Exploring 'valuable' knowledge, skills and attitudes: Perceptions of NEETs in an informal settlement in Pietermaritzburg

By

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Abstract

Unemployment, poverty and inequality in South Africa disproportionately affect youth from disadvantaged backgrounds. While we see youth living in rural areas as having fewer opportunities, those living in townships, informal settlements and inner-city areas also face challenges in sustaining full time employment and livelihoods. Many are thus classified as 'NEETs' – not employed, nor undertaking (formal) education or training. However, in this discourse, employment is largely defined in terms of the formal economic sector or being employed by someone. Unemployment is seen as the result of a lack of skills; and thus education initiatives have targeted skills for employability. The NEET discourse is part of the dominant neoliberal linear discourse of the relationship between education, skills and employment, underpinned by Human Capital Theory (HCT). This discourse ignores structural unemployment that makes it unlikely a person would get formal employment, even with skills; the variety of 'work', both paid and unpaid, that youth might be doing; and the skills, knowledge and attitudes that youth might find valuable in pursuing this work.

This qualitative case study thus focuses on youth living in the Slovo informal settlement near Pietermaritzburg, who fall into the NEET category. Framed within the critical paradigm, and using purposive and snowball sampling and participatory research tools, I sought to listen to the voices of those affected by unemployment, poverty and inequality, to find out what skills, knowledge and attitudes these young people value; how education can respond to their personal, social and economic challenges; and what they think would be the most useful way to learn these skills. I use emerging alternatives to the dominant discourse, in particular the concept of socially useful labour and the principles of *Ubuntu*, to consider this data. The findings indicate that participants value learning informally and non-formally rather than through formal education and training. They emphasise skills, knowledge and attitudes that
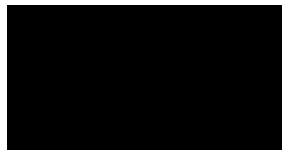
will help them and their communities in their daily lives, rather than those directly linked to the workplace. They value learning by doing, with others who understand their situation. They also emphasise unity, collaboration and co-learning from their own community over individualism.

Declaration

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education (Adult Education), University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.
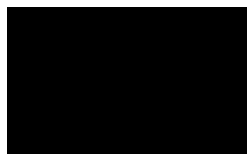
I, Patience Thandi Gumbi, declare that

1. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.

2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

3. This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

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   a. Their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced

   b. Where their exact words have been used, then their writing has been placed in italics and inside quotation marks, and referenced.

5. This thesis does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the Internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source being detailed in the thesis and in the References sections.

Thandi Gumbi

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Acknowledgements

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

AIDS: Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

CDE: Centre for Development and Enterprise

CERT: Centre for Education Rights and Transformation

CET: Community Education and Training

CIPSET: Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training

COSATU: Congress of South African Trade Unions

CWP: Community Works Programme

DHET: Department of Higher Education and Training

EPC: Education Policy Consortium

EPWP: Extended Public Works Programme

ETI: Employment Tax Incentive

FET: Further Education and Training

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

GEAR: Growth, Employment and Redistribution

HCT: Human Capital Theory

HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus

IMF: International Monetary Fund

IT: Information Technology

NEET: Not in Employment, Education or Training

NGO: Non-governmental Organisation

NPM: New Public Management

NQF: National Qualifications Framework

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PEST: Political, Economic, Social, Technological

PSET: Post-School Education and Training

QLFS: Quarterly Labour Force Survey

RDP: Reconstruction and Development Plan

SAFTU:	South African Federation of Trade Unions
SAP:	Structural Adjustment Plan
SAQA:	South African Qualifications Framework
SETA:	Sector Education and Training Authority
SKA:	Skills, Knowledge, Attitudes
TVET:	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UKZN:	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UN:	United Nations
YES:	Youth Employment Service
YWS:	Youth Wage Subsidy

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

As a former educator, and now a worker in a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that works with local communities in solving local issues, I have a particular interest in the young people that I work with. Most of them are volunteers in other organisations as well, whilst some are working to make a social impact in their own communities in other ways. They seem to me to be making a contribution to society. Most of them are not formally employed, and apart from attending occasional non-formal training workshops, none is studying. They thus fall into the category of youth often referred to as NEETs, people not in employment, education or training.

Youth unemployment is a growing concern both internationally and in South Africa. In the 2018 State of the Nation Address, for example, the new South African President, Cyril Ramaphosa, indicated the government's concern about this issue by saying, "At the centre of our national agenda in 2018 is the creation of jobs, especially for the youth" (Ramaphosa, 2018). National policy, including educational policy, has repeatedly referred to this issue over the last decade; often in conjunction with a concern about youth not being in some kind of education and training. For example, the *Green Paper on Post-School Education and Training (PSET)* (2012), hereafter referred to as the *Green Paper*, states in its introduction:

> Approximately three million young people between the ages of 18 and 24 are
> not accommodated in either the education and training system or the labour
> market. This is an appalling waste of human potential, *and a potential source
> of serious social instability*. (DHET, 2012, p. x; my emphasis)

It is clear that government considers these NEETs a 'problem'; and is thus focusing considerable attention on expanding both education and training opportunities and employment opportunities for youth. However, much of what I hear or read about government policy, especially in relation to what kind of education and training youth should be getting, does not seem to fit what I know of their actual lived experience. I am also alarmed by the discourse that sees them as 'a potential source of serious social instability', rather than young people concerned about their world and trying to make a difference, as they seem to me to be doing. I wanted to explore what youth actually think about their situation, and what they would see as useful education and training that could help them with their

lives. The aim of this study is thus to investigate the perceptions of youth in an informal settlement near Pietermaritzburg, who are NEETs, regarding the kind of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are valuable to them.

1.2 Background and rationale

In 2017, when I started this study, Statistics South Africa (2017) reported that the number of youth aged 15–24 years who were not in employment, education or training (referred to as NEETs), was 3.2 million persons, or 31.2% of the total population of 15 to 24-year-olds. This means that nearly one in every three 15 to 24-year-olds fall into this category – an astonishingly high figure, and in that year, South Africa had the highest percentage of 40 developed and developing countries (OECD, 2017); and one which appears to growing:

> During the [third] quarter [of 2018], the number of NEETs increased from
> 31.7% in 2017 to 39%. In 2018, this percentage represents 3.8 million young
> people for whom additional opportunities for employment, training and
> reskilling must be made available. Of the 3.8 million young people, the
> majority of them have less than Grade 12 or equivalent educational
> attainment; neither do they have skills through which they can be employable
> or earn decent sustainable livelihoods. (DHET, 2019a, p. 12)

The NEETs are considered to be a 'problem' (DHET, 2019b, p. 8) because they are believed to affect the labour market negatively and, as is clear from the *Green Paper* quotation above, also to potentially cause 'serious social instability'. Considerable attention is thus being focused on the NEETs, and in particular what should be done to decrease youth unemployment. Strategies are directly affected by the government's analysis of the underlying causes of youth unemployment. I would argue that this analysis has been profoundly shaped by neoliberalism.

The neoliberal skills discourse argues that there is a direct relationship between unemployment and education. Since the dawn of democracy in South Africa, education in general and post-schooling education in particular has been defined in terms of its relationship with the market – i.e. the extent to which education and skills development deliver economic growth and job creation (Balwanz & Hlatshwayo, 2015). Unemployment is seen as largely a result of a lack of skills (Maluleke & Harley, 2016), leaving it up to the education system to supply skilled people for the labour market, and making individuals responsible for making themselves employable (Swanson, 2012).

As I argue in detail in the next chapter, this has given rise to a dominant linear discourse, which argues that education and training will lead to skills, which will lead to productive employment, which will in turn lead to economic growth, which will create more jobs. In this way, people will be able to move out of poverty and inequality. This idea is underpinned by Human Capital Theory (HCT). Theodore Schultz, the key creator of HCT, argues that the education, experience and abilities of an employee have an economic value for the employee, employers, and the economy as a whole (Schultz, 1961). Investing in appropriate education and training (i.e. that geared to the marketplace) is therefore critical for a country's economic development. I argue that if we see the purpose of education as mainly to provide people with skills for employment, we will then be supporting the prevailing assumptions regarding the problem and causes of youth unemployment, which I dispute. Unemployment, I argue, is a structural feature of neoliberal capitalism. As Treat, Hlatshwayo, Dipaola, and Vally (2012) argue, the system needs to ensure that there is a workforce which is unable to sustain its daily needs except by working for someone else. In addition to this, there must be a sizable surplus workforce, in order to keep wages down. Unemployment is thus a requirement of the system.

Rather than focusing on the needs of the economy, or human needs narrowly understood (and thus met through income from employment), I believe that a discussion about human needs, aiming at restoring dignity, hope, skills and capabilities (Treat et al., 2012), is necessary. Looking at skills, knowledge and attitudes outside of the "jobs" paradigm, as is necessary in the current context of high structural unemployment, opens up the possibility of different skills, knowledge and attitudes (SKA) being 'valuable'. The issue then becomes one of who gets to judge what constitutes 'valuable' SKA.

As is clear, there are millions of young people in South Africa who do not have a formal job, nor are they studying. There are also many different ideas about SKA that might be most useful to them (both within the dominant skills discourse, and alternatives to this), but often these ideas are not from young people themselves. Because of this gap, there have recently been some studies actually asking youth for their views. For example, a study by Maluleke (2013) asked unemployed youth in a rural village in Limpopo for their views on what education and training they would find useful; and Baatjes, Baatjes, Balwanz, Harley and Steyn (2018) report on studies done in other rural and working class areas on views about Post-School Education and Training (PSET). However, there have been no studies done in an informal area in KwaZulu-Natal, such as that from which the youth I know come. I wanted to know the perspectives of the young people I come into contact with. In undertaking this

study, I also hoped that through it, the participants would have an opportunity to make sense of these issues together, and discuss topics related to their own experience, culture and settings. I hoped that this knowledge could be useful to them and their community as well as to others who may learn from the study.

1.3 Location of the study

Unemployment, poverty and inequality disproportionately affect youth from disadvantaged backgrounds. DHET (2013) recognises that while we see youth living in rural areas as having fewer opportunities, those living in townships, informal settlements and inner-city areas also face challenges in sustaining full time employment and livelihoods.

This study thus focuses on youth who are not in any form of employment nor any form of education and training (i.e. NEETs) living in an urban, working class community. The participants in the study are six youth, aged between 18 and 30 years. They all live in an informal settlement known as Slovo in Plessislaer, an area which is part of Greater Edendale about 8 km outside the CBD of Pietermaritzburg. Plessislaer has a population of approximately 1 000 people, most of whom are youth and children (Msunduzi Municipality, 2017).
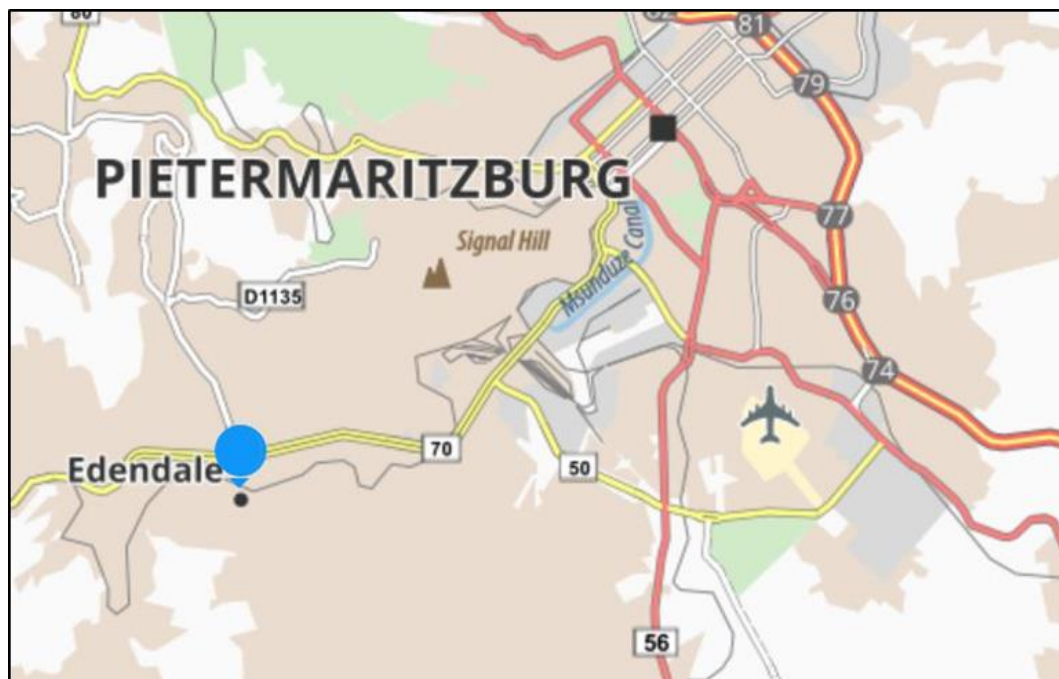
Figure 1: Edendale in relation to Pietermaritzburg CBD

The Msunduzi Municipality reports that 60% of its human settlements and development projects are targeted at the Greater Edendale area, of which Plessislaer is part. In its latest Integrated Development Plan (IDP), the municipality notes that there is much transformation of this area needed, as a result of the lack of basic services and facilities; the HIV and AIDS epidemic; high levels of poverty and unemployment; complex legal land issues; and the advancing growth of informal settlements (Msunduzi Municipality, 2017). There is no agreed single standard definition of informal settlement, but most definitions emphasise the dwelling type, the nature of land tenure and formal demarcation, poverty, vulnerability and social stress. Whilst there is no data concerning education levels in the Slovo informal settlement, in keeping with the general picture in informal settlements across South Africa, these are likely to be low, as the Housing Development Agency reports:

> In 2001, 16% of adults aged 18 and above living in informal settlement EAs had no schooling; 15% had a Matric and a further 2% completed Technikon, University or other Post Matric.

> According to the 2009 GHS [General Household Survey], four out of five adults aged 18 and above living in shacks, not in backyards, have not completed matric. 7% have no schooling (the same proportion for all South African adults). Only 2% of adults in shacks not in backyards have completed Technikon, University or other Post Matric compared to the national average of 11%. (2012, p. 51)

The community of Plessislaer is a microcosm of the above description of informal settlement areas, as an organisation working in the area confirms:

> The area is underdeveloped: infrastructure is badly maintained, water and electricity supplies are unreliable and streets are narrow. Roads, schools, clinics and other services are basic. The area has Edendale Hospital within walking distance, but Pietermaritzburg is difficult for the many unemployed people to reach owing to the cost of transport. (Centre for Criminal Justice [CCJ], n.d.)

Figure 2: Inside Slovo – playground (Thandi Gumbi)

Figure 3: View of Slovo, showing existing housing (Google)

Figure 4: One of the 'passages' leading into the community (Google)

Figure 5: Slovo informal housing and electricity connections (Google)

1.4 Focus and purpose

The focus of this study is therefore on six youth who are not employed, not in any formal education or training, and are between the ages of 18-30. They all live in Plessislaer-Slovo. The purpose was to find out what skills, knowledge and attitudes these young people value; how education can respond to their personal, social and economic challenges so that they are developed holistically; and what they think will the most useful way to learn these skills.

1.5 Research questions

My research questions are thus:

1. What do the NEETs think will be the most valuable skills, knowledge and attitudes to help them with their lives?
2. According to them, how could these be most easily accessed?
3. What do they think will the most useful way to learn them?

1.6 Conceptual framework

As I discuss in detail in Chapter Two, employment is often defined in terms of its relationship with the formal economic sector or of being employed by someone. Thus, someone might be doing all kinds of 'work', both paid and unpaid, but be considered unemployed.

A number of studies show that people can and do pursue livelihoods and are useful in society in other ways than just being employed by someone. They contribute in a meaningful way to their communities or society. For this reason, the conceptual approach which Motala and Vally (2014a, 2014b) term, 'socially useful labour', as well as the African concept of *Ubuntu* (Ramose, 2002a, 2002b; Murithi, 2007), frame this study. These concepts will be looked at against the dominant (and problematic) concept of Human Capital Theory (Schultz, 1961), which I argue profoundly influences education and training provision in South Africa.

1.7 Research design

This research is located in the critical paradigm. Critical researchers aim to unpack structural, socio-economic and political issues in order to understand what is necessary for radical transformation, and to take action towards this (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). The critical paradigm is therefore appropriate and relevant to this study because I wanted to listen to the voices of those who are affected and impacted by unemployment, poverty and inequality which I argue is caused by neoliberal capitalism amongst other factors. In keeping with the critical paradigm, I used a qualitative approach.

It is critical to ensure that data is collected from those who are best placed to understand the phenomenon being investigated. My sample was thus six youth who fit the broad definition of 'NEETs' and who live in an informal settlement near Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal province. I purposefully sampled the youth, using snowball sampling.

Carey and Asbury (2012) claim that use of focus groups is beneficial in community settings, where it is vital to hear the voices of vulnerable members of society. I thus used an extended Focus Group Discussion (FGD), questioning and probing and reflecting on data collected through participatory tools. One of the tools that helps people talk about issues affecting their lives is drawing (Harley & Butler, 2009). I asked each participant to first draw a picture of their community as they would like it to be. I then asked them to present and discuss their drawing to the whole group, asking questions, probing and encouraging the other participants to engage. The next tool, PEST analysis, asked the youth to look at the political, economic, social and technological factors, at a local, national and global level, which they believed impacted on their lives and community. PEST analysis is a participatory visual tool which allows people to link issues and explore relationships that are not commonly seen by using verbal techniques alone (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Liao, 2003).

Inductive thematic content analysis was used in this research. This involved inductive coding and then further iterative grouping of concepts into themes. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) assert that this method is open-minded and exploratory. I then conducted deductive analysis, looking for concepts and themes based on the concepts of 'socially useful labour' and *Ubuntu*.

1.8 Overview of the dissertation

This dissertation is made up of seven chapters:

- Chapter One has introduced the reader to background information and the rationale for my study, the focus and the purpose of the study, and thus my research questions. The chapter then considered my conceptual framework and the methodology used to answer the research questions.
- In Chapter Two, I interrogate and review relevant international and local literature on NEETs to explain the dominant discourse on the relationship between skills, education and employment. I then consider critiques of this. I look at other studies directly relevant to mine. Finally, I link the above literature to the concepts of socially useful labour and *Ubuntu* in contrast to Human Capital Theory as applied in the context of NEETs living in disadvantaged communities.
- In Chapter Three, I provide an outline of the research methodology employed in the study. The critical paradigm and qualitative research approach is explained and justified. The research design, and the sampling and analysis is explained. Its links

and relevance to the study is discussed. Finally, I discuss limitations, validity, trustworthiness and reliability, as well as presenting ethical issues concerning the study.

- Chapter Four presents my data from the drawing exercise and PEST analysis, and the FGD reflection and discussion of these.
- In Chapter Five, I present my inductive and deductive analysis of the data based on the literature and conceptual framework as outlined in Chapter Two.
- In my final chapter, Chapter Six, I provide a conclusion to the dissertation. I present a short summary of the findings of the research and reflect on the research process, before identifying possible areas for future research.

1.9 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to orientate the reader to the focus of this study, which is to find out what skills, knowledge and attitudes youth in an informal settlement in Pietermaritzburg who are not employed nor in any formal education or training people value; how they can best access these; and what they think is the most useful way they could learn these. It is my hope that this research allows participants to critically reflect in order to plan action within a context of high unemployment, poverty and inequality. The next chapter critically reviews the literature on education and skills in a context of unemployment and as related to the NEETs.

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

2.1 Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, the aim of this study is to investigate the perceptions of NEETs regarding the kind of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are valuable to them; how these could be most easily accessed; and what they think would be the most useful way to learn them. I have highlighted in the rationale that there is a huge problem both globally and in South Africa with youth unemployment, particularly amongst youth from disadvantaged, working class backgrounds. This is in the context of high general unemployment, poverty, and inequality. The extremely high number of young people who are not in employment, education or training is of great concern not only in South Africa but globally, as reflected in media and by international organisations (DHET, 2017; Elder, 2015). As I will show through a discussion of the literature, the NEET discourse is part of the dominant linear discourse of the relationship between education, skills and employment, underpinned by the Human Capital Theory (HCT). Using emerging critiques of this discourse, I argue that this is part of a neoliberal move to secure the position of the dominant few over the poor majority. I end the chapter by looking at an alternative discourse, based on the concept of socially useful labour and the principles of *Ubuntu*.

2.2 The emergence of the NEET concept

The term NEET was first used in the United Kingdom during the era of Prime Minister Tony Blair, in the late 1980s (Furlong, 2006; Kraak, 2013). It was soon adopted by countries such as Japan, Taiwan, South Korea and others in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Furlong, 2006; Holte, Swart, & Hiilamo, 2019; Kraak, 2013; OECD, 2019). Specifically used in relation to youth, it reflected a growing concern with youth unemployment in particular. By the late 1990s, countries such as Portugal and Spain had youth unemployment rates roughly double that of adult unemployment (Stats SA, 2002).

The 2008/2009 economic crash considerably worsened the situation, causing countries to focus attention on the youth (Carcillo & Königs, 2015). Professor Alison Wolf, a British economist and academic tasked by the Secretary of State for Education in England to review the country's vocational education for 14–19 year olds after the crash, reported that "young

people have always suffered first and most in recessions, but England is now also increasingly like other European countries in having very high structural youth unemployment rates, up to and including 25 year olds" (Wolf, 2011, p. 25).

As a result,

> From 2008 to 2010, the proportion of young people not in employment, education or training in the youth population, the "NEET" rate, increased by 2.1 percentage points to reach 15.8 per cent as an average of OECD countries. This means one in six young people were without a job and not in education or training. (ILO, 2013, p. 4)

Youth unemployment is seen as problematic both in terms of its impact on the economy (youth are not only not contributing productively to the economy, but are a potential drain on the economy, since they require support), and its potential social repercussions – although these are argued to be primarily individual. A report on NEETs by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound, 2012) said that youth unemployment could result in "scarring effects or wage penalties, but can also lead to a range of negative social conditions, such as isolation, involvement in risk-related behaviour, or unstable mental and physical health" (p. 61). The ILO report expressed concern about the ongoing impact of being a NEET on the NEETs themselves: "Because this group is not improving their future employability through investment in skills, and are also not gaining experience through employment, NEETs are particularly at risk of both labour market and social exclusion" (2013, p. 14). Thus the worry is that youth not somehow integrated into the system (e.g. working in formal employment, or in formal education and training), and hence shut out of the social, economic, political and cultural mechanisms of social integration, might end up being so in the long term (Kraak, 2013; Munck, 2013).

2.3 Problems with the NEET concept

Furlong (2006) argues that one of the primary problems with concept 'NEET' is the lack of an agreed definition of the term, which makes it difficult to make international comparisons. For example, the age that the concept deals with varies. It originally applied to those between the ages of 16 and 18 in the United Kingdom (Furlong, 2006), whereas in European statistics the higher age is 24 (Eurofound, 2012), with Fumagalli and Morini (n.d) relating the term to Italians aged 25–29 years.

