible and remote but they have the bulk of the population. The ministry officials should also ensure effective mobilisation of youth, involving them in project planning and implementation. It is recommended that this should not be just rhetoric where officers pay lip-service to youth involvement. The researcher believes that the self-help projects are being affected by the symbolic involvement of youth yet they do not identify with the projects.

Most beneficiaries of the programmes are concentrated in the same wards again and again. This could be a result of the funders’ prescription since training is evidently supported by the organisations. This tends to entrench clusters of poverty in the district. The initiative continues to side-line other areas, especially former commercial farms. It is the same trend with the centre-periphery theory by the dependency theorists where the urban set up continues to benefit at the expense of the outlying areas. The researcher noted with concern the concentration of beneficiaries of the youth empowerment fund in ward 18 which is

Rutenga growth point. Whilst there are genuine reasons to that effect, it is against the idea of rural development and decentralisation principles.

Recommendation 3: Inclusive selection of beneficiaries

Another notable feature amongst the respondents is that NGOs support female youth more than their male counterparts. This could be plausible in the sense that there is need to redress traditional imbalances which have over the years negatively impacted on women. It is also argued in literature that investing in women brings better results for everyone. However, the researcher noted with concern the trend which is developing where female youth have adopted the dependency syndrome and they cannot go beyond what is provided for them by the organisations. This is unsustainable and impacts negatively on the socio-economic empowerment paradigm of this research. Besides, the continued exclusion of male youth may breed some conflicts within the society as males would feel less important.

Youth organisations also need to adopt a national strategy rather than concentrating on Harare and other towns. It was noted in the research that youth barely know organisations claiming to champion their concerns in the country. This is despite the fact that these organisations claim to have a national membership. Again, it is noted that youth organisations should strive to unite rather than divide people. Sloganeering without delivering results will leave youth in perpetual poverty.

7.8 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study adopted a qualitative approach in understanding the youth socio-economic empowerment of rural youth in Zimbabwe paying particular attention on Mwenezi District. It has provided insights into policy implementation, self-help projects and youth social and economic emancipation. It explored the challenges contributing to failure of self-help projects in Mwenezi District in Masvingo Province. It also attempted to give solutions to the challenges therein. Future research should adopt a quantitative and qualitative dimension focusing on a larger context. This will possibly yield substantive evidence to enhance understanding of the similarities and differences of the research contexts across the regions. Such an academic

enquiry will extend the scope of this research's findings on policy implementation and youth socio-economic empowerment.

It is also suggested that researchers can emphasise on the gender dimension of policy implementation to explore the narratives of the youth using gender lenses. This can successfully capture the aspirations of both females and males and comparisons as well as contrasts can be made on how they fare in their self-help projects endeavour. A study focusing on an urban setting can also help to explore the differences brought about by the different contexts in the rural-urban divide. Such researches will probably yield informing results and make some improvements in the policy implementation.

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APPENDIX 1
UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
Public Governance

Dear Respondent,

PhD Research Project

Researcher: Hlungwani Promise Machingo

Supervisor: Dr C Mohammed Sayeed

UKZN Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Office: (031 2608350)

I, Hlungwani Promise Machingo, a PhD student at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, am conducting a research project entitled *Youth socio-economic empowerment through policy implementation in rural Zimbabwe: A Case Study of self-help projects in Mwenezi District (Masvingo Province)*.

The aim of this study is to answer the question: *To what extent has the policy framework allowed for the establishment and sustenance of youth self-help projects in rural Zimbabwe? And secondly, to what extent does engaging in self-help projects ensure the socio-economic empowerment of rural youth in Zimbabwe?*

Through your participation I hope to *understand the extent to which the rural youth in Zimbabwe are being economically and socially empowered by engaging in self-help projects in the current policy environment.*

Your participation in this Project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the Project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this survey. **Confidentiality and anonymity** of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in this study, you may contact me or one of my Supervisors at the numbers listed above. The survey should take you about 20 minutes to complete. I hope you will take the time to complete this survey.

Sincerely

Investigators' signature _____ Date _____

CONSENT TO CONDUCT INTERVIEW– Please ensure that you sign

I..... (full names of participant)
hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the Research Project.

I hereby consent / do not consent to have this interview recorded.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

Interview schedule: for individual youth self-help projects

Part A

1. What are some of the government initiatives that are helping rural youth in their self-help projects in Zimbabwe?
2. How are the government initiatives enhancing the establishment of self-help projects in Mwenezi District?

Part B

3. Can you briefly describe the nature and reason of the self-help project you are doing?
4. What public policy initiatives are helping you to sustain your project?

Part C

5. What are the social and economic benefits you are getting from engaging in self-help projects in Mwenezi District?
6. What notable changes in your life do you attribute to the self-help project you are doing?
7. Which critical skills have you gained through participating in self-help projects?

Part D

8. What are the key challenges you face in implementing self-help projects in Mwenezi District?
9. How do the challenges influence the sustainability of the self-help project you are doing?
10. What are you doing to overcome the challenges that you face in the project implementation?

Part E

11. What are the gender stereotypes that you face in doing the projects in the district?
12. How do the gender stereotypes affect the sustainability of the projects you are doing?
13. What measures are you putting in place to overcome the challenges of gender stereotypes?

District: Mwenezi

Date

Start Time

End Time

APPENDIX 2A
UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
Public Governance

Dear Respondent,

PhD Research Project

Researcher: Hlungwani Promise Machingo

Supervisor: Dr C Mohammed Sayeed

UKZN Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Office: (031 2608350)

I, Hlungwani Promise Machingo, a PhD student at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, am conducting a research project *Youth socio-economic empowerment through policy implementation in rural Zimbabwe: A Case Study of self-help projects in Mwenezi District (Masvingo Province)*.

The aim of this study is to answer the question: *To what extent has the policy framework allowed for the establishment and sustenance of youth self-help projects in rural Zimbabwe? And secondly, to what extent does engaging in self-help projects ensure the socio-economic empowerment of rural youth in Zimbabwe?*

Through your participation I hope to *understand the extent to which the rural youth in Zimbabwe are being economically and socially empowered by engaging in self-help projects in the current policy environment.*

Your participation in this Project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the Project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this survey. **Confidentiality and anonymity** of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in this study, you may contact me or one of my Supervisors at the numbers listed above. The survey should take you about 20 minutes to complete. I hope you will take the time to complete this survey.

Sincerely

Investigators' signature _____ Date _____

CONSENT TO CONDUCT INTERVIEW– Please ensure that you sign

I..... (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the Research Project.

I hereby consent / do not consent to have this interview recorded.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

Interview schedule: Key informant interview for NGOs

Part A

1. What projects are you implementing to ensure youth empowerment through sustainable projects?
2. Do you feel the concerns of the rural youth are adequately addressed in the present youth empowerment policies in Zimbabwe?

Part B

3. Which government initiatives are sustaining the self-help projects in rural Zimbabwe?
4. What is the between public policy, development and youth socio-economic empowerment in rural Zimbabwe?

Part C

5. What types of self-help projects does your organisation support amongst youth in Mwenezi District?
6. What are some of the socio-economic benefits derived by the youth from their self-help projects in Mwenezi District?

Part D

7. What are the key challenges that you face in implementing youth self-help projects in Mwenezi district?
8. How do the challenges impact on the sustainability of youth projects?

Part E

9. How are gender stereotypes affecting the youth policies and self-help projects in Mwenezi District?
10. How can youth self-help projects be used to ensure sustainable emancipation of participants?

District: Mwenezi

Date

Start Time

End Time

APPENDIX 2B
UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
Public Governance

Dear Respondent,

PhD Research Project

Researcher: Hlungwani Promise Machingo

Supervisor: Dr C Mohammed Sayeed

UKZN Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Office: (031 2608350)

I, Hlungwani Promise Machingo, a PhD student at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, am conducting a research project entitled *Youth socio-economic empowerment through policy implementation in rural Zimbabwe: A Case Study of self-help projects in Mwenezi District (Masvingo Province)*.

The aim of this study is to answer the question: *To what extent has the policy framework allowed for the establishment and sustenance of youth self-help projects in rural Zimbabwe? And secondly, to what extent does engaging in self-help projects ensure the socio-economic empowerment of rural youth in Zimbabwe?*

Through your participation I hope to *understand the extent to which the rural youth in Zimbabwe are being economically and socially empowered by engaging in self-help projects in the current policy environment.*

Your participation in this Project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the Project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this survey. **Confidentiality and anonymity** of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in this study, you may contact me or one of my Supervisors at the numbers listed above. The survey should take you about 20 minutes to complete. I hope you will take the time to complete this survey.

Sincerely

Investigators' signature _____ Date _____

CONSENT TO CONDUCT INTERVIEW– Please ensure that you sign

I..... (full names of participant)
hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the Research Project.

I hereby consent / do not consent to have this interview recorded.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

Interview schedule: Key informant interview questions Ministry of Youth and Ministry of Gender

Part A

1. What are some of the empowerment policies targeting rural youth in Zimbabwe?
2. What youth government programmes have your Ministry implemented in rural Zimbabwe?

Part B

3. What is the link between youth empowerment policy and self-help projects in rural Zimbabwe?
4. How are the policies ensuring youth socio-economic emancipation in Mwenezi District?