Some writers express concern that the concept can lead to focusing attention on this group only in terms of education and training, when there are other issues which are a priority to the age group. The term "*not* in education, employment or training" is also considered by some as a labelling trap that defines young people facing different situations by what they are not (Furlong, 2006; Kraak, 2013). Authors argue that there are multiple subgroupings within the term "not in employment, education or training", all of which are lumped together in the single term 'NEET'. For example, some in this category are those who have not been employed for a long time, whereas others have been only fleetingly unemployed; there are those who are have disabilities that are long term and require different interventions; some may be looking after sick or elderly or disabled people or children, whilst others are just taking a gap year pursuing artistic talents or just taking a break from work or studying. This shows that the category combines people who have control over their situations and those who do not.

These conceptual problems are also evident in the dominant discourse in South Africa.

2.4 The NEET 'problem' in South Africa

Although the concept of NEET appears to have only become prominent in South Africa after the 2008/2009 crash (Holte et al., 2009), youth unemployment has been of concern in this country for decades (Chisholm, 2005). By the mid-1990s, the unemployment rate of youth aged 15-24 years was 33% - more than double that of adults aged 25-65 years (12,7%) (Stats SA, 2002, p. 124); remained consistently at 30% or above for many years (Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training [CIPSET], 2018); and has recently risen.

As was the case elsewhere in the world, the 2008-2009 crash significantly affected youth unemployment in South Africa, with National Treasury (2011) reporting that in the two years after the crash, employment of 18 to 24-year-olds had fallen by 20%. Youth unemployment in this country is now the highest in the world, and is considered a national crisis (RSA, 2020). In the post-crash period, youth unemployment became coupled with high levels of school drop-out and high levels of youth not undertaking any form of formal post-school education and training, in the concept of NEET. The term NEET was apparently first used in South Africa by Cloete (2009), in his study, *Responding to the Educational Needs of Post-School Youth*. Cloete showed that over 41% of 18 to 24-year-olds could be classified as NEET – about 2.8 million. Many of these had low levels of education and dealing with this would require a "co-ordinated multi-disciplinary response from the state" (Cloete quoted in

Kraak, 2013, p. 82). According to Kraak (2013), Cloete's findings 'shocked' government officials and politicians. Since then, the concept 'NEET' has entered the general discourse, with interest in and concern about the NEETs voiced by government, media, academia and business alike. For example, a 2013 headline in *Engineering News* read "'NEETs crisis' emerging as SA's most urgent challenge" (according to a World Bank official) (Creamer, 2013); and DHET now refers to it as "The NEET problem" (DHET, 2019b, p. 8).

In 2017, the DHET published a fact sheet on NEETs, providing a detailed breakdown of NEETs in the country, which goes some way towards understanding the subgroupings in this very broad concept. This shows that not being in employment, education or training affects people unevenly across the country, but also across age, sex and education levels.

Interestingly, the fact sheet does not focus specifically on youth – in fact, it refers to everyone in the age group 15–64 years who is not in formal employment, education or training as a NEET (DHET, 2017), thus reflecting one of the problems with the concept of NEET, as discussed above. The fact sheet does, however, confirm that those under 35 are the most likely to fall into the NEET category, as can be seen in Figure 6 below:

	15-24 years	25-34 years	35-64 years
■ 2013	32.8	45.8	42.5
■ 2014	32.3	45.4	42.0
■ 2015	30.5	44.4	41.7
■ 2016	31.2	46.0	42.7

■ 2013 ■ 2014 ■ 2015 ■ 2016

Source: Statistics SA, Quarterly Labour Force Survey Q2, 2016 (Calculations by DHET).
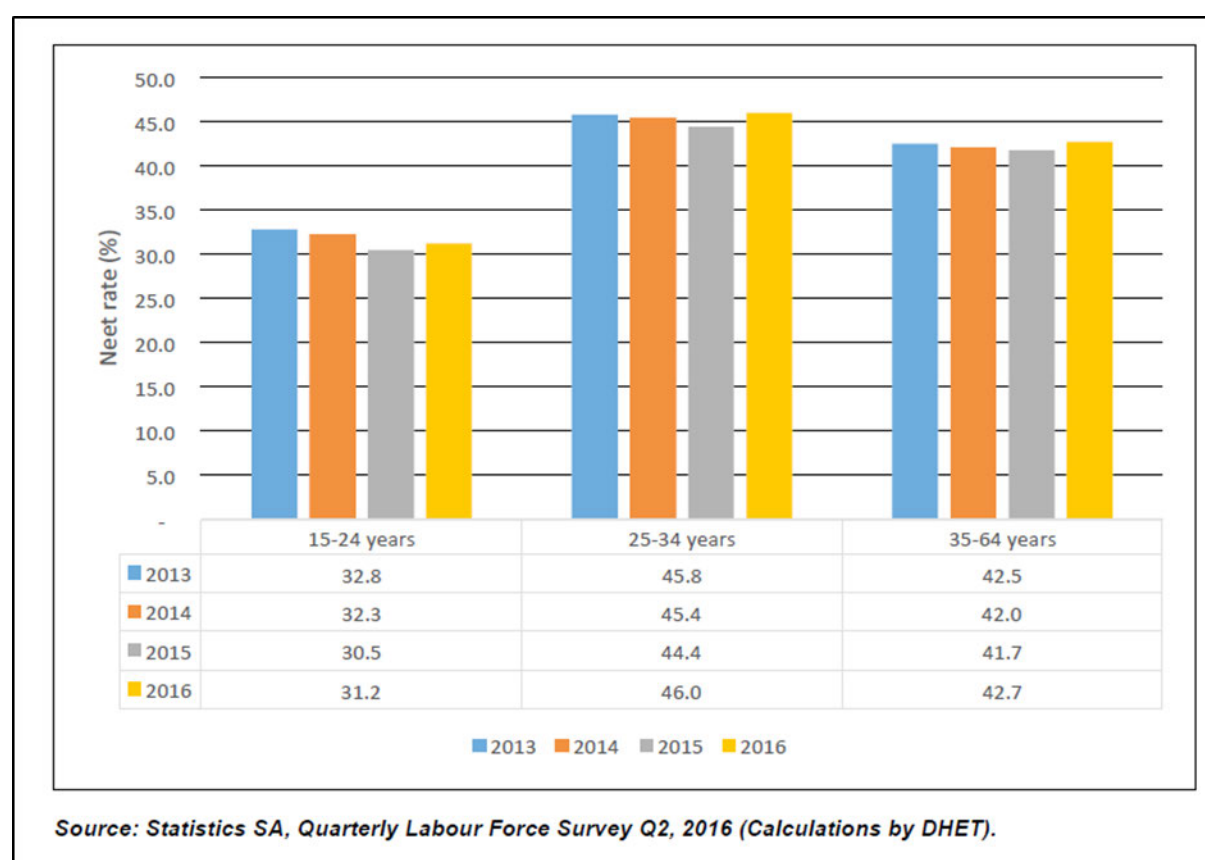
Figure 6: NEET rates by age group, from 2013-2016 (DHET, 2017, p. 4)

KwaZulu-Natal has the second highest number of NEETs in the country, after Gauteng; and it is clear that those under 35 constitute the bulk of these, as Figure 7 shows:

Source: Statistics SA, Quarterly Labour Force Survey Q2, 2016.
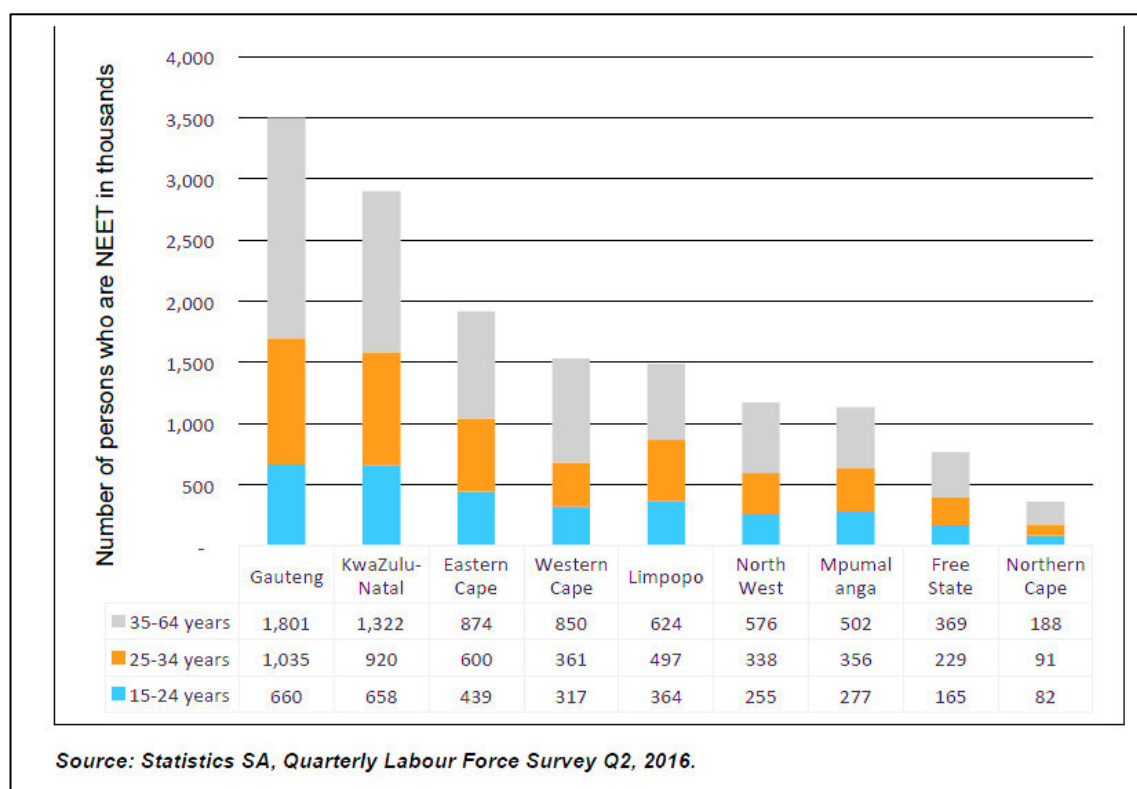
Figure 7: Number of NEETS by province and age group, 2016 (DHET, 2017, p. 6)

The fact sheet also looks at education level of NEETs, showing clearly that NEETs tend to have relatively low levels of education, although the higher age groups are more affected by this (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: Number of NEETs by highest level of education, 2016 (DHET, 2017, p. 7)

Education level	15-24 years	25-34 years	35-64 years	Total
	Thousand			
No schooling	38	61	600	699
Primary or less	351	438	1 833	2 622
Secondary education less than grade 12	1 499	2 313	2 829	6 641
Grade 12	1 145	1 292	1 352	3 789
Grade 12 with Certificate/Diploma	97	172	209	478
Degree[4]	57	112	189	357
Other and Unspecified	31	40	94	165
Total	3 217	4 427	7 107	14 752

Source: Statistics SA, Quarterly Labour Force Survey Q2, 2016 (Calculations by DHET).

Women are far more likely to fall into the NEET category than men, across all age groups (although the gap widens with age). Women over 24 years who have no schooling are significantly more likely to fall into the NEET category than men; whereas younger women (i.e. 15-24) are significantly more likely to fall into the NEET category than men if they have a Grade 12 with a certificate or diploma (see Table 2 below).

Table 2: NEET rates by highest level of education and gender, 2016 (DHET, 2017, p. 8)

Education level	15-24 years		25-34 years		35-64 years	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
	NEET rates					
No schooling	75.5	78.3	56.3	81.6	57.8	74.6
Primary or less	30.9	36.9	46.1	73.2	48.0	64.7
Secondary education with less than grade 12	22.3	27.1	46.4	65.1	40.1	56.5
Grade 12	40.4	44.1	32.9	46.4	25.7	41.1
Grade 12 with certificate/diploma	42.0	60.2	23.0	29.9	15.9	20.2
Degree	35.2	31.7	18.3	18.7	9.7	19.0
Other and Unspecified	41.1	38.2	27.3	52.4	40.8	49.6
Total	**28.8**	**33.7**	**38.9**	**53.3**	**34.7**	**50.0**

Source: Statistics SA, Quarterly Labour Force Survey Q2, 2016 (Calculations by DHET).

The DHET fact sheet suggests that "One likely reason of [*sic*] the difference between the NEET rates of the men and the women is the traditional role-sharing among men and women where women will most likely be home-makers while men go to work" (2017, p. 7).

Table 3: NEETs by reason and age group, 2016 (DHET, 2017, p. 9)

Reason	15-24 years	25-34 years	35-64 years	Total
	Thousand			
Job losers	254	748	765	1 767
New entrants	1 010	907	323	2 240
Re-entrants	54	126	118	298
Other unemployed[5]	56	393	777	1 226
Home-makers	486	782	1 480	2 748
Health reasons	126	272	1 218	1 617
Too young/old/retired	51	4	1 289	1 344
Discouraged job-seekers	662	941	875	2 478
Other not economically active	518	255	260	1 034
Total	**3 217**	**4 427**	**7 107**	**14 752**

Source: Statistics SA, Quarterly Labour Force Survey Q2, 2016 (Calculations by DHET).

As can be seen in Table 3, above, homemaking is in fact given as one of the primary reasons why someone is not in employment, education or training, according to DHET. Being a new entrant into the labour market is also a significant indicator that someone will be a NEET, especially for youth; as is the fact that someone has given up looking for work.

Another fact sheet was produced in 2018 (DHET, 2018). Unlike the 2017 fact sheet, this specifically considered race. It reported that between 2013 and 2017, "Most of the people who were NEET were African/Black and female" (p. 4); in 2017, 84% of NEETs were African/Black. Women constituted 58% of NEETs, with female NEETs having slightly higher levels of education than males. The statistics showed that young people were struggling to find a first job:

> There are many reasons why people are NEET in South Africa and they differ between the youth (15-34 years) and the adults (35-60 years). The highest number of youth were NEET because they were new entrants in the labour market (about 2.0 million) in 2017, followed by those who were discouraged job-seekers (about 1.5 million) and those who were home-makers (about 1.2 million). This shows that about 3.5 million youth in South Africa who were NEET were willing to work but they cannot find work. (DHET, 2018, p. 4)

The 2018 fact sheet asserted that from 2013-2017, the proportion of youth who were NEET stayed at 39%. Since the fact sheet was published, the situation appears to have worsened. Claims about this differ slightly - Head (2019), Omarjee (2019) and Stoddard (2019) all said it had reached an 11-year high by 2019, whilst Writer (2019) reports it as being at its highest rate in over 16 years. A recent book (Rogan, 2019) claims that 50.7% of 23–24-year olds are now NEETs.

As elsewhere in the world, a key concern for the South African state has been not only about how the NEETs impact on the economy, but also about their potential social impact, although in this country the emphasis is far more on the collective impact than the individual. The National Treasury (2011) argues that high youth unemployment "inhibits the country's economic development and imposes a larger burden on the state to provide social assistance" (p. 5). It claims that unemployment is associated with social problems such as "poverty, crime, violence, a loss of morale, social degradation and political disengagement' (p. 9). For DHET, youth unemployment is a source of 'social instability' (DHET, 2012, p. x). According to the DHET's 2018 fact sheet:

It is generally acknowledged, both nationally as well as internationally, that NEETs constitute one of the greatest threats to social stability. Researchers and the media frequently raise the spectre of idle youths as a ticking social time bomb, and there is now heightened awareness of the young people who are NEET to cause serious social disruption. (DHET, 2018, p. 2)

The fact sheet goes on to say that the average age of a house robber if 19-25; of all arrested robbers, 90% did not have Grade 12 and/or were unemployed. "Consequently, the monitoring of NEET trends and strong interventions to address the challenge of NEETs are key to promoting peace and stability in society" (p. 2).

The DHET's *The Community Education and Training College System: National Plan for the Implementation of the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training System* (2019a) again expresses this kind of concern in its discussion on the NEETs:

Against the background of the data presented above, it is crucial to underscore the fact that the low skills levels and educational attainment and high levels of unemployment (among others), pose a threat to the country's stability and social cohesion. (p. 12)

The potential for long-term disaffection, which is a feature of the global discourse on the NEETs as discussed above, is also of concern – i.e. that those uninvolved and excluded from education or work are potentially likely to remain so in the long term (DHET, 2017).

The South African state's concern about the potential implications of the high number of NEETs in the country is echoed in the mainstream press, and the private sector. Recently, the *Daily Sun*, for example, in a call to 'help' youth, reported: "One of the problems of unemployment is that without an income, the unemployed do not spend, which means the cashflow in Mzansi's economy decreases" (Monama, 2018). The Centre for Development Enterprise (CDE), which describes itself as "South Africa's leading development think tank. . . . gathering evidence and generating innovative policy recommendations on issues critical to economic growth and democratic consolidation" (CDE, 2019a, 'About CDE'), produced a brief on 'Tackling youth unemployment' in the run-up to the 2019 general election (CDE, 2019c). CDE asserts that youth unemployment is likely to lead to a number of the concerns raised by government – that apart from impacting on individual youth, it will affect economic growth, result in social exclusion, and potentially undermine democracy:

Many of the young people who fail to find work will be condemned to a lifetime of exclusion from the main currents of economic life, especially formal sector employment, for most if not all of their lives. Given the role a youth bulge can play in accelerating an economy's growth, the failures of the labour market constitute a vast waste of South Africa's resources. It is also a terrible human tragedy that crushes the hopes of millions of citizens, poisoning our communities and our politics.

The hardening of the boundaries between those who are included and those who are excluded from the economy represents the greatest threat to the viability of democracy in South Africa. Unless those who are currently excluded feel their lives getting better and develop credible hope of further improvement, there is every prospect of our politics becoming uglier, more violent and less capable of delivering reasonable solutions to our challenges. (CDE, 2019c, p. 1)

Numerous policy interventions targeting NEETs have thus been initiated in the last decade. Such initiatives aim to address issues of vulnerability of youth in terms of unemployment, lack of participation in the labour market, and early school leaving, amongst other things.

2.5 Causes of youth unemployment

The dominant discourse on the NEET 'problem' presents a particular analysis of the causes of youth unemployment in South Africa. Roughly, youth unemployment is largely understood to be the result of four interrelated issues, which I discuss in further detail below:

1. Youth are not employed because they do not have the skills necessary for the current job market, because they are not getting enough education and training.

2. Youth are unemployed because they lack the necessary skills for the workplace because they are not getting the 'right' kind of education and training – i.e. school and post-school education is not closely enough aligned to the needs of the market.

3. Even if youth have enough of the right kind of education and training, youth find it difficult to get employment because of the gap between the world of education and the world of work.

4. Youth are not employed because the economy is not growing fast enough to absorb new job seekers.

These factors have been complicated by 'the malign legacies of apartheid' (CDE, 2019c, p. 2).

The assumption that many youth are unemployed because they have not received sufficient quality education and training to give them the skills necessary to find a job is evident in discussions on the NEET 'problem', as is clear from the *Confronting Youth Unemployment* report by the National Treasury (2011). This contains an extended discussion on the issue. The report argues that "The deficiencies of the education system are a fundamental constraint on the quality of young workers looking for jobs and limit a young person's ability to find decent employment" (p. 19). It argues that quality of schooling is poor, resulting in poor performance, particularly in maths and science; and continuation and completion rates are low. "Combined, these are a drag on youth employment because they lower the productivity of young workers entering the labour market and therefore contribute to the gap that exists between productivity and real wages" (Ibid.). Absorption rates into the labour market increase as level of education increases, which emphasises the importance of getting more young people to achieve higher levels of academic or vocational schooling.

> Improved employment prospects are particularly evident for those attaining some level of tertiary education but through-put from high school to tertiary schooling is low. . . . These factors illustrate the need to curb drop-out rates and improve the overall quality of the education system. (Ibid.)

The National Treasury thus argued that the education system needed to be improved to reduce drop-out.

> In addition there is a significant role for *second-chance* programmes. Second-chance programmes aim to strengthen the employment prospects for unemployed, low-educated youth and to motivate their re-entry into education. These programmes target early school leavers (those that have dropped out of secondary school) and young adults who have not gone on to further education or vocational training programmes. (Ibid.)

The latest draft National Youth Policy 2020-2030 (RSA, 2020) also subscribes to this analysis, stating that "it is clear that the major contributor to poverty, inequality, and unemployment amongst the youth in South Africa is the low level of educational attainment and skills" (p. 17).

However, the initiatives also suggest a growing analysis by government of a disjuncture between formal education and training and the workplace. In this analysis, even if youth get more education and training, they might still not be employed because they are not being properly prepared by the education and training system, and do not have the requisite skills, to enter the workplace. Commentators argue that this problem has been compounded by the shifting nature of the economy post-apartheid, and hence the shifting nature and level of the skills required:

> Under apartheid, state policy was used to remove black people from cities and to prevent them from acquiring skills or getting high-status jobs. This caused an oversupply of cheap black labour, which benefited the owners of business enterprises, particularly in agriculture and mining. Over time, these two industries have become more mechanised and capital-intensive, and less labour-intensive. This is an important historical factor that partly explains our current unemployment problem.

> The finance and services sectors have increased substantially in the recent past. Yet the finance sector in particular tends to employ highly skilled people. An important factor to consider is the mismatch between the skills distribution in our society and the skills distribution that our economy seems to need. (Ranchod, 2019)

Thus, the education and training system needs to be more closely aligned with the market; and in the interim, youth need to obtain the necessary skills through actual workplace experience. National Treasury (2011) maintains that one of the reasons for youth unemployment is a lack of skills and work experience, which makes potential employers view hiring youth as risky. Klees (2014) further argues that vocational skills, since they are context specific, are best learned on the job; making it even more important to ensure on-the-job experience.

This reflects precisely the analysis being made in Europe in the period after the 2008/2009 crash. At the point where concerns about youth unemployment (as double that of adult unemployment) were being raised in the United Kingdom and other OECD countries, some countries, including Germany, Austria and Switzerland, showed a deviation from this pattern. In these countries, there were similar unemployment rates between youth and adults. It was argued that this was because of apprenticeship programmes that allowed entry into the labour market (Stats SA, 2002).

This was a point picked up by British economist and academic, Alison Wolf, in her report (2011) to the Secretary of State for Education in England on vocational education for 14 to 19-year-olds. As mentioned above, Wolf was tasked with this review in the wake of the 2008/2009 crash. The aim of the review was to determine how vocational education could be improved so that these young people can successfully progress into higher education or the labour market. Wolf commended the German dual system. In the dual system, "students combine school-based vocational learning with company-based learning (apprenticeships)" (OECD, 2019, p. 46). In her report, Wolf emphasised the value of work experience, saying, "Even though formal credentials are seen as increasingly important, they are not, in fact, all-determining. Work experiences still offer an alternative progression route, while many formal qualifications are not worth having at all" (Wolf, 2011, p. 10).

CDE (2019) claims that the problem of a lack of work experience is compounded over generations, and exacerbated by a lack of information about the world of work:

> Large numbers of work-seekers come from households in which no one holds a full-time, formal sector job. As a result, they often lack some of the requisite workplace skills and aptitudes that might be acquired organically in a household in which more people work. They also often have little knowledge about what kinds of jobs are available, for which jobs their skills and aptitudes are best suited, or how to maximize their chances of finding one (p. 2).

However, many commentators have also argued that youth unemployment is a factor of slow economic growth, which has failed to deliver sufficient jobs in the post-apartheid period. The World Bank's lead private sector development specialist for a number of Southern African countries, Dr Chunlin Zhang, adopts this position:

> The point is that economic growth has a much higher job-creation potential in South Africa than in other countries. So, it is very clear that what is missing . . . is higher growth," he said . . . This growth should also create 'low-skilled jobs', or it would not help in solving the unemployment problem, as 60% of jobless South Africans did not have secondary-level education and had not worked for the past five years. (Creamer, 2013, n.p.)

2.6 South African policy responses and interventions to the NEET 'problem'

Whilst the language of NEET only emerged in South Africa a decade ago, as already mentioned youth unemployment has been of concern for at least the last fifty years. It is crucial to understand the context in which initiatives to deal with youth unemployment are proposed, including the contemporary perceptions of the state, business and the labour sectors on the causes of youth unemployment.

Chisholm (2005) outlines how the 1976 youth uprising influenced the apartheid government and the private sector towards programmes to deal with (mostly black) young people who were unemployed and not in education. Programmes such as the Special Employment Creation Programme (SECP) which started in 1985, were created to facilitate training centres for unemployed people, including youth. A primary reason for this was to deal with the potential for youth to become revolutionary. Thus the concern with the social impact of youth unemployment is of long standing.

With democracy, youth unemployment (33% at this point) emerged as a key concern to be targeted by the new government. Even before the 1994 elections, the African National Congress's (ANC) election manifesto, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), was already expressing concern about youth unemployment, and why it needed to be dealt with:

> The high levels of youth unemployment require special programmes. . . Youth
> development more generally must focus on education and training, job
> creation, and enabling young people to realise their full potential and
> participate fully in the society and their future. (ANC, 1994)

Thus, even at this early stage (more than ten years before the term NEET was being used), two clear strategies were identified – increasing education and training opportunities, and increasing jobs; thereby ensuring the full participation of youth in society. It is clear how these strategies relate to analyses of the causes of youth unemployment as discussed above. Since then, these two strategies have been implemented; but have also been joined by two further strategies – initiatives to help youth bridge the gap between formal education and work; and the reshaping of education and training to align more closely with the workplace. In all of these, the influence of the European analysis and response is clear. Eurofound, as cited in Avis (2014), examined the literature on NEETs in the United Kingdom, drawing out the policy interventions designed to address this issue. As I compare the policy solutions

outlined for the United Kingdom, I see similarities to the South African interventions, as outlined in Table 4 below; both cases demonstrating an alignment to analyses of the key causes of youth unemployment:

Table 4: Comparison of UK/European and South African NEET interventions

U.K & European programmes	S.A programmes
Preventing early school-leaving Increasing the scope of compulsory education Education Maintenance Allowance	Compulsory schooling Grade 1-9
Reintegrating early school-leavers	Second chance matric
Supporting school-to-work transitions	Internships and Learnerships
Fostering employability of young people YES Internships	EPWP Internships and Learnerships Youth Employment Service (YES) Broad-based black economic empowerment (B-BBEE)
Removing barriers and offering employer incentives e.g. Wage subsidies, apprenticeship subsidies and incentives	Youth Wage Subsidy/Employment Tax Incentive (ETI)

Within South Africa, the last decade has seen substantial attention focused on reshaping the education and training system, focusing primarily (but not only) on post-school education and training. In the first instance, the intention was to ensure that youth completed schooling, through decreasing school drop-out rates and allowing more opportunities for second-chance matric (i.e. those who had not completed, or failed, were afforded opportunities to complete their schooling more easily). Secondly, the intention was to dramatically increase the number of youth accessing education and training.

The last ten years have thus seen a massive overhaul of the entire PSET system, with the TVET College system and the adult education system particularly targeted. An entirely new institutional framework – the Community College system – has been put in place. The NEET concept was already being widely used at the time the *Green Paper* (DHET, 2012) and *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* (DHET, 2013) were being formulated, and clearly influenced these:

The system must be expanded to cater for the needs of the over three million young people who are not in employment, education, or training, to cater for the needs of an economy that must enhance its skills levels in order to grow and to provide the high-level research and innovation required by a modern economy. (DHET, 2013, p. 2)

The *White Paper* thus proposed massively increasing enrolments at PSET institutions. It set the target for TVET college enrolments as 1 million by 2015 and 2.5 million by 2030 (a 385% increase), and proposed increasing enrolment in public adult learning centres (now to be community colleges) from 265 000 in 2011 to 1 million 2030 (a 377% increase). Enrolment increases at universities were only slightly less ambitious - from 937 000 students to 1.6 million in 2030 (171% increase) (DHET, 2013).

However, increasingly, the emphasis is not simply on increasing education and training opportunities, but of more closely aligning education and training with the marketplace. Increasingly, it is the Community College sector (now termed Community Education and Training (CET)) that is seen as the primary mechanism for dealing with the NEET 'problem':

The TVET colleges provide vocational or occupational education opportunities, aimed at developing skills towards a specific range of jobs, employment or entrepreneurial possibilities (TVET Colleges, 2019). The NDP [National Development Plan] envisages a critical role for TVET colleges in the development of intermediate, practical and employable skills with the aim of reducing skills shortages and thereby also youth unemployment.

CET is a new type of institution intended to cater mainly for youth and adults who did not complete their schooling or who never attended school. Given the substantial and varied educational needs that cannot be addressed fully by colleges and universities, CET colleges are viewed as best positioned to offer training to youth who are "Not in Employment, Education or Training" (NEETs) by providing opportunities to improve their levels of education and adult literacy as well as their skills for self-employment. (DHET, 2019b, p. xi)

In 2019, DHET published a national plan for the implementation of the CET system as espoused in the NDP and *White Paper* (2019a). The plan proposes to expand access to CET services for youth and adults; ensure the implementation of appropriate programmes that

meet the variety of needs for youth and adults; boost the success of youth and adults in the CET by increasing the rate of graduation; improve the quality of provision in CET colleges; ensure that the CET institutions are distributed widely and equitably; develop guidance frameworks to properly control and facilitate the delivery of CET programmes; ensure successful development through strategic involvement of stakeholders; and make sure that research and monitoring and evaluation supports evidence-based institutional preparation and development. There is thus nothing essentially new in the proposals.

An OECD report on the CET system in South Africa published in the same year (OECD, 2019) notes that only 273 000 adults were enrolled in the system in 2019; and the ambitious target of one million students in CET institutions by 2030 is currently unlikely to be achieved. The existing CET system remains underdeveloped, with little progress made since the introduction and enhancement of the system, and limited public finance directed to it. The system continues to be affected by high dropout rates, low quality, low visibility and poor image. The ability of the system to really tackle the NEET issue by dramatically increasing opportunities for education and training, and improving employability through providing appropriate skills, is thus in question.

However, as has been discussed above, part of the dominant discourse on the causes of youth unemployment is that the economy is not expanding fast enough to correct the high unemployment which was seen as a legacy of apartheid as well as absorb new job seekers. The concern about youth unemployment at the point of the democratic transition needs to be seen in the context of a concern about unemployment in general. Thus from 1994 on, job creation has been high on the agenda. The RDP was overtly aimed at providing jobs whilst also delivering the infrastructure that had been denied to the majority under apartheid. For example, building a million low cost houses in five years was one of the objectives of the RDP (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 1994). The idea was that the Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise (SMME) sector of South Africa could take on most of these construction projects, thus creating multiple jobs for relatively low skilled workers.

Every major policy since then – the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy (1996); the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA) (2006); the New Growth Path (NGP) (2010); and the National Development Plan (NDP) (2012) – have each, in their turn, emphasised the need to grow jobs, promising the delivery of hundreds of thousands of jobs over the years. The public sector has become an important

provider. Programmes to deal with unemployment such as the Community Works Programme (CWP) and Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) have benefited many young people. However, some initiatives very specifically target youth.

In 2011, the National Treasury proposed the Youth Wage Subsidy (YWS), now known as the Employment Tax Incentive (ETI), as a way of curbing unemployment amongst youth. As discussed above, National Treasury (2011) maintained that one of the reasons for youth unemployment is a lack of skills and work experience, which makes potential employers view hiring youth as risky. The YWS was therefore intended to provide an incentive for employers to hire youth job seekers:

> The magnitude of the employment challenge in South Africa, particularly among its youth, suggests that an employment subsidy is an appropriate policy intervention to boost labour demand. The proposed youth employment subsidy would lower the costs to employers of hiring young workers, stimulating employment creation and improving young people's access to decent jobs in important, well-regulated and potentially rapidly growing sectors of the economy, such as agriculture and manufacturing, albeit at relatively low pay levels upon entry. (National Treasury, 2011, p. 37)

Employers hiring people between the ages of 18–29 years receive half the value of the employee's salary as long it is above the minimum wage and less than R60 000 per annum. Despite this proposal being met with disapproval by worker unions like the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) (Reddy, 2014; Treat et al., 2012) and resulting in violent confrontation between COSATU and the Democratic Alliance (DA), the YWS was passed as the *Employment Tax Incentive Act* on 31 October 2013 (Reddy, 2014).

Using short-term employment experience as a mechanism to increase necessary skills has now become an important argument in government interventions. Such interventions help deal with the analysis that youth are unemployed because of the lack of alignment between formal education and training and the marketplace. More attention is being paid to the issue of helping youth to transition between formal education and the workplace through inter alia learnerships and internships.

Following the announcement for prioritising youth unemployment by President Cyril Ramaphosa in the 2018 State of the Nation address (Ramaphosa, 2018), the Youth Employment Service (YES) was launched in March 2018. The programme is led by the

private sector with support from government and labour. The programme aimed to provide 12-month fixed or temporary employment to one million youth aged 18–35 years, over the following three years. The rationale behind the initiative is that through participation in this programme, youth might acquire skills that will enable them to be employable in future (YES, 2018).

The *Draft National Youth Policy 2030* also claims that "even young people with more years of schooling are less likely to be employed due to lack of relevant work experience" (p. 6); and that while those with those with tertiary education have better chances of getting employment compared to their counterparts, this is dependent on whether "their education and skills match labour market demand" (p. 6). The policy thus sees a need to improve education and skills in order to effect positive youth development:

> A comprehensive youth-specific policy is required, that recognises diversity of youth; focuses on improving the education, increasing the skills and economic opportunities including employment and entrepreneurial chances for young people; protects youth who are vulnerable including those with disabilities, not in education, employment and training. (RSA, 2020, p. 7)

Whilst the varied initiatives discussed above can be seen as a direct response to the NEET 'problem', and the government's analysis of the causes of this, there is also an increasing recognition by the state that full employment in the formal sector is unlikely; and that self-employment or livelihood skills must thus be promoted and supported, inter alia through education and training. The *White Paper* argues that the education and training system should not only provide the knowledge and skills needed by the economy, but should also provide skills for livelihoods, and contribute to the development of critical citizens who can function effectively, creatively and ethically as part of a democratic society, understand their social environment and be fully involved in their economic, social and cultural life. An important role of CET colleges is to provide NEETs with self-employment skills. The aim of CET, according to the *White Paper*, is to promote a life-long learning process in communities by facilitating skills development (including literacy, numeracy and vocational skills) to improve personal, social, family and work experiences (DHET, 2013). In this sense, the PSET system is seen as a means of dealing with the potential economic and social impacts of the NEET 'problem'.

2.7 Underlying assumptions of South African policy responses and interventions

The policies and interventions reflect the key underlying assumptions about youth unemployment discussed above: that youth do not get employed because they lack the skills necessary for a changing market. In the dominant logic, as discussed above, one of the reasons why they lack these skills is because they are not getting enough education and training. Therefore, as seen, policies and interventions focus inter alia on ensuring that youth complete their schooling, or if they do not, ensuring that they have ample opportunity to access second-chance programmes (in adult learning centres – now community learning centres), or enter alternative programmes (such as NCV programmes in TVET Colleges). At the same time, opportunities for post-schooling education have been massively expanded, as has funding to pursue such opportunities (through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), for example). However, youth also lack the necessary skills for the workplace because they are not getting the 'right' kind of education and training – school, TVET colleges, and universities are not closely enough aligned to the needs of the market.

As many writers have pointed out (and I discuss in more detail below), the dominant discourse views the relationship between jobs, skills and education in a linear way. The belief is that education and training will lead to skills needed by the marketplace, which will lead to productive employment; productive employment will lead to economic growth; and economic growth will lead to the creation of more jobs which will provide a way out of poverty and inequality (CIPSET, 2018). This 'skills discourse' is now pervasive. It is premised on Human Capital Theory, a theory which is itself an underlying assumption of neoliberal capitalism, which, as I discuss below, is the dominant economic and political policy of contemporary South Africa.

2.7.1 Neoliberalism

Harvey (2005) describes neoliberalism as:

> A theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. (Harvey, 2005, p. 2)

Although there is considerable debate about the defining characteristics of neoliberal thinking and practice, it is most commonly associated with the economics of laissez-faire, and hence with free market competition, minimal state interference in economic and social relations, privatisation and deregulation; but also commodification and individualization (Harvey, 2005; Peet & Hartwick, 2015; Smith, n.d.). It is believed that competition between different firms and individuals leads to increased productivity and creativity, as businesses search for new products to market and cheaper ways of doing things, and individual entrepreneurship is promoted. Neoliberals argue that putting into place policies which further these characteristics will lead to sustained economic growth, and neoliberalism is often described as the most effective mechanism for the fair allocation of resources, and the best means of achieving human progress (Smith, n.d.).

The globalisation that happened after the economic crisis in the 1970s saw the increasing prominence of views propagated by economists Friedrich von Hayek (who argued that interventionist policies directed at redistribution of wealth ultimately lead to totalitarianism) and Milton Friedman (who opposed public fiscal policy to manipulate the economic system) (Smith, n.d.). Neoliberalism emerged as the dominant economic policy, with the United Kingdom's Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, elected in 1979, as well as the USA's President Ronald Reagan elected in 1981, as the main proponents of neoliberalism. The crisis of overproduction of the 1970s meant there was a need for new markets, which resulted in global trade. Seen as the only alternative, this neoliberal, neoclassical, Western and capitalist society and economic system was adopted (Harvey, 2005; Palley, 2005; Peet & Hartwick, 2015). Neoliberalism is advocated by the media, governments, and financial institutions such as the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Harvey, 2005; Youngman, 2000), and is now the dominant economic and 'development' theory globally.

However, it is also increasingly under attack because of the human and environmental repercussions. The commodification and privatization of public property ('the commons') has led to serious environmental and human problems. The privatisation of public institutions, services, utilities and resources including schools, universities, health facilities, and prisons has placed many services out of the reach of the poor and eroded the remaining public systems. Similarly, the commodification of resources, including natural and cultural (for tourism) into private assets, which has become the norm, has alienated these from the people (Harvey, 2005):

The world's poorest regions and poorest peoples bear a disproportionate burden . . . such as the destruction of their habitats and environments through extractive industries, the enclosure of public goods such as land and water through privatisation, and lack of access to the essentials of life such as food, safety, and a home. (Williams & Satgar, 2019, n.p.)

Neoliberalism has also profoundly affected the nature of work and workers. As Harvey (2005) asserts, the dominant economic system perpetuates unstable, contractual labour and underemployment. It has "increased the precarious and insecure nature of most work, especially in the wake of the 2008-09 global capitalist recession" (Munck, 2013, p. 747). This is a constant process. In January 2020, for example, Morrisons, a 500-store chain of supermarkets in the United Kingdom, announced that it would be eliminating 3 000 higher-paid (and presumably more permanent) managerial roles:

At the same time, it is creating 7,000 new hourly-paid roles in an effort to improve customer service and reduce the gaps on its shelves. The changes will result in a net increase of 4,000 jobs, with many of the new positions on its Market Street deli counters. (Wood, 2020, n.p.)

This phenomenon has given rise to the concept of the 'precariat', introduced by Standing in his 2011 book, *The precariat: The new dangerous class* (echoing the concern about social unrest evident in the NEET discourse); although, as Munck (2013) points out, the concept echoes earlier notions of marginality, informality and exclusion, and has racist overtones. The number of informal workers has also dramatically increased (Stuart, Sammon & Hunt, 2018).

The overall effect has been to undermine the power of formal workers, since precarity and casual work make it increasingly difficult to organise, and because the "efforts to increase participation in the global economy are accompanied by reduced protection for workers" (Blanton & Peksen, 2016, n.p.). The situation has worsened since the 2008 crash, with some arguing that:

With the global economic growth this year at its slowest pace since the financial crisis of 2007-08, capitalist countries across the world are scrambling to protect the wealth of big corporations by shifting the burden on to the working class.

On the one hand, massive financial concessions have been doled out to capitalists, while on the other, workers' wages and benefits have been cut. Increasing

contractualization and mass retrenchments, cutting down of social security through

austerity policies etc, are ubiquitously deployed around the world to extract more

from the working class. (Kulkarni, 2019, n.p.)

How neoliberalism came to dominate, and continues to do so despite growing opposition, is debated; and an extensive discussion here is not appropriate. However, many writers point to the use of financialization, which expands the impact of financial markets, financial institutions and financial elites on economic policy and economic outcomes (Harvey, 2005; Palley, 2005); and some point to the tendency of capitalism to 'manage' and manipulate inherent crises, including the 2008/2009 crash, to further entrench itself (Klein, n.d). However, what is also clear is the role played by the major global financial institutions such as the World Bank, IMF and WTO, inter alia through so-called Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). SAPs are enforced by the IMF on countries who are unable to service their debt. They come with a string of requirements (fiscal restraint, market liberalisation, privatisation, etc.) that effectively ensure that neoliberal policies are put into place in these countries. Although South Africa has never been subjected to a structural adjustment programme, a number of writers argue that it has embraced such policies of its own volition (Harvey, 2005; Herbst, 1990; Van Heerden, 2017).

At the point of transition to democracy in 1994, displacement, marginalisation, inadequate housing, deprivation of tenure and resources, and limited access to socio-economic opportunities were the realities for many South Africans. The objective of the ANC was to change the social alienation, injustice and inequality which had resulted from apartheid; and its plan for doing so was contained in its election manifesto, the RDP.

With the ANC's election to power, the RDP became official policy to meet basic needs and build the economy. The RDP promised land redistribution, houses, water and sanitation for the poor. It was also overtly aimed at providing jobs, as discussed above. South African History Online (2014) claims that while the RDP was successful in providing a welfare system with social security, it did not deliver in terms of the economic growth promised; and within two years, it was 'replaced' (according to many commentators) by a new macroeconomic policy, GEAR.

A number of commentators have argued that this was part of the process through which South Africa adopted neoliberalism. Van Heerden (2017) asserts that GEAR shares similar characteristics with SAPs. This has included liberalisation of trade in order to compete with

global industry. Kingsnorth (2003) claims that the introduction of GEAR in 1996 meant that many of the RDP policies had to be stalled; instead, privatisation and market mechanism were implemented. As a result, "Up to 10 million people have had their electricity cut off; 10 million have had their water cut off, 2 million have been evicted for non-payment of rent" (p. 26), and by 2016 fair, inclusive and integrated cities had not been achieved (SACN, 2016). The introduction of GEAR was overtly about growing the economy and thus growing jobs. GEAR promised 6% economic growth by year 2000, which would bring 400 000 jobs yearly. However, the opposite result was experienced. Annual job losses after the implementation of GEAR were from 1-4 % yearly, amidst an increase in labour productivity (Bond, 2004).

Since then, as already discussed, a number of new policies and plans have been put in place, each promising economic growth (as a result of neoliberal measures), and thus job creation. However, as COSATU continues to highlight, current economic policies have in fact resulted in job losses:

> It is alarming to see both the primary sector, like mainly agriculture, and the all-important productive-manufacturing industries that make up the secondary sector, all haemorrhaging jobs at such an alarming rate (Pamla, 2018, n.p.)

In the recent past, there has been a constant stream of news reports of retrenchments and job losses. For example, in October 2019 it was reported that the construction sector faced the retrenchment of 3 584 jobs (Mthethwa, 2019a); whilst in November 2019, it was reported that the South African Post Office would be cutting "several hundred jobs", whilst SAA would axe 944 (Bloomberg, 2019, n.p.). South Africa has thus shown a similar trend to the global phenomenon of an increasingly precarious workforce.

Given the social, economic and environmental effects, the neoliberalising process within South Africa has thus been subjected to constant critique and resistance. Writers argue that the neoliberal system has not fulfilled its promises to the working class, but has rather served to benefit the economic elite. According to the World Bank, South Africa is now the most unequal country on earth (Scott, 2019).

This is in keeping with the analysis of how neoliberalism creates inequality. Harvey (2007) argues that while neoliberalism has failed to be a vehicle for economic growth, its hegemonic nature has ensured that wealth is transferred from the working class to the dominant so that it benefits a few. In what he calls 'accumulation by dispossession', Harvey shows how the dominant class accumulates resources by plundering what belongs to the poor for the benefit

of the elite. This includes eroding the rights that poor working-class people had previously. In a neoliberal capitalist system, wealth and income is redistributed to the elite rather than generating new income. The rich become richer (Harvey, 2015).

One of the gross injustices that was/is evident in South Africa and in other parts of the world is the forced removals of people and land enclosures (CIPSET, 2018; Fairlie, 2009; Jacobs, Lahiff, & Hall, 2003). In this process large numbers of people were forced to leave their rural land to move to cities. One of the reasons for this was/is to create a workforce that would be unable to sustain their daily needs except by working for someone else (Treat et al., 2012). The current global system has such negative social effects that are seen in the form of poverty, inequality and unemployment. Kingsnorth (2003) maintains that the intention was to make us believe that this economic system will fit every country, and that its adoption will ensure development and economic prosperity for all (Youngman, 2000). This, however, has only increased inequality between rich and poor and created social and environmental instability (Bond, 2004, 2006; CIPSET, 2018). One of the sectors hit hardest by the adoption of neoliberal ideas was the South African clothing and textiles sector, which had to face massive retrenchment, casualization of labour and closure of companies who were unable to compete with the cheap imported goods from the global competitors. This was also seen in the privatisation of state assets (Bond, 2003; Herbst, 1990).

The move from the RDP to GEAR was also a blow to equitable land reform and dealing with poverty and unemployment. The shift meant a focus from a 'growth through redistribution' to a market-led neoliberal programme which fostered 'redistribution through growth' (Karriem & Hoskins, 2016). This shows an evolution of capitalism (Harvey, 2007) which has failed to generate growth but simply plunders resources from the poor for the benefit of the rich. In response to the State of the Nation address (SONA) by the new president in 2018, the South African Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU) attacked both the 'misnamed' Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy of 1996 and the National Development Plan. SAFTU lamented the loss of jobs in the manufacturing industry, poverty, inequality and youth leaving school with no academic qualifications, stating that:

> These free-market, pro-business policies led to the exact opposite of what they promised – slower growth, less employment and redistribution from the poor to the rich. It has disastrous consequences in every of area of the life of the majority. (Vavi, 2018, 'Neoliberalism')

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It is also disturbing to note how 'naturalised' (Harvey, 2007) we are to this social order, so that we unquestioningly accept these concepts/ideas because they have become part of our thinking and impact on all parts of our daily life including health provision, welfare and education.

2.7.2 Neoliberalism, education, and Human Capital Theory

There is now a very large body of work showing how neoliberalism has profoundly influenced education globally, and in South Africa. To some extent, this reflects neoliberal policies on fiscal restraint, which have resulted in a process of privatisation of education (Fanelli & Evans, 2015). However, it also reflects the influence Human Capital Theory (HCT), developed primarily by William Theodore Schultz (1961).

Schultz argued that the difference in earnings between different people could be explained by the differences in their knowledge and skills level. This is because the more education and training someone has (of the right kind), the greater their productivity, and therefore their value to the employer, who is thus prepared to pay more. Hence, education and training should be seen as an investment, not just for the individual (who will earn more, thereby offsetting the cost of potential earnings lost because of studying rather than working), but also for the country. Hence, Schultz recommended that 'underdeveloped' countries invest in education and training as way to enhance economic growth. He believed that in such countries, as long as "the labor that is available is lacking both in skills and knowledge . . . the rate of growth will be seriously limited" (1961, p. 16). Indeed, it was the acquisition of knowledge and skills that have economic value (together with investment in health) that "predominantly account for the productive superiority of the technically advanced countries" (p. 3), and explained the relatively rapid recovery of countries whose physical capital was destroyed in the Second World War.

Schultz warned that expenditure on education is not always and necessarily an investment, since "much education is cultural and in that sense is consumption" (p. 15). Thus, if expenditure on education does not yield increased earnings, then the expenditure is consumption, not investment. Schultz argued that on-the-job training, formally organized education, and adult education such as agricultural extension, were all educational activities that developed capabilities, and were thus investment. However, since some education was acquired by those who are not or will not be income-earners (such as women), in calculating returns on investment governments would need to distinguish between education in the

general population as opposed to education in the labour force. Schultz also warned that unemployment caused human capital to deteriorate.

The wide acceptance of HCT currently can be seen in the assumption that education and training (of a particular kind) are prerequisites for economic growth and solving the issue of unemployment. Education is considered important and relevant since it will potentially create necessary knowledge and skills for people to be employed as workers who will then be productive and therefore earn a higher salary and pay higher taxes (thus repaying the investment in education by both the individual and the state). This argument underpins the education-skills-jobs discourse. However, as Schultz (1961) argued, on-the-job training is also an important investment in human capital – an argument which is increasingly evident in South Africa's policy regarding the NEETs, echoing a global discourse. As we have seen, Wolf (2011) highlights the importance of skills taught at work. Despite the growing value of formal qualifications, mid-adult job flexibility and earnings are strongly affected by work experience and success, and labour market research has consistently highlighted the importance of employment history in explaining earnings - experienced workers earn more because they are more skilled and therefore command a premium. Within HCT, and the education-skills-jobs discourse, human beings themselves are regarded as a form of capital (Baatjes, Baduza, & Sibiya, 2014; Schultz, 1961; Tan, 2014). Indeed, some argue that treating human beings as capital has been the norm since the beginning of capitalism (CIPSET, 2018). Schultz (1961) himself was aware of the negative connotations of considering human beings as capital, and the general resistance to the idea as a result – part of his argument was precisely that such resistance needed to be overcome because of the benefits of understanding people as capital.

Tikly (2013) argues that HCT has informed several education and training policies of national governments and major international institutions, namely, the World Bank, IMF and International Labour Organization (ILO). The interests of these organisations are in the role of vocational education and training in particular in supplying human capital for economic growth.

The influence of HCT in the conceptualisation of 'NEET' is also evident. The concept emerged in the late 1980s, alongside the growth of New Public Management (NPM), itself part of the global neoliberal wave (Kraak, 2013). Furthermore Serracant (2014) and Hutchinson, Beck, and Hooley (2016) argue that the NEET concept replaced that of youth

unemployment at the point when the rights of 16 to 18-year-olds in the United Kingdom to unemployment benefits were repealed in 1988. The NEETs were deemed to be not making an effort to improve their human capital. Various initiatives were then employed to prevent and manage NEETs (Hutchinson et al., 2016).

The influence of neoliberal ideas about education (including HCT) is clearly evident in South Africa, simply in the assertion that educational and training provision should be linked to the demands of the economy. Indeed, as Balwanz and Hlatshwayo (2015) argue, post-schooling education and training as well as education in general have been defined in terms of the extent to which education and skills development are expected to deliver economic growth and job creation since the transition to democracy in the early 1990s. The Draft National Youth Policy, published in 2020, specifically uses the term 'human capital' in its argument for interventions that will see young people playing a critical role in improving the country's economy:

> It takes into cognisance the realities that the country's economy faces, mainly sluggish growth and indeed the challenges of Africa and the rest of the developing world, and identifies the potential human capital inherent in young people as an untapped potential that should be harnessed and employed for the benefit of the whole society. (RSA, 2020, p. 4)

Neoliberal ideas are fostered by research and advocacy institutions like CDE, which critiques the South African state for its handling of youth unemployment, whilst advocating for increasingly neoliberal remedies. These institutions argue that the labour market must be more flexible; more skills for the market are needed; and that education is failing to provide young people with the necessary skills for formal employment and self-employment.

Within a very short period of time after 1994, over thirty education policy initiatives were adopted (Hay & Monnapula-Mapesela, 2009), which fundamentally restructured education at a macro level. The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act (Act 58 of 1995) was the first piece of legislation on education to be passed post-1994 (Pretorius, 2007). This Act was responsible for creating SAQA, implementing the NQF and setting up the National Standards Bodies. The Ministries of Education and Labour shared responsibility for the development of the NQF as the first *White Paper on Education and Training* had interrelated education, training and jobs.

DHET (2019b) notes that prior to 1994, the education system was fractured and marked by unequal provisioning along racial lines. The NQF was developed in 1996, providing a framework for performance comparisons and distinction across the subsectors of PSET. The aim of the NQF was to encourage both versatility within the PSET process as well as progression. *The Higher Education Act* created the Council for Higher Education (CHE), and the *Skills Development Act* (Act No. 97 of 1998) established both Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and the National Skills Authority (NSA). The higher education system was streamlined between 2003 and 2005. Universities were differentiated into research universities, universities of technology, and comprehensive universities in the new system. The Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA) was developed in 2006 to support the policy priorities and goals set out in the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA) (discussed above). A major outcome of these initiatives was to emphasize the training needs of artisans. *The Further Education and Training Colleges Act* (Act No. 16 of 2006) was passed in 2006, which restructured the TVET College sector. In 2009, the Department of Education (DoE) was split into DHET and the Department of Basic Education (DBE), with DHET subsuming responsibilities formerly held by the Department of Labour, including the incorporation of the *Skills Development Act* and SAQA and SETAs oversight (DHET, 2019).

Policies and interventions have included an emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects; but also on facilitating youth getting the necessary skills through workplace experience. Policy documents make frequent reference, inter alia, to the Wolff report. Overall, there has been a growing emphasis on vocational education for formal employment, but also to allow youth to become entrepreneurs, as an article in the Daily Sun argues: "Youth need to learn vocations such as welding, plumbing, driving, carpentry, electronics, programming, tiling, panel beating, cooking, designing, farming, painting and sewing" (Monama, 2018, n.p.). As already discussed above, the government has emphasised the need to expand the TVET College system, and the system has undergone a long-term process of restructuring and intervention. However, recently, proposals have been made to introduce a technical vocational or occupational stream within the schooling system. This would entail a school-leaving certificate at Grade 9. The argument is that introducing a General Education Certificate would provide a formally recognised qualification for the 300 000 pupils who drop of school between Grades 10 and 12; and would allow such pupils to continue their education at a TVET college, or at repurposed schools of specialisation in

technical vocational or occupational subjects (such as automotive engineering, aviation, engineering, mathematics and science) (Mthethwa, 2019b).

Government discourse (and World Bank advisors) clearly favours vocational over academic access in terms of expanded opportunities for entry into PSET institutions. The announcement of free education in public universities by the then President, Jacob Zuma, as part of the demands of the *Fees Must Fall* movement, was thus not met with optimism and enthusiasm, despite the fact that it would allow higher enrolment in universities. The World Bank warned that, "extending such support to too large a pool of students will diminish the public resources available to admit more students into PSET" (DHET, 2019, p. 12), clearly indicating that 'PSET' has come to be seen as the TVET and CET system. The recent World Bank report on the new funding proposals (World Bank, 2019) has again highlighted the fiscal constraints that operate, even concluding that this scheme would not be fiscally sustainable and may reduce the budgetary resources critically needed to improve the quality of education, particularly in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges (World Bank, 2019).

As discussed above, Community Education and Training Colleges (CETCs) have been created as another organisational form within the PSET structure, aimed primarily at young people and adults who have not completed their education or who have not attended school and are therefore not eligible to study at colleges and universities (DHET, 2019). The CET sector is now seen as the main mechanism for dealing with the NEET 'problem'. As discussed, DHET acknowledges that this sector should not only provide the knowledge and skills needed by the economy, but also those that will help NEETs become citizens who can function effectively, creatively and ethically as part of a democratic society, understand their social environment and be fully involved in their economic, social and cultural life. CET colleges are also considered to be in the best position to provide self-employment skills. The aim of CET, according to the *White Paper*, is to promote a life-long learning process in communities by facilitating skills development (including literacy, numeracy and vocational skills) to improve personal, social, family and work experiences (DHET, 2013). As I discuss below, the CET sector is being positioned to deal with the potential social 'threat' posed by the NEETs to the existing economic and political structure.

2.8 Problems with the skills discourse

As discussed above, the dominant linear discourse claims that education and training (of the right kind) will lead to (appropriate, necessary) skills which will lead to productive jobs and hence to economic growth. This will create more jobs, which will allow people to move out of poverty and inequality (CIPSET, 2018). As argued above, this discourse is now pervasive. A recent article in the *Daily Maverick* asserted that "Reskilling must form a significant part of getting the 27.6% unemployed to work and prepare the youth for future jobs" (Mabasa, 2019, n.p.).

Many writers and commentators dispute this claim. A key component of the argument against the claim relates to the issue of the evident scarcity of existing jobs – i.e. there are simply not enough jobs to absorb unemployed youth, whatever their skills. However, two very different understandings of why this is the case are evident.

Whilst acknowledging the long-term effects of apartheid, and global economic effects, CDE, for example, asserts that government policy is largely to blame for the 'crisis' of youth unemployment, inter alia because it has not sufficiently adopted neoliberal policies, and has thus not realised the economic growth necessary:

> Slow growth, a variety of malign effects of apartheid, and the structural characteristics of the South African economy have meant that the labour market has failed to create enough jobs to absorb entrants since the late 1970s. Part of the problem relates to government policy decisions, which have led to increased costs and risks for firms and investors. This in turn has led to slower economic growth, which inevitably means reduced employment creation. But there are other challenges, too:
>
> - South Africa's economy has become increasingly capital intensive over the past decade. Part of this is inevitable – as technology advances and productivity rises, fewer workers are needed to produce the same amount of goods. But the process has been accelerated by the low skills of the workforce, the relatively high cost of unskilled labour, and the incentives offered by government to firms seeking to modernise their production processes.
>
> - The position of young, inexperienced workers is made especially precarious by the fact that minimum wages are not much lower than the wages paid to the typical worker in an industry. This means that firms have no incentive to risk

employing someone who has no experience. Why do so, when an experienced

workers costs about the same amount? (CDE, 2019c, p. 2)

CDE thus argues that the South African state has failed "to adopt policies that respond to the extent and severity of the crisis and to stop actions and policies that actively harm employment and growth" (CDE, 2017, n.p.). CDE agree that there is a shortage of job-relevant skills and proposes that the education system be improved to deliver these. In the meantime, "Young people need to be able to offer their labour at a discount to compete" (Ibid.), and thus a national minimum wage should be rejected. They argue that "profit-seeking firms are the most efficient vehicle for delivering millions of jobs" (2019b, n.p.), and therefore mechanisms prevent firms for providing jobs (including minimum wages that are too high) should be removed. Ultimately, "To reduce youth unemployment, South Africa needs accelerated inclusive growth that is urban-led, private sector driven, enabled by a smart state that understands markets" (CDE, 2019c, p. 4). CDE further proposes more private educational institutions be created to ensure quality education (Van der Berg & Van Broekhuizen, 2012).

The contrasting view on why there are too few jobs, and unlikely to be many more created, argues that unemployment is primarily structural – i.e. it is a function of the neoliberal capitalist economy. Full employment has never been realised in any capitalist system in any place in the world because of structural conditions (Motala, 2009). Thus, while education can increase employability, it does not guarantee full employability (Vally & Motala, 2014).

Even with higher levels of education, unemployment is a growing global problem, showing that HCT rests on a flawed assumption. While governments like that of the United Kingdom still encourage higher education leaners to see education as an investment that will ultimately translate into labour market benefits, this will only be true for some (Tomlinson, 2008). This is also the case in South Africa – although youth seem to prefer university-based education to vocational education, university education does not always translate into better job opportunities (Baatjes et al., 2014). Whilst, as Majova (2018) claims, black graduates are faced with higher unemployment compared to their white counterparts, to the extent of working without remuneration (including in internships created to provide job experience), graduate unemployment is on the rise even according to official statistics (Stats SA, 2019).

Unemployment is, fundamentally, not a labour supply problem, but a capitalist structural problem (Klees, 2014; Treat et al., 2012; Vally & Motala, 2014). When presented as a labour

supply problem, the blame for unemployment is placed on the education system or the individual (Motala & Vally, 2014a; Vally & Motala, 2014), leaving it up to the education system to supply skilled people for the labour market (and making the purpose of education as only that of supplying a skilled workforce for the formal economy) (Motala, 2009), and/or expecting individual people to be responsible for making themselves employable (Maluleke & Harley, 2016). Youth are made to feel that the reasons for being unemployed are their own deficiencies, laziness, lack of experience and inabilities, amongst others. The National Treasury takes this blaming even further:

> The unemployed do not acquire the skills or experience needed to drive the economy forward, which in turn inhibits the country's economic development and imposes a larger burden on the state to provide social assistance. (National Treasury, 2011, p. 9)

The new Draft National Youth Policy, while maintaining that "most of these young people are discouraged with the labour market", also claims that "they are also not building on their skills base through education and training" (RSA, 2020, p. 16). In this line of argument, NEETs are responsible not only for their own unemployment, but also for the lack of growth of the economy, not developing their skills and the inability of the government to spend money on other priorities. Youth are increasingly written off – the draft youth policy says that "According to Statistics SA, the majority of South Africa's youth fall within one of three categories: uneducated, unemployed, and unemployable" (RSA, 2020, p. 6).

This leads to another key concern with the skills discourse, as well as with the concept of NEET itself - that it tends to assume formal employment as the basis of understanding unemployment. Generally, a definition given for people who are unemployed is those who have not had work for the last seven days at least, even though they are actively looking for a job. There are also those who are described as discouraged job seekers who would accept a suitable job if offered but have given up actively looking for work (Elder, 2015; Fields, 2000). Avis (2014) notes that the way unemployment and employment are talked about is largely in relation to the formal economy; which fosters capitalist class relations where people are only regarded as employed if they have a job, working for someone. Education and training are also seen in formal terms. Eurofound (2012) thus asserts that NEETs are characterized by those young people who are "not accumulating human capital through formal channels" (p. 2).

There is additionally a problem with the assumption that if someone is not in formal employment or education and training, they are not doing anything useful, and are a potential social threat (Avis, 2014; DHET, 2012; National Planning Commission (NPC), 2012; National Treasury, 2011). Speaking in Johannesburg in 2017 to leaders in business, government, civil society and the media, CDE executive director, Ann Bernstein, said, "Nearly 40% of young people (15-34 year olds) are *doing nothing and going nowhere*, they are not employed, not in training, not in education" (CDE, 2017, n.p.).

This narrow view of what counts as work - that which constitutes formally paid wage labour – is a result of the emphasis on accumulation, excessive consumerism and commodification of everything by capitalism (CIPSET, 2018; Vally & Motala, 2017). Anything (anyone) outside of the formal economic system are seen as in some way deficient. For example, the United Nations (UN) Statement on Poverty, signed in June 1998, defines poverty as:

> Fundamentally, poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation" (UN Statement, June 1998 – signed by the heads of all UN agencies). (Gordon, 2005, p. 3)

Whilst this was a real attempt to understand poverty and its impacts in a broader sense, its real effect is to assume that poor people are powerless, insecure or susceptible to violence and other forces. This denotes that they are without agency, and I do not believe it is necessarily true.

Munck (2013) and Avis (2014) also construct an argument that although the dominant discourse suggests an emphasis on wanting to integrate the unemployed or underemployed into the formal, waged, economy for the purposes of economic growth, in fact the real purpose is one of social control. Munck shows how the dominant discourse about the 'dangerous class' (i.e. the precariat) echoes that of 'social exclusion' that emerged in Europe during the 1980s, which "focused on the need for social order and moral integration" (p.

750). Avis (2014) points out that neoliberal capital has now so successfully reached into even private realms, that surplus value is extracted even when people are not employed. The NEET discourse, he argues, really rests on the issue of potential disruption to the neoliberal capitalist system, rather than the need for waged labour:

> The point is that even those without waged labour contribute towards the production of surplus value and, in addition may not be required to labour directly for capital, being part of a surplus force. In this instance, the concern with NEET is more about social control than directly addressing the labour requirements of capital. (Avis, 2014, p. 69)

This kind of argument goes some way towards explaining why, despite the government's emphasis on the PSET system over decades, the system remains problematic. It also explains the growing emphasis on the CET system to provide not just skills for the marketplace, but also skills for self-employment, and the skills necessary for active participation as a democratic citizen. Similarly, it could be argued that the various interventions by the state to provide job experience through the initiatives discussed above, are not in fact likely to make any profound difference in terms of formal youth employment.

Some writers, for example, have claimed that the Youth Wage Subsidy (YWS) will not make a considerable difference to the unemployment problem (Treat et al., 2012) and young people will simply be 'churned' between short-term jobs (Reddy, 2014), rather than any new meaningful jobs being created. Reddy (2014) and Treat et al. (2012) further argue that the YWS furthers the tendencies of the South Africa labour market to prefer casual labour and potentially encourages employers to swap older employees for younger ones, thus causing a divide between workers.

What is clear is that the skills discourse (resting as it does on HCT and neoliberal assumptions) has had a profound effect on what is considered to be appropriate, relevant, quality education and training. In terms of the HCT argument, education is only considered valuable when it can yield economically by increasing earnings and productivity; both of which ultimately serves the interests of capital. People are expected to invest in education only if it brings productivity or economic value. Education for other purposes – personal interest, joy of learning, exploration, citizenship – is undervalued, and therefore frequently underfunded. The goal of education in a context of a global crisis of unemployment is to train people for the limited jobs available.

Motala and Vally (2014b) argue that the skills discourse also uncritically perpetuates the view that the working class and their families are incapable of thinking and learning beyond the workplace; and incapable of doing work that is abstract, involving thinking, and must thus be confined to practical manual work (Motala & Vally, 2014a, 2014b). They also assert that the skills discourse places the emphasis on knowledge as an individual attribute, as opposed to valuing the collective knowledge that has been important for centuries.

In addition, the skills discourse suggests that as long as people invest in appropriate, relevant education and training for the market, they will receive an appropriate return on their investment. This ignores the multiple ways in which, as Robeyns (2006) argues, the rate of return on education is not the same for everyone, despite Schultz's claim – women consistently earn less than men, even with the same level of education; black graduates consistently find it harder to get a job than white graduates.

Given the critique of the skills discourse as presented above, and the continuing context of unemployment, inequality and poverty, there is a growing emphasis on the need for a new and different PSET system (CIPSET, 2018; Treat et al., 2012).

2.9 The need for a different kind of Post-School Education and Training

Many writers (Baatjes et al., 2018; CIPSET, 2018) argue for an education that can ensure that all employed and unemployed people are informed and given opportunities and skills that are valuable and useful to them so that all can experience a better future. They argued that knowledge is needed for reasons broader than economic ones. These include but are not limited to building citizenry, conscientising people about their rights and responsibilities, for basic rights like literacy and numeracy, and accessing services and public goods, ensuring democratic accountability and making informed decisions for themselves and the society.

Unlike the linear discourse that emphasises formal education and training for the market, there is a need to look at the creativity of young people, rather than viewing them as a potential threat; and a need to look at post-schooling education and training which will be useful for their lives outside of formal employment. Some recent studies have focused on this, which are directly relevant to my study. Two research centres have been pivotal in this work: The University of Johannesburg's Centre for Education Rights and Transformation (CERT, 2006); and the Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training (CIPSET, 2018) at the Nelson Mandela University. However, other institutions doing community or PSET research, as well as individuals, like Maluleke (2013) discussed below, have also

produced relevant work. Many of these initiatives have been supported by the Education Policy Consortium (EPC) (of which the centres above are members).

On 29th November 2012, CERT hosted a workshop attended by about 100 community activists, researchers, professionals and union representatives in Johannesburg. The focus of the workshop was "Employment, education, skills and training", specifically focusing on young people. The discussions were summarised in a booklet published in the same year, titled *Youth unemployment: Understanding causes and finding solutions*. Discussions highlighted the need for critical thinking about the difference between creating formal employment on one hand, and the many ways that people's needs can be supported in order for them to have livelihoods and make a living on the other (Treat et al., 2012).

The discussions were also on what it means to be 'unemployed'; causes of unemployment; the 'crisis' of education and the shortage of skills. A key focus was thus on how we should understand the relationship between education, skills development and employment:

> The importance of understanding this difference very clearly is that it can significantly affect how government uses its resources to help people, by creating opportunities for them to live better lives. Often, the assumption is made that 'jobs' are the obvious, correct answer to the problem of livelihoods, and that government should set its policies and direct its support to encourage businesses to hire more people. It might make sense to approach the challenge this way in some cases, but each case must be evaluated on its own, and we should not overlook other options that may create more or better opportunities for people and communities, and that may be more effective at helping us build the kind of world most of us want. (Treat et al., 2012, p. 10)

People at the workshop argued that many people living in informal settlements, townships and towns show continuous resilience, creativity and commitment. They already have valuable life skills that should be acknowledged in government policy discussions, and actively promoted and drawn on. They gave as examples of these valuable skills that people possess: childcare; skills for building things that are needed by communities such as houses, shops and other various things; homecare skills such as cleaning and cooking; taking care of the sick; making music; telling stories; and a range of other skills. Workshop attendees commented that people often provide these skills and services as part of 'informal arrangements'/ exchanges which do not always involve money (Treat et.al., 2012).

The CERT workshop, while it recognised that SKA are important, argued that which SKA are necessary relies on a prior decision on the kind of society and world we want to build. People spoke about case studies of those living in cities, informal settlements and townships, showing determination to make their lives meaningful by addressing local needs in meaningful way. These case studies suggested that having a formal qualification may not reflect the abilities of a person to function effectively in a specific role; particularly because people need a wide variety of skills in life. Instead of focussing on the skills needed by the marketplace, the government should help people build all of these skills necessary for life. These would include:

- Skills to earn a livelihood, if they are able to do so, whether through self-employment, co-operation with others, formal employment, or through knowing how to access social services they need during times when they are unable to earn a living themselves;
- Skills to find information they need in order to make important decisions – about their education, about their careers, and about their future;
- Skills to protect and improve their health and well-being, and to obtain the support they need from others – including from the government – that can help them protect and improve their health and well-being;
- Skills to resolve disagreements with members of their family, with their neighbours, or with colleagues;
- Skills to participate in democratic political processes – in their schools, workplaces and communities, and as stakeholders in society more generally. (Treat et al., 2012, pp. 15-16)

Workshop participants argued that the government should rather support and expand collective actions and programmes already existing in communities, so that people are empowered according to their needs, than focus on the creation of formal jobs (Treat et al., 2012).

Some years after the CERT workshop, members of the EPC conducted research with people from rural and urban working class communities of South Africa to find out what people think about the education offered to those who had either finished their schooling or had not had a chance to finish their schooling, and how it could be improved. The research was published in 2018, as *Learning for Living: Towards a New Vision for Post-School Learning*

in South Africa (Baatjes et al., 2018). The book reflects the voices of working class and rural people who seek to have education or leaning that will make sense to their daily lives (Baatjes et al., 2018). The research found that, far from 'doing nothing', people are actively engaged in trying to make a good life (to meet daily needs, but also be fulfilled human beings) for themselves and their families, amid the many difficulties and issues they face.

It was evident that people are critical of the current PSET system which does not help people to improve their lives. People indicated that they want a different kind of PSET which will help them create better lives of dignity and shared unity. When asked how they learned the SKA they have, learning by doing seemed to be a key feature of people's informal learning, and they favoured this way of learning in the future. They also value learning that is 'co-constructed' by the people involved in learning so that it responds to their felt needs - i.e. is based on human-centred values. They want a situated learning which is not distant from their daily lives and realities; and learning that is in their home language. Education should be dignifying, acknowledging existing skills and abilities, yet challenge learners to learn new things. Learning in communities with peers and in flexible settings is also valued.

Overall, people want to learn and experience practical skills that would allow them to meet their daily needs; new knowledge, skills and experiences, including indigenous knowledge, to extend them; values to build character. They want PSET that will allow them to become involved in extracurricular activities that build the community; that includes activities that allow for self-expression and joy; and that will develop and nurture talent. They also expressed interest in political education. This suggests a very different PSET from the 'skills for the marketplace' PSET system currently being constructed; however, people did also express a desire for formal education that is accredited, and work experience in order to enter the job market (Baatjes et al., 2018).

CIPSET (2018) recently published a booklet which focuses on how vocational education and community education relate, drawing to some extent on the EPC research. The CIPSET booklet examines the general understanding of vocational and community education and then advocates for alternatives ideas and understandings, and presents examples of these. The argument is for a reconceptualization of the TVET system, including the TVET colleges, whose main purpose, according the *White Paper,* "is to train young school leavers, providing them with the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for employment in the labour market." (DHET, 2013, p. 11). CIPSET (2018) argues that the current economic context

(neoliberal capitalism) means that people may not find a job even if they acquire the "right" skills from TVET colleges. CIPSET also argues that the modern workplace does not allow the worker to understand him or herself as a subject rather than an object, as a being with agency – and thus education and training for the workplace is not inherently a good thing. CIPSET thus recommends a reconceptualization of the system, focusing on a different understanding of the purpose of TVET.

CIPSET (2018) asserts that "students should go through an educational process and exit that process as concerned citizens - concerned citizens as in those who have a greater understanding of socio-economic and political (as in power) issues and who act for change" (p. 16). The example of the Joe Slovo West Community Project situated in the Joe Slovo Township in Port Elizabeth is shared in the booklet. The project is portrayed as an example of the broader purpose of vocational education. Content that is relevant to people' lives is as important as the way in which it is learnt. Students who participated in the project commented on having used their heads, heart and hands. They were using their thought (heads) as they built things together; and their hands as they practised the hard skills learnt (namely carpentry, welding etc.). They also used the word 'love' (heart) to explain how they felt about collaborating with other people in groups and assisting those with limited material resources. One of the participants commented that, "I learned that to volunteer means that you are human, that you have a heart for other people" (Luvuyo Nqakula as cited in CIPSET, 2018, p. 21).

For his Masters' thesis, Maluleke (2013) conducted a study with ten out-of-school youth, who were NEETs and living in Mavalani, a rural village in Limpopo Province. Maluleke adopted a critical research paradigm and used the lens of Food Sovereignty to analyse his data, because of its encouragement of participation by the community, collective ownership and action. As I discussed in Chapter One, Maluleke's study partially motivated my own study, although his focused on a deep rural context. He used participatory data collection methods namely, Community Mapping, Community Timeline, PEST Analysis and a Focus Group Discussion to engage his participants – some of which I used in my study. Through these tools, it became evident that at the time of the research there were few post-school educational opportunities in the village. Maluleke argues that any improvement in vocational education must be 'context-dependent'. People who live in communities know the problems and situations they face, and thus cannot be left out of policy development. It is imperative that they have a say in the kind of PSET that will be relevant to their needs, including in the

planning, curriculum design and teaching of the planned Community Learning Centres (CLCs).

The NEETs in Maluleke's study argued that any future VET has to respond to the village's rural context; it has to help and support people with their daily lives. However, they conceptualised this in broader terms than simply surviving. Whilst they identified hard skills, such as carpentry, plumbing and building, as useful, they also asserted that softer skills and values were important. For example, effective communication strategies were needed – when people in a community have effective communication skills, they are more likely to work together to accomplish a shared goal. The NEETs also stressed that while learning how to survive in society is important for individuals, it is also important for them to know how the other members of their communities survive. This means people must not be individualistic, but must use their abilities, knowledge and resources to help the people around them. Maluleke argues ultimately that VET needs to be improved, not to serve the formal sector better, but rather to equip people with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in their daily lives (Maluleke, 2013). Instead of teaching and training young people to be recognised by potential employers, young people need to learn to skilfully utilise local resources to sustain their lives and their families.

The research by the different institutions and individuals above reflect how people are critically thinking about alternative PSET to what exists. In terms of what young people think it would be useful for them to learn, a variety of SKA is proposed – which reflect an analysis of life as being about far more than simply day-to-day survival. Hard skills such as building, plumbing, carpentry, mechanics etc. are seen as useful; but skills such as childcare, caring for the sick, communication, as well as the skills necessary to engage actively in social and political life, are obviously highly valued. Youth also emphasise attitudes beyond the individualistic competition promoted by neoliberal capital – they argue for a more caring society, underpinned by communal values.

In terms of what the research shows on what youth believe would be the best way to learn the kind of SKA they want, whilst the formal system is not rejected, non-formal and informal ways of learning are acknowledged and encouraged. The research makes it evident that people are dissatisfied with education that is removed from their experiences, priorities and needs, and this typifies much formal education. The current PSET policy, and the skills discourse, pre-supposes formal instruction which is structured and hierarchal with formal

curricula leading to certification by institutions – and it is only this formal certification that is recognised by employers. Non-formal education, however, whilst organised, tends to be less formal, and can be developed from the 'ground up' (CIPSET, 2018). This means it is often more interactive than formal education, taking learner's needs into consideration to a greater extent. Informal learning on the other hand takes place outside these formal and non-formal learning situations and can be defined as "any activity involving the pursuit of understanding, knowledge or skill which occurs outside the curricula of educational institutions, or the courses or workshops offered by educational or social agencies" (Livingstone, 2001, p. 5). The research discussed above shows that many of the SKA that youth already possess, and which they value, was learned in this way.

The research also shows how people pursue (and value) livelihoods well beyond formal employment. The studies show that young people emphasise learning connected to their actual lives, and thus largely outside of the workplace; and learning with or connecting to others. This leads me to my conceptual framework – the concepts of 'socially useful work' and *Ubuntu*.

2.9.1 'Socially useful labour' - a different look at what we term as 'work'

As discussed above, part of the problem with the skills discourse is a narrow focus on work as formal employment, as waged labour. Capitalism has tended to promote this very narrow conception of 'work'; and, as Motala (2009, n.p.) argues, "Simply assuming that the only forms of labour are those associated with individual ends and private profit is the only possible form of work is the core of the problem societies face in capitalist systems". The assumption is problematic for a number of reasons.

Firstly, the form of work determines our social life, and "[wage labour's] effects are exploitative, oppressive and alienating both economically and psycho-socially for the majority of those engaged in the labour process globally" (Vally & Motala, 2017, p. 3). Holloway (2010) explains this using Marx's concept of the 'dual character' of labour/work. Labour, in Marx's understanding, can be expressed in two ways, either according to its 'use value' or according to its 'exchange value'. Use value relates to concrete labour which is qualitative; exchange value relates to abstract labour which is quantitative. Useful labour or 'productive activity' according to Holloway (2010) is needed in every society, although it can take different forms and is not separated from the social contexts of that society. In capitalist societies, however, products are not produced for use value, but merely as commodities for

exchange (Harvey, 2015; Holloway, 2010); work in capitalist societies largely serves the needs of the capital (Braverman, 1998).

This means that human beings are not connected to their work, since their work is only for the exchange value of their labour (Baatjes et al., 2018; Treat et al., 2012); they do not care what they produce, or how. The work that people do becomes 'alienated', dehumanising, abstract and removed from their social and cultural life (Holloway, 2010).

> Work that is not free ceases to be a fulfilling pursuit and becomes an effective means of dehumanization. Work should not be coercive, but an act of creative expression that brings happiness to humans. Each person should also share in the rewards of human accomplishments. (CIPSET, 2018, p. 7)

Secondly, by equating work with waged labour, those not formally employed are considered to be doing 'nothing'. The discourse suggests that people are only able to meet their daily needs if they are in paid formal employment; however, as is clear from the research presented above, most people can and do (and often have to) also pursue many other kinds of work than waged labour.

> Paid jobs are only part of the picture. People also work to find and keep jobs and homes; to nurture others; to build communities; to access services; and more. Migrants and refugees work to sustain transnational families and build new lives. People work to establish and transform identities, protect privileges, and resist the indignities of marginalization. They work to make changes. Children work, in the informal economy, as well as at home, in school, and in their communities. Many people have long worked in shadow economies; some have begun to create new kinds of local economies. And new technologies are producing novel forms of work that are only beginning to be understood. (Eastern Sociological Society, quoted by Vally & Motala, 2017, p. 9)

The concept of 'work' thus has to be seen in far broader terms that simply waged labour, as Airth (n.d.) suggests in his definition of work as "Anything that a person undertakes with a goal of being productive in a way that meets human needs. Work includes mental and/or physical exertion but does not always have to include an exchange of money". People work in order to satisfy their human needs – but with 'needs' seen much more broadly than simply basic, physical needs (as is evident in the research presented above). People have done this

work in order to survive within a capitalist system (particularly in a context of high unemployment); but people have also done this work because it is simply part of what we are as human beings - "Work is integral to our collective being" (Vally & Motala, 2016, pp. 24-25). This kind of work involves "those labours and responsibilities associated with reproducing life" (von Kotze, 2009, quoted in Vally and Motala, 2016, p. 25), and allows people to contribute in a meaningful way to their communities or society. In this sense, work as more than making a living but rather a way of living (Baatjes, 2018; Vally & Motala, 2017).

As the research discussed above shows, people who have been exploited by the capitalist system are not sitting back, but are finding ways to be useful, doing activities that are fulfilling, beyond simply those things that allow them to survive. Indeed, people have always thought and devised new ways of living through cooperative and social means (CIPSET, 2018; Treat et al., 2012). These activities are variously termed 'doing' (Holloway, 2010), 'making a life' (Baatjes et al., 2018; CIPSET, 2018) or 'socially useful labour' (Motala, 2009).

The concept 'socially useful labour' has been developed in work by Motala and Vally as a specific critique of current conceptions of work and the skills discourse (Motala, 2009, 2013; Motala & Vally, 2014b; Vally & Motala, 2016, 2017). They argue that both historically and currently, human beings hold different conceptions of 'work', and have always depended on co-operative forms of social labour (something which is deliberately undermined by the neoliberal emphasis on the individual) (Motala, 2009). Such 'socially useful labour' helps people contribute not just to their livelihood but to those around them; and thus warrant support:

> A wide range of activities are possible to support the lives of working class families from child care and the processes of early childhood development to care for the aged, frail and disabled. Communities can and must be supported in these endeavours since they have limited resources to do so themselves and yet continue to do these things. There are a wide range of community projects which can be supported relating to areas like primary health, the local economy, housing development, service infrastructure, land usage, recreation and cultural activities and support for schools. Indeed, there are examples of communities who support the unemployed through finding useful activities such as child care, community and school meals servicers,

and school renovation, maintenance of public spaces, etc. And these activities are undertaken collectively, leading as in the case of the Argentinean factory occupations to co-operative forms of production and distribution. There is a rich history of worker co-operatives, even in this country and these must be re-examined for their strengths and weaknesses. Simply assuming that the only forms of labour are those associated with individual ends and private profit is the only possible form work is the core of the problem societies face in capitalist systems. (Motala, 2009, n.p.)

Socially useful labour can also involve supporting people who need home/community-based health care; music and arts; building; repairs; cleaning; climate change jobs; savings clubs, and so on (Vally & Motala, 2017). This "wide diversity of work . . . takes place in the interstices of capitalist production even though it is often wracked by contradictory forms" (Vally & Motala, 2016, p. 24).

As Vally and Motala point out, whilst such unwaged work has always occurred, because of high levels of structural unemployment people are increasingly being forced to look at alternative ways, to practice "livelihoods at the margins" (2016, p. 25). They argue that some of the things people do are simply a reaction to being excluded from the formal economy, for example through unemployment (2016); and thus not all of these forms of work fall outside of capitalist relations; rather,

> some forms of work are direct extensions to capitalist production reproducing it in various ways. Many are simply responses in desperation without any conception of an alternative, i.e. forms of work based on the necessary labour to survive the framework of existing relations. (2017, p. 9)

Other forms of work are contradictory, allowing for the possibility of being used to extend capitalist relations. However, some of the socially useful labour people are currently engaged in is a conscious attempt to create something different from what exists:

> The question we have to ask is about how we conceptualize the difference between the forms of work that, on the one hand, are largely responses to the crisis of personal and community lives – subsistence and sub-subsistence and other forms of work – from the potentially more direct challenges responding to the alienating characteristics of capitalist production. (Vally & Motala, 2017, p. 3).

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This kind of work

> could include activities which range from individual to collective responses to the failure of the market in producing useful forms of employment, through the formation of common wealth trusts, production, consumption and distribution cooperatives, solidaristic economies, climate change jobs not subject to 'greenwashing', occupied factories and communes amongst other forms of socio-economic and livelihood organisation". (Vally & Motala, 2016, pp. 25-26)

They argue that there are hundreds, if not thousands, of such small, independent, self-sustaining initiatives (Vally & Motala, 2016). Such activities represent new forms of collaborative, socially useful work (Motala, 2014). Vally and Motala (2016, 2017) also stress that the alternatives can create something new only if they operate outside of exchange values - otherwise they will still be alienating and exploitive (even if only self-exploitative). They must thus rest on the prior question of what kind of society/social system we actually want, rather than on an attempt to incorporate people better into the (neoliberal capitalist) one we have. They must be based on the understanding that the current way of living is not sustainable and that there needs to be a new conception of work that will meet the socio-economic demands of family and communities.

All such "alternatives to the dominant capitalist modes of economic organization based on alienating and exploitative social relationships and unequal power" (Vally & Motala, 2016, p. 26) have a number of identifiable general characteristics (as well as specific characteristics):

1. They are small, 'independent', generally self-generated or local initiatives which have little or no external support;

2. They often involve households and communities developing autonomous (and sometimes solidaristic) economies;

3. They are thus directly beneficial;

4. They are collective, autonomous, and involve high levels of participation;

5. They are likely to be drive by women, given the concentration of men in formal jobs;

6. They are also often fragile, embryonic, and can fail. Many never move beyond the conception stage. "Their sustainability is the critical issue" (Vally & Motala, 2016, p. 26);

7. They are generally not really engaging with the issue of the relationship between education and work – i.e. theorizing this; and are on the whole not being supported by traditional intellectuals in this work (Motala, 2014; Vally & Motala, 2016).

It is evident that in South Africa, a few of these initiatives also engage the state in the quest for just and sustainable forms of social organisation (Motala, 2009; Vally & Motala, 2016). Motala & Vally (2014b) argue that much of this socially useful work should be fostered and supported by the state, which should provide the kind of education and training necessary to support them.

They argue that the alternative initiatives "are yet to develop their orientation to the practical issues of relating education to work more fully", and that "theorising the role of education is as yet somewhat rudimentary" (2016, p. 26). However, what is clear is that rethinking what we mean by work requires us to simultaneously rethink "what kind of knowledge and skills best serves humanity?" (Motala, 2009, n.p.). The skills that people are using for doing 'socially useful' work are often not learnt in formal training or institutions. Many of them are learned on the job or informally (CIPSET, 2018). As I have argued above, people value learning from peers, in flexible spaces where they can use their indigenous knowledge. This necessitates that one thinks critically about how education can respond to the NEETs' personal, social and economic challenges so that they can participate in socially useful labour, to allow them to learn the necessary useful skills. As discussed above, Higher Education Minister Blade Nzimande has argued that PSET should focus on catering for the 3.4 million youth who are NEETs. Motala (2013) warns that PSET should be examined critically, given the kind of society we have and the dominant and hegemonic power relations. It is imperative that the implications of these alternatives for the education and training system be looked in a realistic and critical way.

To this end, place emphasis on linking alternative activities to learning; understanding the framework of agency and power; deepening our understanding of work and how it has evolved; examining our use of concepts like progressive education, lifelong learning in relation to alternatives and the relationship between production and nature. This is corroborated by Vally & Motala (2017) who argue that "it is necessary to examine the form, content, methodologies, and praxis related to the idea of socially useful work as intrinsic to the relationship between education and training, work and society" (2017, p. 19).

Vally & Motala (2016) argue that what we need is a much broader view of the role of education; education should foster citizenship and social justice while playing a role in helping develop useful livelihoods and the production of goods and services that will relate to productive, useful work. CIPSET (2018) also stresses the importance of education in developing people to be concerned citizens who will be part of changing their communities for better. To do so means they must have a greater understanding of socio-economic and political issues so that they can be change agents. Thus, socially useful labour and education and learning need to be thought about together:

> Policy makers, academic analysts, social commentators and all those concerned with 'transformation' need to explore more fully the relationship between the alternative livelihood, socio-economic, citizenship-based and cultural and solidaristic activities in which especially the most marginalized sections of society are engaged *together with* the learning that takes place in the alternative activities of such communities. Such an exploration would provide a stronger theoretical, practical and organizational basis for an alternative, more robust and meaningful curriculum – not determined by the requirements of capitalist labour markets but by the requirements of a democratizing society, seeking support for the self-generative activities of such communities towards the development of a conscious and engaged citizenry (Vally & Motala, 2017, p. 17).

Vally and Motala (2016, 2017) argue that we do not have to create something entirely new – we can usefully learn from past education and learning alternatives. They give as an example the work done by Patrick Van Rensburg at Swaneng Hill in Botswana in the 1970s, as well as a university course he ran on his return to South Africa from exile in the early 1990s. Van Rensburg incorporated aspects of social justice into the curriculum, as well as tools for critical analysis of the socio-political context. He linked what was being learnt with practical skills, emphasising 'Education with Production'. Van Rensburg also initiated a development brigade in Mpumalanga in the 1990s, providing unemployed youth with skills to construct houses and renovate derelict buildings – with no support from the new democratic state. Vally and Motala argue that this kind of approach could help build socially useful alternatives in the current context.

In addition, as Motala (2009) stresses, people have always created knowledge essential for their survival in a broader sense, in contrast to the current claim that people simply need technical knowledge related to skills for the workplace:

The history of human civilisation over tens of thousands of years reinforces the idea of collective knowledge, is dependent on and has been built on the knowledge of ordinary human beings going about their daily lives and fashioning new ways of doing things, of thinking, of observation and experience, of trial and error and practical application, intelligently solving many of the vexing issues that faced humanity over the millennia. (Motala, 2009, n.p.)

As I have argued above, based on the research presented, people value learning from peers, in flexible spaces where they can use their indigenous and everyday knowledge; and such learning should allow their involvement in collective socially useful work. This speaks to the connectedness of people; a connectedness emphasised by the concept of *Ubuntu*.

2.9.2. *Ubuntu*

The skills that people are using in the examples above for being 'socially useful' are generally not learnt in formal training or institutions. Many are learnt informally (CIPSET, 2018). Ntseane (2011) claims that in traditional African settings knowledge is produced and owned by communities. As I have argued above, people value learning from peers, in flexible spaces where they can use their indigenous and everyday knowledge. This speaks about the connectedness of people – an idea contained in the indigenous concept of *Ubuntu*.

In an interview with Tim Modise, a South African journalist, Nelson Mandela explains *Ubuntu* as follows:

A traveller through a country would stop at a village and he didn't have to ask for food or for water. Once he stops, the people give him food, entertain him. That is one aspect of *Ubuntu*, but it will have various aspects. *Ubuntu* does not mean that people should not enrich themselves. The question therefore is: Are you going to do so in order to enable the community around you to be able to improve? These are the important things in life. And if one can do that, you have done something very important which will be appreciated. (Modise & Mandela, 2006 – quote is verbatum)

The concept *Ubuntu* is used variously to mean humaneness, sharing and caring for others (Ramose, 2002a), and tolerance and respect (Gade, 2011; Letseka, 2012; Mabovula, 2011) amongst other things. Ramose (2002a) analyses it as a two-word term which has a prefix ubu- and the stem -ntu. The prefix ubu- means 'being' and -ntu means 'becoming', which implies

a notion of motion and continuity. He also implies that there is no strict separation between ubu and ntu on the ontological level. *Ubuntu* is the 'fundamental ontological and epistemological category of the Bantu-speaking people of Africa' (Ramose, 2001). Ramose (2002b) further explains that the term means oneness and wholeness. Being is in relation to others human beings and physical nature (Ramose, 2015). Murithi (2007) explains *Ubuntu* as people being available to serve and be available to others because they know they belong to the greater community. That in turn makes them human. When *Ubuntu* is practised, one sees people who are compassionate, going out of their way to care for, give and befriend others. The Nguni proverb "*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*", which is translated as "A person is a person because of others" denotes interconnectedness, social interdependence (Letseka, 2012; Ramose, 2002b) and deep-rooted community. Mabovula (2011) uses the term communitarianism to refer to this.

Ubuntu is also said to have many meanings associated with it (Gade, 2012; Murove, 2014). Some define *Ubuntu* as a quality of life (humaneness) and some as a phenomenon, ethic, worldview or an African philosophy (Gade, 2011; Mabovula, 2011; McDonald, 2010). *Ubuntu*, while it is an Nguni term, is also associated with other meanings found in other African languages, *Hunhu* in Shona, *Botho* in Sesotho and SeTswana (Gade, 2011; Matolino & Kwindingwi, 2013; Murove, 2014; Ramose, 2002b). Murove (2014) argues that the concept of *Ubuntu* cannot be restricted to quality of life but should encompass an African worldview of connectedness from which the quality originates. I would agree that the concept of *Ubuntu* should not be restricted to the quality of life but encompass how we are continuously being *abantu*, in relation to and interdependent with others. That makes us human and one as the term *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* denotes 'I am because we are'. Murove (2014) claims that the differing meanings are also caused by the fact that the term cannot be pinned to one particular period in history. Others claim that its meaning evolved over time because of differing interests and conditions in different regions (Matolino & Kwindingwi, 2013).

Gade (2011) provides an historical analysis of how the term has been defined in written sources. He claims that the term has regularly appeared in writing since 1846. It is from that period until the 1980s that most people referred to it as a human quality. Gade (2011) claims there was a sudden interest in the use of the term when Zimbabwe and South Africa were undergoing political transitions. He cites the book by Samkhange and Samkhange (1980) as one of the first written sources on *Hunhuism* or *Ubuntuism* in Zimbabwe. This was during the

period of Zimbabwe's political transition in the 1980s. In 1993, as a way of building democracy (Mabovula, 2011), and addressing divisions and strife through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), *Ubuntu* was included in the Epilogue of the South African Interim Constitution.

Gade claims that the resurgence of interest in *Ubuntu* is connected to narratives of return in post-colonial Africa. Such narratives are associated with other post-colonial leaders, namely Julius Nyerere and the notion of Ujamaa, Kenneth Kaunda with humanism, Kwame Nkrumah with consciencism, and Leopold Senghor with negritude (Matolino & Kwindingwi, 2013). In the context of social transformation, these narratives were subjects of discussion where past values were seen as alternatives to a better future (Gade, 2011). Three phases are emphasised: pre-colonial, associated with harmony; the period of decline, which was caused by invaders who plundered African resources, dignity and culture; and the phase of recovery, where Africans have gained sufficient political power to restore dignity, culture and traditional/ socialist values that were assumed to have been lost.

Basing their argument on Gade's article, Matolino and Kwindingwi (2013) argue that *Ubuntu* is no longer a useful term, precisely because it is part of a narrative of return. According to Matolino and Kwindingwi (2013), the narratives have a common thread of Afrocentrism and socialism, which have failed on both the political and economic front; and that Afrocentrism is inherently exclusive and exclusionary.

As argued above, neoliberalism has been normalised (Harvey, 2007), and McDonald (2010) highlights how the notion of *Ubuntu* has become marketised in South Africa. For example, *Ubuntu* is used to encourage people to pay for services so that they can be enjoyed by everyone. This is encouraged by government, the private sector and non-governmental organisations (Morove, 2014; McDonald 2010). Morove (2014) further argues that, as a post-colonial humanistic ethic, *Ubuntu* can be a model to guide business relations as it takes into consideration the well-being of others. This further highlights the marketization of the concept (since Morove is not suggesting that business *per se* ends). While we see all these forces at play, as McDonald (2010) and Metz (2014) warn, because it is being used for the benefit of the market we should not simply reject the notion of *Ubuntu;* but we do need to unearth the communal principles it espouses.

The above arguments highlight how *Ubuntu* as a human quality, moral ethic, philosophy and worldview can restore the dignity, harmony and well-being of people, but can also be used to

further interests of an elite. From my experience of relating and interacting with various people in communities, I am of the opinion that the humaneness of people leads them to being, which is interrelated to others (*abantu*), hence the saying, *'umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu'*. This further means that without others we are cannot be *abantu*. While many scholars agree that the concept is not static (Ramose, 2002b; Matolino & Kwindingwi, 2013; Murove, 2014), the fundamental values can be espoused by individuals, communities and society at large.

2.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have reviewed the literature related to my study. I considered the emergence of the concept 'NEET', both globally and in South Africa, the context within which this occurred, and the technical concerns related to the term. I also explored the more substantive critique of the assumptions underlying the concept, noting how these have been influenced by HCT and neoliberalism. I then considered studies on what constitutes a different kind of post-school education and training, one geared towards the lives of young people like those I work with. Finally, I discussed the concepts of 'socially useful labour' and *Ubuntu,* which offer an alternative way to think through what might constitute really useful and valuable education and training for NEETs.

What is clear is that our young people, the so-called NEETs, need to be given an opportunity to explore these alternatives so that they can make a meaningful and valuable contribution to their communities and society. As will be shown in the next chapter, it is on this basis that I have designed my study.

Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I gave a review of the literature related to youth who are not in any form of employment or any form of education or training (NEETs). I also outlined the conceptual framework within which much of the literature is located, neoliberalism and Human Capital Theory, which has profoundly influenced current educational provisioning. I ended the chapter by discussing the counter concepts of 'socially useful labour' and *Ubuntu* as potentially useful lenses from which to look at the issue of NEETs.

As discussed in Chapter One, the aim of this study was to investigate the perceptions of youth who are not in any form of employment or any form of education or training (NEETs), regarding the kind of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are valuable to them; how they can best access these; and what they think will the most useful way to learn these skills. The focus is thus on youth who are NEETs, between the ages of 18–30 years, living in the Slovo informal settlement in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. My study aimed to answer three research questions:

1. What do the NEETs think would be the most valuable skills, knowledge and attitudes to help them with their lives?
2. According to them, how could these be most easily accessed?
3. What do they think would be the most useful way to learn them?

This chapter discusses the research design I have chosen to help answer these questions.

3.2 Research paradigm

A research paradigm is a way of seeing the world because of holding certain beliefs or particular views (Babbie, 2013). It guides how one will research the world and the position one will take in analysing the data. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) and Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) claim that the paradigm that one uses informs research questions, data collection methods, and how and what one pays particular attention to in analysing findings. Basically, this informs "what is to be studied and what rules are to be used" (Kirby & McKenna, 1995, p. 43).

This research is located in the critical paradigm. The critical research paradigm, sometimes referred to as the transformative paradigm, has its origins in the nineteenth century work of Georg Hegel and Karl Marx and more recently in the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire (Vine, 2009). Creswell (2008) claims that the critical research paradigm emerged as a result of the dissatisfaction of critical researchers, who felt that the interpretivists were not adequately addressing issues of social justice.

Critical researchers aim to unpack structural, socio-economic and political issues in order to better undertake radical transformation (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). The ontological assumption is that reality is shaped by social, political, cultural, race, ethnic, and economic values, and we come closest to understanding reality through an examination of power. They also believe that our understanding of reality is subjective and that being objective and neutral is ultimately not possible.

The critical paradigm is therefore appropriate for and relevant to this study because I sought to listen to the voices of those who are on the 'margins' (Kirby & McKenna, 1995), affected/impacted by unemployment, poverty and inequality which I argue is caused by neoliberal capitalism, amongst other factors. As seen in the participatory methods that I have used, critical researchers aim for collaboration, taking careful consideration of power and avoiding discrimination, while striving for a change in society (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). The whole point, for critical research, is to take action to change the world.

3.3 Research approach

The approach that I adopted in line with the critical paradigm is the qualitative approach. Qualitative researchers seek to understand how and why people think and act the way they do in the everyday life contexts that they find themselves in (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2010; Kirby & McKenna, 1995). Thus, as opposed to the quantitative approach which uses numbers, statistics and figures, the qualitative approach mainly deals with text generated through different methods as is necessary when one seeks a deeper, holistic understanding of the phenomenon or case being studied.

The qualitative researcher therefore asks why and how questions. They are also interested in processes, contexts and influences (Hennink et al., 2010). Thus, methods often used by researchers in the qualitative paradigm include case study, in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participatory research.

Qualitative research and the critical paradigm have been criticised for subjectivity and social bias; however,

> the attempt to produce value-neutral social science is increasingly being abandoned as at best unrealizable, and at worst self-deceptive, and is being replaced by social sciences based on explicit ideologies. (Hesse, 1980, p. 247)

As I will discuss below, being aware of one's role or position is important, as it can have an influence on the research. This is called reflexivity. Hennink et al. (2010) argue that a researcher needs to reflect on their background, assumptions, and how participants respond to them, because they can have an impact on the process of research.

3.4 Research style

Different authors use different terms for the aspect of style. Some refer to it as an approach, or methodology, rather than a style, as Bertram and Christiansen (2014) and Cohen et al. (2013) do. The research style guides a researcher towards the best ways of collecting data (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). I adopted a case study research style for this research.

Rule and John (2011, p. 4) describe a case study as a "systematic and in-depth study of one particular case in its context in order to generate knowledge". Whilst there is some debate about how 'bounded' a case is, generally, the particular case is bounded by time and place. This means that there is an element of inclusion and exclusion – i.e. what falls within the case, and what falls outside it. My study is a study of the perception of NEETs (aged between 18 and 30) currently living in the Slovo informal settlement near Pietermaritzburg of what they consider to be 'valuable' SKA. My case (and unit of analysis) is the group of six NEETs from Slovo who attended the FGD. I am looking at the different views of a single group of NEETs within the same context, and am thus using a single holistic case study design (Yazan, 2015).

Rule and John (2011) stress the importance of locating the case within a context. The Cambridge Dictionary (2019) defines context as "the situation within which something exists or happens, and that can help explain it". By context, Rule and John (2011) mean the broader area of relevant factors, relationships and systems in which the case is situated. Context may include a whole range of aspects such as elements of socio-politics, history, culture, organisation and policy. As I will explore further, this involves a relation between the immediate or the near (instance) and the more distant and comprehensive (context). Rule and

John (2011) suggest looking at the relations between the case and the context as well the relations between the context and the case. The former can be understood in three ways, 'microcosm', 'outlier' and 'catalyst'. When a case is a microcosm of a broader context, it reflects various aspects and forces that shape and impact on it. An outlier case is an exception to the rule, capable of resisting and overcoming contextual forces around it. When the case is a catalyst, it impacts and contributes, influences and shapes, the context. Because I was interested in understanding the views of youths who fall within the broader category, concept and discourse of NEET, I understood them as a microcosm of a broader context, and was interested in exploring how the wider forces impacted on them as a case.

In illustrating the relationship between the context and the case, Rule and John (2011) use the spatial metaphor of 'ground'. They identify four lenses through which the relationship can be analysed, namely, background, foreground, liftground and underground. Context as background represents the historical and social background of processes and situations which helps one to situate a case in relation to its history. Foreground, on the other hand, represents the current reality that informs the lives of people. Things that are part of the distant context (background) can have a continuous pivotal impact in the present (foreground). Liftground refers to the public discussions that are used by people in public arenas. It involves vocabulary used in the public domain to make sense of the current circumstances. Underground represents personal and community discourses of people. It represents the hidden and silenced voices of the people, such as the views of the youth I interact with.

Case studies can use quantitative or qualitative data collection tools, or a combination of these. As I will explain below, the data collection tools used in this research reflect and explore the case within the socio-political, economic and technological context. This is what critical researchers aim to do. Cohen et al. (2013) claim that one of the strengths of this style of research is its potential to establish cause and effect. They seek to expose and challenge these socio-political, economic and technological factors.

Another focus that case studies can allow is a community's approach towards a social issue (Mabry, 2008). In my case, the study is aimed at understanding the lived experiences (Cohen et al., 2013) of youth living in a community and affected by unemployment.

While there is much debate about the extent to which case studies can be generalised beyond what the case can warrant (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Mabry, 2008; Rule & John, 2011), case studies can be used to shed light on other studies (Rule & John, 2011) or to be part of a

'growing pool of data' where multiple studies will help to generalise them further (Cohen et al., 2013). As I discussed in the previous chapter, there are some fairly recent studies that served as my point of reference for this research. Those studies informed my research focus and design, among other factors; and I hope that my study will in turn form part of a 'growing pool of data' on what young people themselves consider to be valuable education and training.

3.5 Selection of sites and participants

Sampling is the decision that a researcher takes regarding which participants, settings, and phenomena to include in a study (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Cohen et al. (2013) claim that the quality of research is not just dependent upon methods used, but on the strategy used for sampling. In qualitative research, the researcher is not interested primarily in the size of the sample but rather in the depth and richness of the information being collected about the phenomenon/problem being studied. Hence the suggestion of using a more manageable, smaller number of participants (Cohen et al., 2013; Rule & John, 2011).

I used a combination of purposive and snowball sampling for this research. Cohen et al. (2013) maintain that purposive sampling is a feature of qualitative research. I used this non-random method in order to handpick participants based on characteristics relevant to the study and to serve a specific purpose. It is also important to consider the number of participants in an in-depth study, as larger numbers are less manageable, as discussed above (Hennink et al., 2010; Rule & John, 2011). In this case, I wanted between five and eight people who were unemployed, not currently undertaking any formal education or training, and aged between 18-30 (i.e. who met the key characteristics of NEETs), and who lived in an informal settlement near Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal province (i.e. in an urban context, which, as discussed in Chapter One, was a key focus of my study).

I work with youth from the Slovo informal settlement in the Edendale Valley area of Pietermaritzburg. Some of them met the required criteria, but these were not enough to constitute my entire sample. I thus used snowball sampling, where I asked those I knew to help identify and recruit additional participants from among their acquaintances, who were also NEETs living in Slovo. In line with what Kirby and McKenna (1995) suggest as criteria to be used for selecting participants, my participants were geographically located in an area that was accessible to me; they were willing and able to respond; they were contactable; and they were able to communicate so that sharing of information could occur effectively.

3.6 Data collection

I collected my data through an extended focus group discussion (FGD) with all of my participants. I believed that these individuals would have the knowledge required to answer the research questions, since they met the criteria as discussed above.

Heath, Brooks, Cleaver, and Ireland (2009) recognise a need for participatory methods so that young people are encouraged as social, active participants and subjects (Kirby & McKenna, 1995) of their world. Kirby and McKenna (1995) mention the importance of inter-subjectivity in research. This process involves dialogue and respect of participants as individuals who are creators of knowledge. I valued the knowledge that the participants brought, as they are the ones who are experiencing unemployment and living in the community. I thus used visual participatory data collection tools, namely Drawing and PEST analysis, together with a discussion reflecting on the data collected via the visual participatory methods. The FGD thus involved both the visual participatory methods, and the discussion that we had after each.

3.6.1 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

While the FGD method originates in sociology, with Merton and Lazarsfield publishing early works on the method, it has been widely and most recently used in marketing (Carey & Asbury, 2012; Smithson, 2008). A focus group generally comprises six to twelve participants who have certain common characteristics (Kitzinger, 1994; Krueger & Casey, 2014; Smithson, 2008). People who advocate this method maintain that it provides researchers with rich qualitative data through providing participants with a collective opportunity to make sense of and to interact with topics related to their own experience, culture and settings (Carey & Asbury, 2012; Wilkinson, 2014). Kitzinger (1994) claims that the interaction which happens between the participants during the FGD is one of the unique strengths of this tool. She claims its function is beyond collecting data but also aids in the analysis of data.

One of the critiques of the use of this method is that researchers may tend to focus more on group interaction than data collection. Carey and Asbury (2012) thus recommend that it should be seen as a tool to achieve a purpose, which should always be kept in mind. Stahl, Tremblay, and LeRouge (2011), building upon the work of critical theorists Jürgen Habermas and Michel Foucault, argue that a critically oriented FGD can be emancipatory for both participants and the researcher. This process, however, needs careful consideration of the design, choice of participants, discussion topics, the seating, the moderation, and so on.

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It is critical to ensure that the data collection methods are based on the participants' experiences, drawing on feelings, attitudes, knowledge and values so that they can relate to these (Kitzinger, 1994; Stahl et al., 2011). As discussed above, I used a focus group comprising my six participants. Carey and Asbury (2012) claim that the use of focus groups is beneficial in community settings, where it is vital to hear the voices of 'vulnerable' members of society. The data collected there can also be rich and detailed. The FGD included two participatory methods (discussed in detail below), which were then used as the basis for discussion. The participatory tools created enough information for this discussion. However, I was guided by questions that I had developed before the FGD that allowed me to stay on track in terms of answering my research questions, whilst also probing (Carey & Asbury, 2012) aspects of knowledge, skills and attitudes that they needed, as well as how they could learn and access these (See Appendix 3 for FGD schedule).

3.6.2 Drawing

One of the tools that helps people talk about issues affecting their lives is drawing (Harley & Butler, 2009). Edgar (1999), Jones and DWEBA (2001), and Rule and John (2011) claim that this visual, participatory tool, through its creative process, facilitates an experience that is able to draw out emotions as well as the subconscious of the participants. Heath et al. (2009) and Mitchell, De Lange, and Moletsane (2017) claim that a number of studies on young people employ visual methods in order to ensure that young people's voices are heard. They further explain how drawing enables participants not just to understand and engage with their own ideas but to engage with others and to think about taking action, thus enabling consciousness and agency (Theron, Mitchell, Smith & Stuart, as cited in Mitchell et al., 2017). The tool can thus help bring about purposeful change.

Mitchell et al. (2017) also suggest that the knowledge that is co-produced in visual research should be shared widely, so that it can bring about not only social change but also critical consciousness, thus challenging internalised oppression and oppressive forces.

I asked each member to first draw a picture of their community, as they would like it to be, with themselves in it. I then had them present and discuss their drawing to the whole group, asking questions and probing and encouraging the other participants to engage in discussion. As I will explain further below, this process was aimed at bringing about reflexivity, which Mitchell et al. (2017) argue is a strength of participatory visual methods.

I also specifically looked to see what 'educational' or learning initiatives/institutions were included in the drawing in order to help answer the second and third research questions. This was done in the hope that the discussion would not just allow participants to talk about themselves but also encourage a rich discussion on what they collectively think. Carey and Asbury (2012) assert that people like to be heard. Then, as part of the FGD, I asked questions about what they thought they would need in such a future community; what skills, knowledge and attitudes (SKA) they felt they needed to get there; and which of these they (commonly or individually) had. I then asked them how they felt they might get the SKA they needed. I used this aspect to listen to the voices of the participants so that I could hear their perspectives not as individuals but as a collective. The discussion was followed by an analysis on the political, economic, social and technological aspects that could impact the group/community for their gaining these skills, knowledge and attitudes.

3.6.3 Political, Economic, Social and Technical (PEST) Analysis

A PEST analysis allows for a deeper analysis of community issues. It is a participatory visual tool that allows people to critically link issues and explore relationships that are not commonly seen when using verbal techniques alone (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Liao, 2003). This tool, which looks at political, economic, social and technological factors, is mainly used in business to understand the impact of the external environmental/factors to inform future planning. Bensoussan and Fleisher (2012) maintain that the use of this tool is not only beneficial to organisations and businesses but to individuals as well.

In my study, I used it in the second part of the FGD, with the hope that it would help the youth identify factors at the local/community, national and global level that currently, and possibly in the future, impact their community in order to inform a discussion on the skills, knowledge and attitudes that they have and need for their lives. Using a PEST analysis also allowed me to understand the 'case' in its context, in keeping with Rule and John's (2011) insistence on the importance of understanding this relationship in case study research. This was then followed by a discussion and reflections on these aspects, and how they could most easily and usefully access and learn the 'valuable' skills, knowledge and attitudes they identified.

PEST analysis was also used by Maluleke (2013) in his study with out-of-school youth living in a rural village of Limpopo, as discussed in Chapter Two. Maluleke argued that using a PEST analysis allowed the participants not only to identify themselves in the world system

but to also be aware of forces impacting on them so that they were better able to change their situations/world. Since this was also an objective of my research, this method made sense. In addition, a PEST analysis specifically allowed for an examination of the relationship between the microcosm of my case and the context.

3.7 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis involves the process of organising and immersion (Hennink et al., 2010) in data to identify patterns, features, categories and themes so as to make meaning of the data collected (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Cohen et al., 2013). It generally involves a number of steps, as I discuss below.

3.7.1 Data Analysis and Interpretation during Data Collection

When using a focus group discussion method, Carey and Asbury (2012) outline the importance of understanding that data analysis begins during the group session itself, as the facilitator analyses the responses and interactions. Charmaz (as cited in Carey & Asbury, 2012) recommends what she terms as "imaginatively engaging" with the data. She explains that this allows the researcher to think of patterns that are not immediately obvious. The group process allows for participants to learn from one another (Morgan & Krueger, 1997). It is also evolutionary, meaning that the discussions and questions build on previous inputs. This needs a facilitator who is aware of group dynamics and the fact that some may try to influence or dominate discussions while others feel intimidated. I was therefore aware to observe other factors of communication, like body language, that were beyond words.

Rule and John (2011) claim that participatory methods like the ones I used (PEST analysis, Drawing and FGD), allow for more involvement by participants. The interaction is therefore not just intended for the data collection process but for analysis as well. This means that because of the tools used which reduce the limitations of language, participants are therefore engaged with the researcher in a collaborative meaning-making process. This may also help the facilitator to generate a whole range of diverse views and experiences. One essential part of this analysis process that Rule and John (2011) emphasise is for participants to move from literal picture descriptions to a deeper analysis of the value and meaning of drawings/illustrations. This means that the researcher should allow participants to investigate the root causes of data-represented problems and critically think about how these issues contribute to larger events and processes that were not identified in the data.

3.7.2 Data Transcription

This step involves creating a written record through transcribing audio recordings. The data collection (i.e. FGD) was all done in isiZulu, which was the language of the participants, although they did answer some of the questions in English where they felt comfortable enough to do this. The data was transcribed as recorded, and then translated into English. I present the verbatim translated transcription of the FGD in Chapter Four.

The use of a co-facilitator where possible (Carey & Asbury, 2012) is recommended by some, as it allows the facilitator to engage with participants without the distraction of taking notes. For that reason, I used a co-facilitator/scribe, with the consent of the participants. In addition, the activities and discussions were audio taped and video recorded, and these transcripts as well as the charts for the PEST analysis and the drawings constitute the data.

3.7.3 Theme Identification and Coding

Rule and John (2011) explain that a case study can be used in three ways. One way can be deductive (to test theory) or it can be used in an inductive (hypothesis-building) way to produce theory. A third one is a dialogic approach where case and theory connect in both directions. This dialogical analysis allows for the possibility that there may be a valuable interplay between theory and research at various phases of the research process in both inductive and deductive research. I thus used both inductive and deductive.

I first used inductive thematic content analysis of the transcripts. This involves inductive coding of key ideas/concepts/terms emerging from the data itself, then further iterative grouping of these into themes. I prioritised key ideas, then engaged in multiple reading of the transcripts to ensure that codes and themes were well grounded in data (Carey & Asbury, 2012). Bertram and Christiansen (2014) assert that this method is much more open-minded and exploratory. However, in order for me to look for concepts and themes based on the concepts of 'socially useful labour' and *Ubuntu*, I also used deductive analysis, which works from general to specific (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014).

3.8 Summary of research design

The table below summarises the overall research design I constructed in order to answer my three research questions.

Table 5: Research questions, sources, and methods of data collection and analysis

Research Question	Source/Unit of analysis	Data Collection Method/Tool	Conceptual Framework	Data Analysis
1. What do the NEETs think would be the most valuable skills, knowledge and attitudes to help them with their lives? 2. According to them, how could these be most easily accessed? 3. What do they think would be the most useful way to learn them?	5-8 NEETS (18-30 year olds) in target community	**Drawing** of future community **FGD** related to this **PEST Analysis** **FGD** related to this	'Socially Useful Labour' and the concept of *Ubuntu*	Inductive and deductive thematic content analysis

3.9 Ensuring trustworthiness

As mentioned above, qualitative research is not value free (Lather, 1986) and is thus subjective. However, there is a need to ensure that the research is trustworthy (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Lincoln and Guba (1986) suggest the following criteria for trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. I discuss these in detail below.

Credibility is concerned with the extent to which the data reflects the participant's reality. I devised member checks (Chilisa & Preece, 2005) to ensure that I accurately reflected participants' positions. I did this by checking during the process of data collection that I was understanding what was being said, as well as by giving a brief outline of the research process to my supervisor a day after data collection. This member checking also ensures confirmability, which basically ensures that the data collected and its analysis can be confirmed (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014), through keeping detailed records – in my case, the audio- and video-recordings, the flipcharts (drawings, PEST analysis and notes captured by the scribe) produced during the FGD, and my own notes of the FGD, as well as presenting the verbatim transcript of the FGD in this dissertation.

In order to ensure trustworthiness, I used triangulation, which means using different sources and/or methods of data collection. Baker (1999) and Denzin and Lincoln (2008) explain that

bringing different types of evidence ensures the accuracy of data collected. This also helped to ensure dependability. This was achieved through the Drawing, PEST analysis and FGD – in other words, I used different tools to answer the same questions, so that I could compare to ensure that the data was credible or valid. Whilst I only had one source – the 'NEETs' themselves (since only they could really answer my questions) – collecting my data through a FGD allowed differences and similarities to emerge and be confirmed or clarified (i.e. the participants themselves could check understandings of each other), and also allowed me to check across participants and probe any ambiguities.

Furthermore, I also looked into construct validity. I had to deal with different themes and concepts that formed my theoretical/conceptual framework. I needed to be careful that these reflect the lived realities of the participants. Lather (1986) suggests that researchers should ask themselves, *"How do we explain the lives of others without violating their reality?"*. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) mention that research in the critical paradigm must reflect ways in which social phenomena and people's understanding of these are informed by power relations. Through the use of the PEST analysis as well as the FGD, I engaged the participants in identifying such power relations in their local context, as well as at a national and global level.

I also engaged with the issue of trustworthiness through reflexivity. Reflexivity is not expected only from the researcher but also from participants. As mentioned above, I used participatory visual methods, drawing and PEST analysis. These allow for reflexivity which Mitchell et al. (2017) see as a strength of participatory visual methods. Also, as discussed in the limitations below, my position of being a senior employee of an organisation that some of the participants are volunteering in, was explained and clarified during the data collection phase. I did this to ensure that they understood my role as a researcher. Chilisa and Preece (2005) provide a checklist that can be used by researchers to help with this. After the data collection session, I had a debriefing session with my supervisor. This is where I discussed the process, a day after the data collection, in order to help me to reflect on the data collected, and my 'reading' of this, at an early stage.

I have mentioned above the argument concerning the limitation of case study research in terms of generalisability. I thus sought to ensure maximum transferability, as Rule and John (2011) suggest, by providing a thick description of the case and its context. Hopefully, this means that the reader will feel that the case resonates with other cases. To ensure that I really

understood the phenomenon I was looking at, I recruited participants that I believed would be knowledgeable about the topic, since it affects their daily lives. I also intended to help the participants gain an understanding of their lived experience/situation in their community (through drawings), and how this is affected by broader social, economic and political forces (through the PEST analysis).

Given my motivation to seek research that is emancipatory in nature, I used catalytic validity, as proposed by Lather (1986). Lather explains that the critical researcher must consciously challenge participants towards social change or action as a result of their involvement in the research. Thinking this through in relation to skills, knowledge and attitudes (SKA) allowed the participants to value their own, and other community members', existing SKA, and consider which other SKA would be most valuable to them; why they did not already have these; and how best they might go about accessing them. My hope is that the process motivated them at an individual and collective level to take action.

3.10 Limitations

While it is normal for any research to have its limitations, knowing about and acknowledging them gives one the ability to minimise the impact of these. I had foreseen my position, as a person who holds a senior position in the organisation where many of these youth volunteer, as a potential limitation. Myself as a middle-aged woman doing a study on youth also meant that there is an age gap that I needed to be aware of which could limit effective communication. I therefore defined and clarified my role as a researcher as well as my interest in the research before I started the data collection. My existing relationship may in fact have helped the youth to trust my intentions and the process.

As I had sampled the participants well ahead of the data collection process, I was aware that their availability might be dependent on whether or not they were participating in any form of employment or training during the time of data collection. I initially planned to have 8–10 participants. I had collected the names and contact details of ten participants who met my criteria through my sampling process; but by the time of the FGD, four no longer did. Two had been employed (albeit in casual/temporary work) by the time of the FGD, while two others were receiving some kind of training. As discussed in the sampling section above, I used snowball sampling, asking youth that I knew, because they volunteered in the NGO I work for, and whom I knew fitted the definition of NEET as discussed in Chapter Two, to ask others that they knew to attend. One person who attended did not in fact fit the NEET

definition, since he was over 35. Rather than excluding him, I allowed him to participate; I have included his responses in the transcript below to allow the flow of conversation, but I have excluded his responses in my analysis. Those who were present participated fully in the discussion, allowing me to obtain rich data.

The choice of venue for data collection was another potential limitation (the FGD was held in the offices of the organisation where I work and where many of them volunteer). It was chosen based on convenience, since there were no suitable venues close to most participants. Nevertheless, the venue chosen was comfortable, accessible, conducive and familiar to most of the participants. Babbie (2013) stresses the importance of conducting the discussion in a conducive environment.

As discussed above, being the facilitator/moderator can make it difficult to adequately capture behaviour and other dynamics in the group. I thus used a co-facilitator for logistics, to serve as a scribe and for voice and video recording. In this way, I was able to fully interact with the group.

Controlling the group dynamic was also a challenge, as some participants were more vocal than others. Babbie (2013) and Carey and Asbury (2012) assert that facilitating an FGD needs special skills. Being aware of this dynamic, ground rules regarding participation were set at the beginning of the FGD. I had to constantly manage this dynamic through an FGD schedule with questions that I had prepared and by promoting a group rapport, well as regularly specifically asking individual participants if they wished to say anything.

As I have mentioned in the section above, because this is a case study the findings of this research may not generalisable to other contexts. The research was done with a small group of youth from a very specific context. The purpose was to acquire in-depth information (Cohen et al., 2013) from those in a good position to give it. While it may not be generalisable, it might be useful for those looking into similar themes and concepts.

3.11 Ethical considerations

I ensured the study was compliant with key requirements for ethical research. Issues of confidentiality and anonymity were explained in the consent form and were discussed with all participants before I obtained consent from them. I explained to all the participants that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time if they wished to do so. Carey and Asbury (2012) suggest that in a focus group, the facilitator must ensure that

the participants do not disclose more than they intend. I explained this at the beginning of the sessions so that the participants were all fully aware that it was their choice to share information. I ensured that the group itself committed to confidentiality as well.

In keeping with the critical paradigm's concern with the issue of power in research, I ensured that the research power dynamics were acknowledged and that the findings represented the voices of the participants, by checking my findings with the group. I also committed to doing least harm, avoiding exploitation and not causing offence or embarrassment. As some of the questions and discussion had the potential for raising sensitive issues, participants were made aware that support/counselling could be organised if needed.

I ensured that research data and analysis were kept in a safe place known only to my supervisor. Participants were also made aware that when the study was published, this would be done in a way that would ensure that their identities were protected. I have thus carefully considered all data specific to individuals; where there is a possibility that someone might be identified, I have removed the attribution in my data presentation chapter, and in my analysis. I am confident that nothing that I present in this study will allow a specific individual to be identified.

With this kind of research regarding unemployment in disadvantaged communities, expectations may be raised amongst the participants of possible jobs or entrepreneurial, education or training opportunities. While these may indirectly come as a result of critically engaging with issues impacting on their lives, I made it clear that the study would not create these. Prior to the data collection process, I clarified my role, the purpose and scope of the research. I however hoped that the research would be of benefit to the participants, other researchers and the society at large.

3.12 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the research design used in my study. I further discussed how I ensured trustworthiness and reflected on ethical issues, as well as the limitations of the research. The chapter reflects my hope that this research might allow participants to critically think through and reflect on their lived experience so that they understand the range of knowledge, skills and attitudes they and their communities already have, as well as those that they do not have that they might find valuable for planning action within a context of high unemployment, poverty and inequality.

Chapter Four: Presentation of Data

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented the research design used in my study. As discussed in the previous chapters, the aim of this study was to investigate the perceptions of youth who are not in any form of employment or any kind of education or training (NEETs) regarding the kind of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are valuable to them; how they can best access these; and what they think would be the most useful way to learn these skills. As I discussed in Chapter Three, I planned to collect the data with which to answer these questions through holding an extended focus group with between five and eight NEETs from the target community, using visual participatory data collection tools, namely drawing and a Political, Economic, Social & Technological (PEST) analysis. The drawings and PEST analysis charts formed the basis for the Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

The actual research ran according to plan. The FGD thus involved both the visual participatory methods, and the discussion that we had after each.

4.2 Participants

Seven people participated in the focus group. As discussed in Chapter Three I used snowball sampling, asking youth that I knew, because they volunteered in the NGO I work for, and whom I knew fitted the definition of NEET as discussed in Chapter Two, to ask others that they knew to attend. I was initially expecting four women and four men. One woman had just found a part-time job during the week of data collection. The other woman could not find anyone to leave her child with, so she could not attend.

It transpired that one person who attended was over 35, and so did not in fact fit the NEET definition I was using. Rather than excluding him, I allowed him to participate; I have included his responses in the transcript below to allow the flow of conversation, but I have excluded his responses in my analysis. The remaining six all meet the definition of NEETs, and all live in the Slovo informal settlement. Two of them are women and four are men, all aged between 18–30 years.

Only two of them have completed matric. While most of them have had various forms of informal or non-formal training, one has had formal training from a TVET college that he has yet to complete. Most of the training and skills that they have were gained either through

NGOs that they had volunteered in, schooling, in the community, or where they have previously worked. None of them were in full-time employment or study during the time of the Focus Group Discussion.

Table 6: FGD participants

Participant pseudonym	Acronym	Age	Gender	Level of Education
Blacky	Bk	28	Male	Grade 10
Self-Love	SL	21	Male	Grade 11
Banana	Bn	18	Female	Grade 7
Lemon	L	20	Female	Grade 11
Thunder	Th	23	Male	Grade 12
Sunday	Sun	25	Male	Grade 12, and some FET courses
Almond	A	35+	Male	(Unknown)

4.3 Focus group discussion process

The focus group was conducted in the offices of the NGO that I work for and where four of them volunteer. The venue was chosen based on convenience since there are no suitable venues close to where the participants live, and most are familiar and comfortable with the office. I had a co-facilitator (Sandra) who helped with recording and served as a scribe, who is from the NGO and was thus known to most participants. The FGD was recorded and then transcribed in isiZulu. I then translated this into English. Below I present the data collected in this study, in the form of the verbatim translated transcript and the artefacts created. As mentioned in the previous chapter, I have anonymised the participants. Please note that ellipses denote a pause, rather than the removal of text.

4.3.1 Welcome and Introductions

After introducing myself and my co-facilitator, I welcomed everyone. Before explaining the process of the focus group, I asked them to choose pseudonyms, which were used as both an icebreaker and getting everyone to know one another better.

T: I'm Thandi, so anyone can just call me Thandi today. I am your equal. You are the ones who are experts today. You are the ones with the knowledge that I need. I value your input and a whole lot more. We are still going to talk about some rules and other things. For now, I would like us to know one another. We will do it like this. I will say, I'm 'tenacious' Thandi. This means I'm determined to do things that I need to do. I'm also 'tactful'. I like treating the people I interact with, with respect. So, if I don't live up to my name, I will be in trouble. I also need a nametag, Sandra.

Bk: Okay, I'm Blacky. I'm just a guy who's free but I don't work, I'm at home. I do piece jobs here and there. That's all.

L: I'm Lemon, I'm a person who likes to laugh a lot, yes!

T: Thank you, Lemon.

Bn: I'm Banana. I'm just always at home, I'm not at school, I'm at home, that's all.

SL: People call me Self-Love.

T: Do you love yourself?

SL: No [meaning yes], this name is self-explanatory. I'm a person that loves to help especially people who come from not-so-rich families and are poor. My desire is to help such people, even children, that I can [say] are losing their future because of the things that they do. This is because we live in a different society now. There are many things that are present, and which can take us away from the things that we desire. My wish is that one day I'm able to help people who have lost their future.

T: Wow, thank you.

Sun: I am Sunday.

T: Do you love Sunday?

Sun: It's just that I was born on Sunday at 10:55pm.

T   Is this your real name?

Sun: I'm S…., I also like to laugh a lot.

T: Yeah, you are like me (laughter).

Th: I'm Thunderstorm (laughter). I believe that I am a good person, because many people say so. I'm a kind, good hearted person who believes that God has brought them with something here on earth. I believe that one shall see that.

T: Wow, thank you so much. Right, now I will tell you the process through which you were selected. According to my understanding, you do not have a job unless it is a temporary job that you get from time to time. I understand that you are not in any education or training that is involving you every day of the week. And you are all youth.

At this point, it became clear that Almond was over the age limit of 35. As discussed above, rather than exclude him, I allowed him to participate, but have not used data related to him in my analysis and findings. The rest of the participants were all under 35.

4.3.2 Explanation of the process

T: Oh, okay, that's fine. So, I chose you with the hope that you will be prepared to share information that will be useful for the research. I'm a student at UKZN [University of KwaZulu-Natal]. This research is not one that pays people to participate, but the information/knowledge can help you and many others who might be in similar situations to understand the issues you are facing. So, I will be writing about these experiences and your input in them since I am learning. This will be like I am writing an assignment, but this is research for my Masters' degree in UKZN.

Some of the things that you will be doing today is 'drawing'. This does not necessarily need a skill in drawing. We want to see through your drawing your views on the issues we will discuss. We are also going to do another activity called PEST Analysis, which I will be explaining further. But what is more important is that we will engage in discussions regarding these activities. This is where we will think and reflect on what skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values you think are valuable for and needed for our community of Slovo. I take it all of you live in Slovo?

All: Yes.

T: So, the reason I am going to use all these activities is so that you can have an opportunity to see, think about and discuss the issues in your community. And there are lots of them, isn't it so?

There are millions, about three million South Africans or more, who are in a similar situation as yours. So, we want to hear their (your) views since one cannot have any people think for their situation other than the people who are affected by it. You are the ones who can perceive it better. That is why I would like to hear your views. We would like to finish these discussions today. Was there anyone who was not aware of these times?

L: Me.

T: What finishing time were you aware of? Do you want to prepare for cooking?

L: No, it's just that I had to leave my child with someone.

T: Very well then. We will try and wrap up things in time so that you are accommodated. So please note the following: Please feel free to move around. Note the bathroom and help yourselves to refreshments. As we are moving to this other side of the room with tables to do drawings, feel free to take your cup of coffee.

We can now also look at ground rules that we would like to observe as we work together. We can respond in either isiZulu or English, whichever you are comfortable with using.

Which ground rules do you think we should adopt [Calling Sandra to draft ground rules]? Or if you've ever been to a meeting or workshop, which things do you normally agree on, in order to work well together.

Bk: Maybe we can open in prayer?

T: We are really going to open in prayer (laughter), and we know who's going to do that for us (looking at Blacky who suggested it), isn't it so?

All: Yes.

We then discussed ground rules, and wrote them up:

- Respect
- Cell phone off or on silent
- No side conversations
- Confidentiality

Bk: (Opening Prayer).

4.4 Drawing exercise

As I have explained in Chapter Three, the purpose of using drawing as a visual participatory tool is for participants not just to understand and engage with their own ideas but to engage with others and to think about taking action. I explained to the participants that right-handed people will be using their left hand and the left-handed their right hand to draw. I explained that the two different sides of the brain (left and right) have two different functions. The left brain uses logic and right brain is for creativity. Using the left hand, which controls the right side of the brain, will access the creative side of the brain and facilitate an experience that is able to draw out emotions as well as the subconscious so that they are creative and imaginative.

T: Now that you have told me about yourselves, I would like to know more about your community. In whatever way you look at it. I want you to draw and not write so that I can understand the way that you see it.

L: (complaining about drawing) I don't know how to draw!

T: You don't know how to draw? Then you are like me. It is not important for the drawing to look good. I just want to see what you have drawn. Can I see all right-handed people?

SL: I'm left-handed.

T: This then means that you will use your right hand while everybody else uses their left hand to draw.

All: Haaaa!

T: You know what, the left side of the brain has different functions to the right side. So, we will let those sides of our brains that are not normally active to be so. We are going to use crayons to draw. Let me know if you really can't. This is just like polishing a shoe, have you not used a left hand before?

All: Yes, we have.

T: It will be just like doing that. Again, remember that the important thing is not to see a perfect drawing but what it tells us about your community. So, we want to know what you are thinking about your community. I want you to draw it the way you would like

to see it in future with you in it. Afterwards, we will talk about our drawings. Remember our rule to respect and not to laugh at people. Maybe I must also draw mine with my left hand so you can see how obscure it can be.

Each person will have their own table, using the chart paper. You can use kokis (felt tip markers) and markers where you need to but wax crayons are enough for everyone. You must just draw your community.

In that way you can relax because this [drawing] is another way of thinking. That is why I said you mustn't look at each other's drawing. But you are all looking at your community with yourselves in it. We want to see what it will look like and what needs to be in it. I will be going around helping where needed and answering your questions, but I'm sure you won't need much of it as you know Slovo more than me since you live in it.

I gave each of the participants a piece of flipchart paper and crayons, and they drew pictures of the community, as they would like to see it in the future.

4.4.1 Presentation of the drawings

I then had them present and discuss their drawing to the whole group, asking questions and probing and encouraging the other participants to engage in discussion. I did this in the hope that the discussion would not just allow participants to talk about themselves, but also encourage a rich discussion on what they collectively think.

T: Before we discuss your drawings, how did it feel doing this? Can anyone share?

Bk: It was challenging.

T: In what way? What was challenging?

Bk: There are many things that one can add to make that place better. It needs creative thinking so that you can see it the way you want to see it in future. It was fun even though I cheated [meaning using his right hand instead of left every now and again].

T: I saw . . . (laughter). Someone else?

Bk: It made me feel happy because I saw that sometimes dreams can succeed since there are many talents in people.

T: Yes.

Bk: Even though I was using my left hand, that has shown that dreams can come true. If you didn't enjoy that, say so!

SL: For me this was so good, because I saw that there are things that I have been thinking about and some that I haven't even thought about. I was drawing about my community and saw how it looks. How the spaces look, which allowed me to draw stuff there because I was able to see what can happen there in future in these unused spaces.

T: Wow, wow . . . and you, Thunderstorm?

Th: I can also say that it was fun doing the drawing. It made me wish . . . because there were things that I wanted to add but I couldn't do so because of time. But I saw that if I were a person who had power to change things in the community, there is lots that I would have changed. Many people don't see what I see, what I see is what more I can add to the community.

T: Very good, siyabonga. What about you, Sunday? How was it, doing this?

Sun: What I can say is that this was fun, but it gave me a problem since I'm not used to using my left hand, but I tried to produce something (laughter).

T: We are still going to see that (laughter). And for you, Lemon?

L: It was nice because I drew some things that I would like to see there, work, factories, farms [gardens], because people need jobs.

T: Wow, thank you.

Bn: It was also good to do this even though the place is small, but through drawing, I saw a big place with spaces that can fit other things.

T: Thank you. Thank you so much for what you did, it's important. So now what we are going to do . . . I am going to give each person a chance to tell us about their drawing. Anyone can start. You can explain what is there. I will also ask some questions about why you included certain things. Who would like to start?

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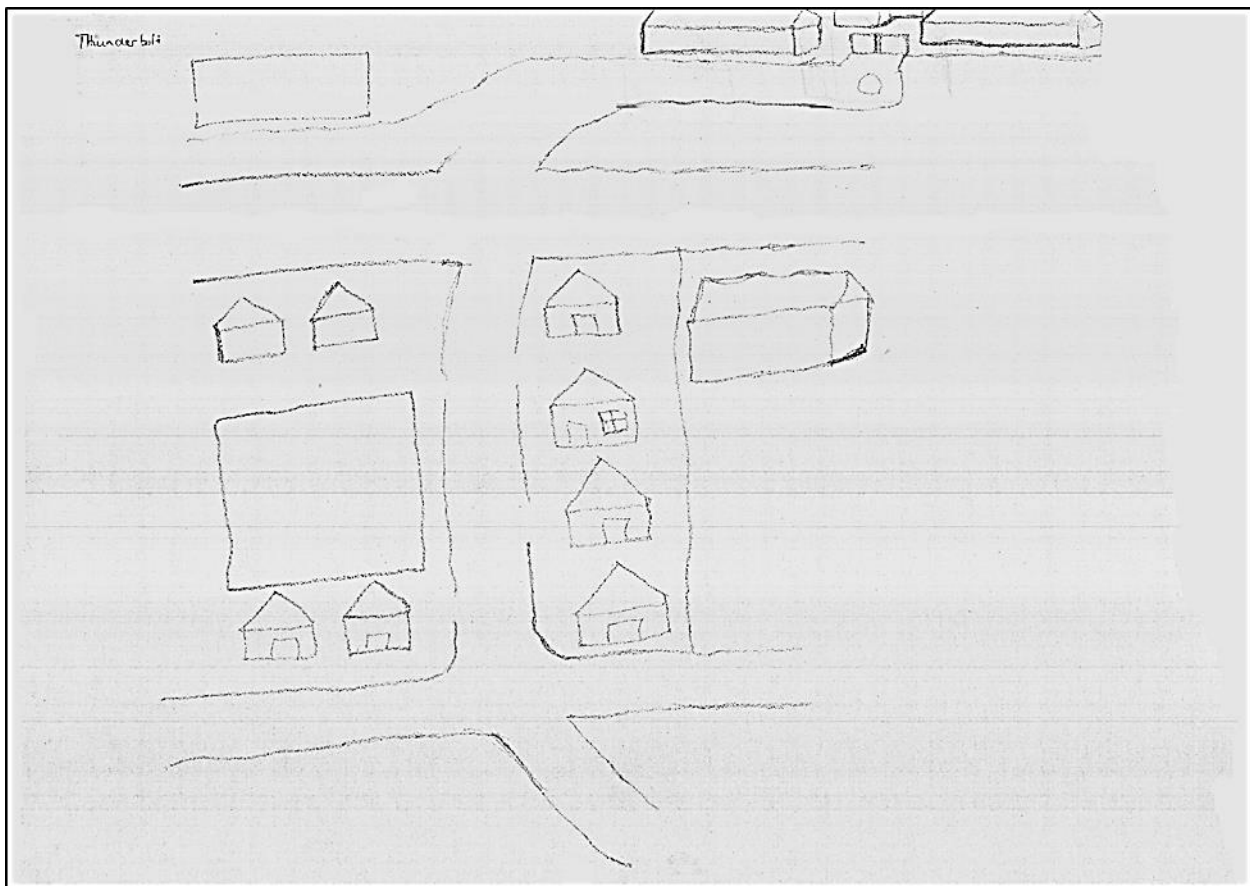
Figure 8: Thunder's drawing

Th: Okay, this means that this is Slovo. As you can see, this is a playground. These houses are close to the playground. This is a place you can walk through if you want to go to the mall. There is a hospital nearby and then this is a municipal building. I see this as a pathway because the municipality . . . said they are busy working but no ways. This place has too many children. I was thinking about a school. Here on the left and on the right, there could be houses. There is a lot that I was hoping could be added into the community, like a place that can be close to the children. We can start an organisation, something that can help children because there are many children in this area. They are actually more than adults. One can even add play facilities for children.