Part C

5. In your own opinion what are some of the benefits derived from self-help projects by the youth?
6. How are the youth projects sustaining the livelihoods of the rural participants in Mwenezi District?

Part D

7. What are the key challenges your office has encountered in trying to implement youth empowerment in the district?
8. What have you done to cope with the constraints you encountered?

Part E

9. What measures have you put in place to ensure that both male and female youth benefit from the government policy?
10. How would giving female youth preferences help them to improve their self-help projects and status?

District: Mwenezi

Date

Start Time

End Time

APPENDIX 2C

Informed Consent Document

Dear Participant,

My name is Hlungwani Promise Machingo (216072998). I am a PhD candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus. The title of my research is: “Youth socio-economic empowerment through policy implementation in rural Zimbabwe: A Case Study of self-help projects in Mwenezi District (Masvingo Province).” The aim of the study is to understand the experiences of rural youth in Zimbabwe in the context of self-help projects and the quest for youth socio-economic empowerment. The research study therefore seeks to capture the youth self-help projects done by youth aged between 18 and 35 years who are out of school, giving their perceptions on the youth empowerment policy and its implementation in Mwenezi District. I am interested in interviewing you so as to share your experiences and observations on the subject matter.

Please note that:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your views in this interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- The interview will take about (30 minutes).
- The record as well as other items associated with the interview will be held in a password-protected file accessible only to me and my supervisors. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding and burning.
- If you agree to participate please sign the declaration attached to this statement (a separate sheet will be provided for signatures)

I can be contacted at: School of Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus, Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg / Howard College Campus, Durban.
Email: promisehlungwani631@gmail.com
Cell: +263775144278/ +27621421676

My supervisor is Dr. C Mohamed Sayeed who is located at the School of Social Sciences, Pietermaritzburg Campus / Howard College Campus, Durban of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details: email Mohamed-Sayeed@ukzn.ac.za, Phone number: +27322605283 or +27822009734

DECLARATION

I..... (*Full names of participant*) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire. I understand the intention of the research. I hereby agree to participate.

I consent / do not consent to have this interview recorded (if applicable)

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

Appendix 3

All communications should be
Addressed to "The Secretary for
Youth, Indigenisation and Economic
Empowerment"

Telephone: 707741/2 701983

E-mail: mydie@zarnet.ac.zw

Ref: B/14/1

23 August 2017

Mr. P. M. Hlungwani
School of Social Sciences
University of Kwa-Zulu Natal
Private Bag X01
Scottsville, 3209
South Africa



Ministry of Youth, Indigenisation
And Economic Empowerment
P. Bag 7762
Causeway
Zimbabwe

**APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH: MR. PROMISE
MACHINGO HLUNGWANI: SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES: UNIVERSITY OF
KWA-ZULU NATAL: SOUTH AFRICA**

Reference is made to your letter regarding the above subject.

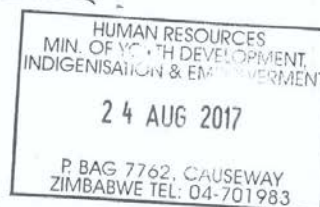
Please be advised that I have approved your application to carry out research within the Ministry
on the topic, 'Youth self-help projects and socio-economic empowerment in rural Zimbabwe:
A Case Study of Mwenezi District'.

You are to liaise with the Provincial Youth Development Officer, Masvingo for assistance and
also to observe below listed ethics:

- Confidentiality
- Integrity
- Anonymity


Dr. D. M. Sibanda
**SECRETARY FOR YOUTH, INDIGENISATION
AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

Copy: PYDO-Masvingo Province
File



Appendix 4

Correspondence should not be addressed to individuals

Telephone No's 731003/6
252529 253925
253492 250714
Fax: 263-04-731879
Email: info@smecd.gov.zw
Website: www.smecd.gov.zw



**Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprise
& Cooperative Development**

Linguenda House
No. 58/60 Nelson Mandela Avenue
Private Bag 7740
Causeway
Harare
Zimbabwe

Ref: SMED/17/8

8th August 2017

Mr. P.M. Hlongwani ✓
University of Kwazulu Natal



**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON "YOUTH SELF-HELP PROJECTS AND SOCIO
ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN RURAL ZIMBABWE, A CASE STUDY OF MWENEZI
DISTRICT": STUDENT NO. 216072998**

Reference is made to your letter dated on 20th June 2017 in respect of the above subject.