T: Thank you so much. Who is next?

Figure 9: Lemon's drawing

L: Okay, it is me. This is the police station. I would love for us to have a police station and factories so that people can get jobs. This is a playground; children play so that they can develop. We also have farms because if there are many farms, people can get paid as well.

T: Where would these farms be?

L: They will be in the grounds because these grounds are not right.

T: When you talk about farms, are you referring to gardens?

L: Gardens and chickens.

T: I see that you have also included a dam there. Where will this help?

L: The dam will help with farming.

T: So, you are personally interested in farming?

L: Yes.

T: Good.

Figure 10: Blacky's drawing

Bk: All right, this is Blacky. "Slovo in Future". When we come from this side, we are
        coming from the police station, using the Old Edendale Road until we enter Slovo.
        One enters Slovo on a gravel road. I would like to change this into a tar road in future.
        This can go to the other new road that is used now.

T: Which is the new road?

Bk: The one that is near Slovo. Ours is a gravel road, but now I would like it to go through
        to the main road near the hospital since this is a passage that is used to go through to
        the mall. Then all these houses surrounding the sports ground could be changed into
        RDP houses so that our community can look new and good. We will also need to
        repair the sports grounds so that it is safe for the children to play. This is especially
        important since their safety is important. Now coming to this side of the sports ground
        - one can get a space for girls so that they can play sports that are suitable for them,
        like netball, etc. We can even remove these brothers placing poles in the sports
        ground.

T: What poles are these?

Bk: There are poles for sale in the community. People occupy the area that is used as a playground to put their poles. We can then get the girls' play area so that they can also play. We can also have at least one supermarket besides the mall is nearby, a two-minute walk. This is so as to remove the number of tuckshops because I don't see the need for these. Shebeens can also be removed because I think we need a change.

T: Why do you say so?

Bk: I say so because of the high rate of alcohol abuse that we see happening in our area. There must be a bylaw that there must be no shebeens here. We also need to have at least one NGO that can empower youth and teens that grow up in Slovo.

T: So, do you see this as possible?

Bk: Yes!

T: Thank you so much, Blacky. Who is next? Banana?

Figure 11: Banana's drawing

Bn: I can't draw, but I tried. Maybe the way I will explain it will make you understand what I wanted to portray. This is the road, then here are houses. This is a tuckshop. As you can see, I can't draw, but I can explain this.

T: Yes, we'd like you to explain.

Bn: There are a lot of things that can't be found in Slovo. I put in streetlights because it gets so dark. This might help light up the place so that people can see what is happening. I don't need to explain this situation of Slovo because people know.

T: But I would like to know, since I do not know about the situation.

Bn: Oh, like Blacky has said what he doesn't like, that is what you can find there. There is constant fighting, beating, stealing and so on. So that is why I drew the (big) street-light so that one can see clearly because this place is so small, and it doesn't have these lights. Even if there is one streetlight, it will be able to bring light into the area. These are the passages of the road that is near the houses. Other houses do not have gardens, but people do not have jobs. So, it is better for people to have gardens so that they can at least get food in their yards. Taps are also needed in homes. That's all I would like to say.

T: Are there no taps in homes?

Bn: There are taps, but sometimes people have to travel if they need water because in most cases, these taps have no water in them, things like that…

T: Thank you, sisi.

Figure 12: Sunday's drawing

Sun: This is a road (pointing) . . . I was still going to draw further but it doesn't matter. In
Slovo, I don't want to have much changed. Maybe we can just get a road. We can also
open some of the passages that have been closed. Maybe those can be tarred so that
we can travel smoothly. I can also have a sports ground in its place. We need it for
both boys and girls. We also need fences as demarcations so that one can distinguish
which houses belong to which people.

T: So, there are no demarcations now?

Sun: Yes, there are some demarcations but there is no order.

T: Thank you.
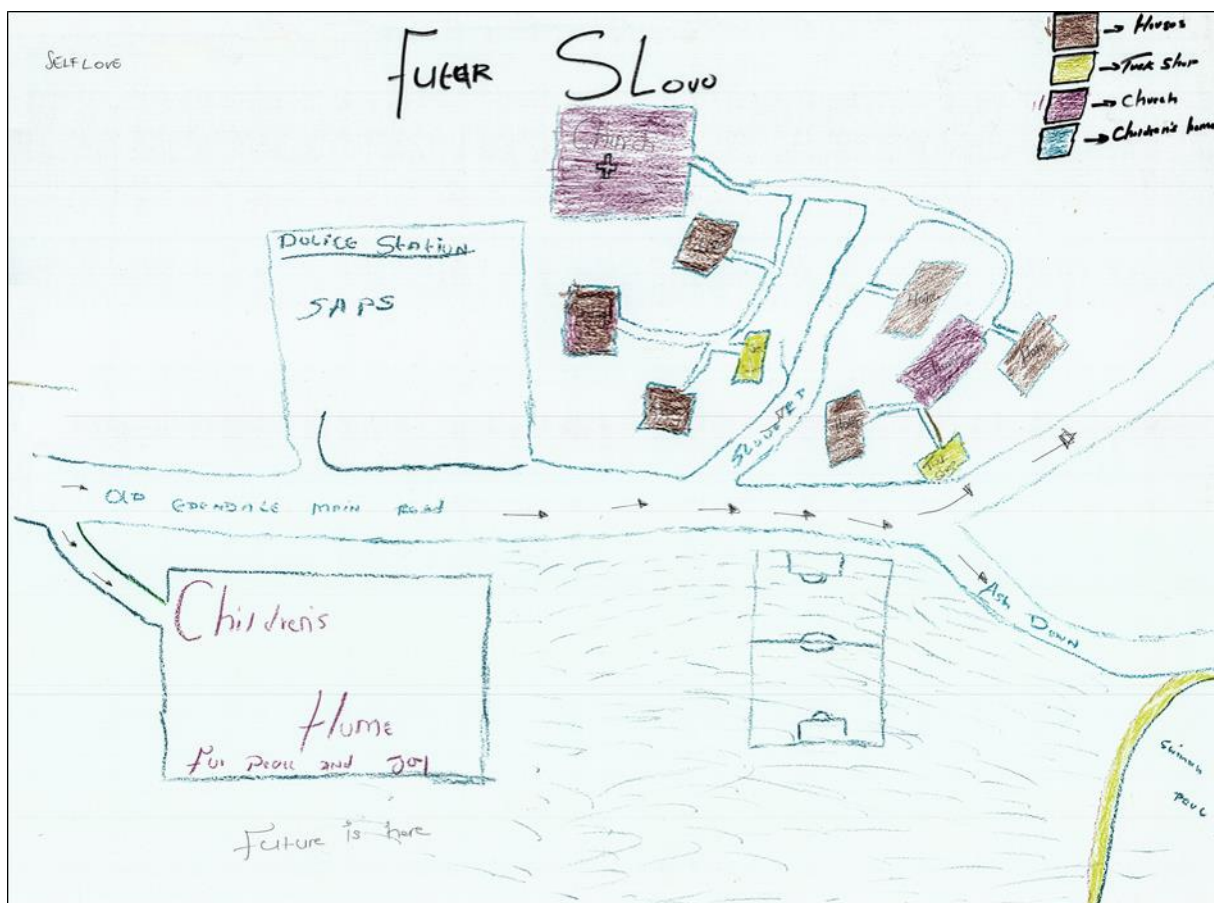
Figure 13: Self-Love's drawing

SL: I won't explain more since others have already done so. I just wanted to mention two things about this area. These are the things I am praying about regarding Slovo. Most of the [other] things regarding this area don't affect me. The first thing is the churches. There are some but things that happen there do not encourage children to be who we expect them to be in future. Most of the ministers of these churches do so many bad things in front of us such that many people do not go to church because of that. You can see these churches. This one is mine [pointing at the drawing] and the rest are those that are in the area as I have highlighted them.

Here in Slovo, there are some things, but can you see that this area is bare? When you enter this place, the first thing you see is a police station, then the next thing is a road that leads to Slovo. So, here in Slovo, I wish there could be a powerful church which could preach the real thing.

Another thing I desire to see is a Children's Home. Even though I might not be able to get something like this, I would be able to change this community because many children here do not have information. They learn swear words from home. A six-

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year-old can use a swear word that I can't utter with my own mouth. So, we need a place where children can be taught values and the right information for their future in life. Some of the children live in the streets. My desire is to stay with these children so that they can come and learn and then go back home. But for those who live on the street, when I say they must go back, where would they go? It will have to have a place where they can sleep, eat . . . as you can see across here, there will also be a swimming pool.

T: You mean across where?

SL: I mean across Sekland (Police Station), this whole area that is over here. My desire is for only these things. Regarding housing, I don't think there is much change a person like me can do because even the councillors are failing to solve it.

T: Thank you so much. Can we come this side now? Huh . . . one thing that I observed in all your drawings . . . whose is this? (They all stand up)

Bk: It's Lemon's.

T: Lemon is the only one who put herself in the drawing, can you see? (They all laugh). I think you all forgot to include yourself in the community that you were each drawing.

All: Yes, we forgot.

T: I asked this because I wanted you to see yourselves . . . because there are communities that one can see, they are out of this world. Do you see yourselves in these communities that you drew? Will these changes happen in your lifetime? I am asking why you have not drawn this or trying to find out the reason why you didn't do so.

All: Maybe in five years' time we will be there.

SL: As I have explained, I had a problem drawing something that can be clearly seen as I can't draw with my left hand. Nevertheless, for me, I would like to see more of the playground where both boys and girls can play freely. I would also like to see houses lined [up] properly [i.e. along the road], with all the resources that are needed, as my peers have shared.

T: Okay, thank you, we will elaborate more on these in the next discussion.

4.4.2 Discussion of the drawings

Then, as part of the FGD, I asked questions about what they thought they would need in such a future community; what skills, knowledge and attitudes they felt they needed to get there; and what they (commonly or individually) had. I then asked them how they felt they might get the SKA they needed. I used this aspect to listen to the voices of the participants so that I could hear their perspectives not as individuals but as a collective.

T: So, let us discuss now. In these drawings that you have drawn, what is it that you would like to see but is not there. What is the difference now?

Bk: Tarred roads.

All: Schools, and farms so that people can get jobs, and churches.

T: But there are churches here?

All: There are more than five in one place.

T: So, are there people here who say they need a church?

Bn: One that is powerful because the other ones are not powerful. In some of them you find that they don't even read the Bible. So, they are all separated, saying different things.

Th: I think what Blacky is trying to say is that in Slovo, most churches are in the 12 Apostolic denomination which are all different, doing different things. You find many churches meeting in people's homes.

T: What else do you want to see?

Bk: Street lights! Right now, Self-Love doesn't have a phone because they mugged him since it was dark, although it was still early enough.

T: Where did this happen?

Bk: If you come from this side (pointing to the west of the drawing), you go straight up and enter through the top side of the Slovo.

T: Do you pass Thunder's house?

Bk: No, you come from Plessislaer, going to Edendale Road.

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T: Where is Self-Love's house from here?

Bk: It is near this place (pointing).

T: Where did they mug him?

Bk: He came out here, going to wait for his sister at the bus stop, they then mugged him. So, we need these streetlights because one cannot rob you when there is light because you might see who they are. In the dark it is easier to do crime.

Bn: There are passages [lanes], so after the thief mugs you, they can go to the next passage to hand over the phone to another person. So, if there were streetlights, it would be better because you might see the person mugging you even though you might not do anything at the time.

A: Another big problem is that there is very long grass. So, if you come from the traffic lights and see that there is someone ahead, they can easily hide behind this grass. When you approach, the person might have been watching you, then suddenly mugs you.

All: Children's Home.

T: Why do you say you need that?

SL: I was raised by a single parent (mum). She was a responsible parent in every sense but there was always a need in me for a father. There were things that I feel that I wouldn't have done if my father had been part of my life. So, when I think about life here on earth, how many children grow without fathers . . . They're growing up, but even if mothers are there, raising them alone is tough. They need someone who is a father figure who will give them the right direction and good advice so that one can be an example in life and in other children. Even though one is raised by a mother alone, they can be an example and be able to listen and respect adults since most children without fathers do not listen. Some will say that since they don't live with fathers, no male neighbour can tell them anything. They may say so because the man is drinking and therefore, they won't listen to them. I know that lives can change because I do not drink and even I don't want to see children living on the street while I am here. That is my desire.

T: Wow . . . Is there anything [else] that you still feel is not in the drawings that you wanted to include?

All: A school that Thunder mentioned.

T: Who spoke about the school here and why?

Th: It is because of the high accident rate amongst the children living here. Maybe if there was one in the area, things would be easier. As it is, many parents are unemployed but from the little money they earn, they have to pay for school transport for their children. In this area there is no school, so children are forced to travel out of the area for schools.

T: Okay, let's think, because we need to do so, what skills do you think you need in order to see the community that you desire, to reach this stage. Or what knowledge do you think you need or will help us to become this community. Sandra will help to jot down these. We will put these into three columns. One with skills, another with knowledge, then attitudes that we need for the community that we desire.

Bn: What I can say, just like Blacky has said, is the idea of an NGO is needed, or a Community Centre because we do not have one.

T: Okay, what do we need for us to get all these things that we have mentioned? What skills do we need for an NGO?

SL: Firstly, we need the community to be united in order to work together.

Bn: We also need to agree and understand that there will be respect for people's opinions when we meet.

Bk: Leadership skills, knowledge.

T: What kind of knowledge?

Th: This is to know how to do a particular thing, like building skills or the knowledge of how to do it.

T: Oh, those are skills, this means we will write in the middle: building, welding and plumbing.

Th: Information to get what we need. Who to contact, because some things/issues need us to consult the councillor as a community.

SL: We can do this as a community, but one finds that we are not united.

T: What are the churches supposed to do?

Bn: Churches should be minimized, there are too many of them (laughter).

All: (Laughter).

A: I think we need to allow people to choose where and what they want to do.

Bk: I think that we should be one with the government so that we can be able to do all that we need to do. If we want to change the things that we need to change, we will need to involve the government because the way we do things is according to our laws. For us to get land, we need to consult the government because even for the things that we may need, like funds, we may not have access to on our own but the government can help with that support.

T: Okay, I have noted the things that you are mentioning, but Self-Love has mentioned a children's home, you have not spoken about that. What skills do you need in order to run a home?

SL: Maybe one would need to learn life skills that can be passed onto children. I learnt these skills from an organisation called Golden Gate. I think that all those skills could be used to develop the lives of the children.

T: Okay, I also heard you mentioning that most children are not respectful, they talk anyhow. What is it that the community needs in order to solve this issue? Please think about children and parent needs.

A: I think that there is no better way to teach children than teaching them that respect starts from the Bible.

T: By that you are referring to parenting skills?

A: I believe that a child may be the way that they are because of how they are raised at home. A parent may tell the child that they can gain respect from the Bible, that they need to read it in order to learn more about respect.

T: You also talked about farming, farming skills?

A: To be passionate about farming. You simply use soil.

T: But do you all think you need that? Maybe some don't think that is important.

SL: It might really help some to get this skill, and employment opportunities.

Bk: Even crime can be reduced, because maybe people may stop stealing since they would then learn ways of earning/creating an income.

T: Okay. Anything else? Just look at the drawings and see what else you can say. Which things do you think we need to get as a community? You mentioned the issue of a school, but on this chart, I see we haven't said much about it. Even factories were mentioned…

Bk: I think that we do need the school in our community. Maybe one of the bigger spaces can be used to build a school. Even if we start with Grade RR because those children are still too young, unlike the older ones who are able to crossroads when going to school.

T: So, what skills do you need in order to have that school? Let's say I have to come to build a school. Which skills do you need as a community in order to build a school? Or do you need someone to come from town and do that for you?

Bn: Teaching, protecting, child-care.

T: So, for you it is important to love and care for children as well as their safety?

A: Yes.

T: Okay. I want you to think about what Self-Love has said, that he has some life skills. What life skills are you talking about? Which ones do you have or is there anyone else in the community who has these skills? We will talk about any attitudes, values and skills that you possess.

SL: In terms of life skills, I do have life skills because I did life skills at an NGO that was teaching us that.

T: Please identify them?

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SL: The life skills that I have are about Child and Youth care; HIV Counselling and Testing; and we also facilitated our sessions.

T: And then who will benefit from these skills?

SL: Youth.

T: Okay. And farming?

A: Everyone.

Th: No, for me, it's really not my thing!

T: What skills do you have, wena Sunday?

Su: I think I have child-care and leadership.

T: And you were once all involved in an organisation that did the same thing?

SL: Yes

T: So wena, Banana, what skills do you have?

Bn: Electrical skills?

T: Where did you learn this skill?

Bn: I didn't do any formal studying for this, but at school we did some lessons. I just like doing electrical things even though I am scared of it.

T: Where did you learn this?

Bn: eMthethomusha Primary School.

T: Can anyone else mention the skills they have.

A: Teaching, I have this skill.

Bk: I can say that mine is teaching.

T: Okay. There are lot of skills there. What about leadership? You have been talking about it.

A: Yes.

T: Farming and leadership? Or think about people that you know in the community who are able to do this work . . . Lemon, what did you study?

L: Farming.

T: Oh, okay. But do you have a garden at home?

L: I have skills besides gardening, I love doing plumbing.

Bk: Most of the people with farming skills are mainly lazy. You know [removed to prevent identification] has just graduated. S/he studied agricultural farming at a local FET [i.e. TVET College], but I've never seen him/her doing gardening.

All: (Laughter).

T: You must encourage him/her . . . But tell me guys, do you ever go to places for information?

A: Yes.

T: As far as what education level? How far have you studied?

SL: Education . . . this is one of the things our youth lacks. Most drop out of school because of various issues they might be facing. Some it is just pure laziness, but these are some of the challenges we are facing.

T: What valuable things do you think you can do in the community; what value did you bring to the community?

All: Lowering the crime rate, employment, HIV and AIDS being reduced, drug consuming being reduced, even school drop-outs.

T: Who will benefit in all that?

SL: The whole community will benefit . . . But even though it is now not so easy for things to change. We can go to FET [TVET] colleges so that we can upgrade our education. So that the generation coming behind us, so that they don't go through the same challenges. If all this is done, they might gain from us.

T: Others, what else do you think?

Bk: I would say that if the youth that will be growing after us can learn from this, it will be better. Even crime won't just be stopped. One is even afraid of meeting someone coming from work, and also most people are unemployed. Because even the person that might be working will just realise that even the farms are so far, then they just think they won't manage.

T: What do you think, Thunder?

Th: These things will benefit us, because where we come from most young people are so involved in drugs, so any change will really be great!

T: Now I would like to know about these skills that you have. Where did you get these skills, and how did you learn them? Did you go to a school to learn them or did you learn from certain people? Like you, Banana, where did you learn the skills that you have and how?

Bn: I learnt to operate electricity from my brother. Every time when he would do something, I would be right next to him. I would then see what to do if I see that a wire is in a certain way. So, one day I tried that, and I proved that I could do that even if he's not next to me. So, I believe that one day, if I can be given a chance to work with electricity, I will be able to use my hands.

T: Is this because you observed him doing so?

Bn: Yes, and sometimes I would say to him, bhuti can I try this? Then he would say no! I'm sure that he was doing so because he was scared that the electricity might be dangerous for me. But one day he died, I was then sure that I must work with electricity. Then my mother asked if I was sure about what I wanted to do, I then tried to learn and remembered what I had observed from my brother while he was alive. I am now able to do this thing with my hands. If I combine this wire to that wire, I know what will come out.

T: But you didn't go to any school to study this?

Bn: No, I didn't. But I know, if I see in my own head, how to work with the wires.

T: Okay, you Lemon, what skill do you have or what attitude or knowledge do you have? If so where did you learn it?

L: I have plumbing and carpentry skills. I learnt these at Edendale Technical High School. Because of the plumbing skill, I learnt how to unblock the waste that blocks the toilet. Or if the water is gushing out, I now know how to tie the area that has a leak. I know which pipe works outdoors. There is also a brother from Mthembu family near the logs, he used to ask me to help him and that's how I knew how to cut pipes.

T: So, you said now you ended up studying at school but gained experience by helping someone?

L: Yes, in carpentry we were learning to use wood, planks. All that I learnt at school.

T: It is good that you didn't just learn at school, but you practiced what you have learnt. What about you, Thunder?

Th: The life skills that have been mentioned I also possess. How to use electricity is also something I learnt how to do it through observing then doing.

T: Whom did you observe?

Th: Here in Slovo, we had a problem of having no electricity. Electrical installation is a new thing. Despite this we've long had electricity (everyone laughs). Everybody from Slovo who doesn't know how to operate electricity is just playing.

T: Really, Hhaybo! You were learning (observing) from people?

Th: Yes, we saw this from one person. Another skill that I have is fitting ceiling boards. I also didn't learn this at school but through a job that I had.

T: Where were you working? Here in Slovo, or outside?

Th: It was somewhere in town.

T: Oh, were you taught by someone from work?

Th: I was taught by a co-worker.

T: If I may ask about the respect that you have mentioned, who did you learn it from?

Th: I would say it's the way I was brought up. At home we were brought up differently, so I became different to others. I never used to receive the same love as others, so I

then told myself how I would raise my child if I have one. Also going to Golden Gate helped me a lot. I even learnt to love children because the organisation we were working with taught us about love. I can say that working with these brothers has helped me a lot. I wish our organisation could grow and help all the children.

T: Okay, and you, Self-Love?

SL: I have skills in plumbing, electricity, life skills and child-care. I don't know if I should add teaching, as well?

T: Oh, facilitation?

SL: Yes, facilitation. I know how to do that so well that people understand what I am explaining. Regarding attitudes, I have love for children and safety. I wish that children could be assisted so that they are able to develop well.

Table 7: Skills, Knowledge and Attitudes participants feel they have

SKILLS	KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDES/ VALUES
- Leadership (leading an NGO) - Building - Welding - Plumbing - Electric - Carpentry - Farming - Childcare - Teaching, facilitation - Life skills (HIV counselling & testing; working with teenagers and youth) - Music