The Ministry hereby grant you authority to carry out the said research on **"youth self-help projects and socio economic empowerment in rural Zimbabwe, a case study of Mwenezi District"**, You are hereby directed to approach the Director, Business & Cooperative Development on the 7th Floor, and Linguenda House. The Division can be reached on the following contact details: Office No. 713, c/o Mr. D. Nyakonda, Cell, 0773280893, email: dnyakonda@smecd.gov.zw.

By copy of this letter, the Division has been advised accordingly. The late response to your request is sincerely, regretted.

G Bvute

for: Secretary Small and Medium Enterprise and Cooperative Development
cc Director Business & Cooperative Development

0775 146 278

Appendix 5

All communications should be addressed to The Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education"
Telephone: 799914 and 705153
Telegraphic address : "EDUCATION"
Fax: 791923



Reference: C/426/3 Masvingo
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
P.O Box CY 121
Causeway
Harare

24 August 2017

Hlungwani Promise Machingo
Neshuro Mission
P.o Box 08
Zimbabwe

**RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN MASVINGO PROVINCE:
MWENEZI DISTRICT: CAMFED OFFICIALS AND DISTRICT SCHOOLS
INSPECTOR.**

Reference is made to your application to carry out a research at the above mentioned schools in Masvingo Province on the research title:

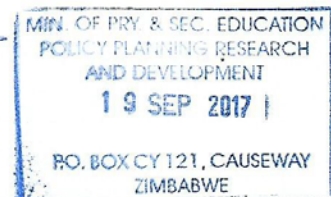
**"YOUTH SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT THROUGH POLICY
IMPLEMENTATION IN RURAL ZIMBABWE."**

Permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to liaise with the Provincial Education Director Masvingo Province, who is in charge of Masvingo Province where you intend undertaking the research. You should ensure that your research work does not disrupt the normal operations of the school. You are required to seek consent of the parents/guardians of all learners who will be involved in the research.

You are required to provide a copy of your presentation and a report of what transpired to the Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education.

DR. S. J Utete Masango

SECRETARY FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
cc:PED – Masvingo Province



Appendix 6

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All communications should be
addressed to "The Secretary, Women
Affairs, Gender and Community
Development
Tel: 251559/258396
www.women.gov.zw



ZIMBABWE

The Secretary for Women Affairs,
Gender and Community
Development
C/O P. Bag 7762
Causeway
Zimbabwe

08 August 2017

The PDO
Masvingo Province

Attention: Mr. J. Mupinga

**RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH PROJECT: HLUNGWAMI
PROMISE**

The above matter refers.

The Ministry has granted permission for Mr. Promise Hlungwami to carry out his research
on: "Youth self-help projects and socio-economic empowerment in rural Zimbabwe"

Please be advised that he is required to share his findings with the Ministry upon completion
of his research.

We wish him well in his research.



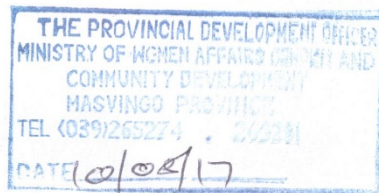
K. Mareedza

K. Mareedza

Acting Director Human Resources

For: Secretary for Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development

Noted
[Signature]



Mr. A Mboneni

Appendix 7



MWENEZI DEVELOPMENT TRAINING CENTRE

P.O. Box 39
Neshuro
Masvingo
Zimbabwe

Registered Welfare Organisation WO25/91

Cell: +263 772773057
+263 782276567
Email: mwendev1@gmail.com
<http://www.mdtc.co.zw>

19 September 2016

Mr Promise M Hlungwani
University of KwaZulu-Natal
School of Social Sciences
P Bag X01, Southville 3209
South Africa

Dear Mr Hlungwani

Re: Permission to Conduct Research with Mwenezi Development Training Centre Officers

Reference is made to the above request to conduct research with Mwenezi Development Training Centre Officers.

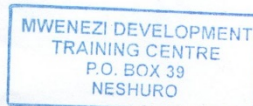
We would like to inform you that your request has been accepted. You are requested to work within the stated parameters of your study and comply with the Mwenezi Development Training Centre regulations and standards.

We also request that you give us a copy of your research findings after completion.

Kind regards.

Yours faithfully

Samuel Masukume
Programme Managing Director



Appendix 8



8 August 2017

Mr Promise Machingo Hlungwani 216072998
School of Social Sciences
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Mr Hlungwani

Protocol reference number: HSS/1032/17D

Project title: Youth socio-economic empowerment through policy implementation in rural Zimbabwe: A case study of self-help projects in Mwenezi District (Masvingo Province)

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 11 July 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisor: Dr Cheryl Mohamed Sayeed
cc. Academic Leader Research: Professor Maheshvari Naidu
cc. School Administrator: Ms Nancy Mudau

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville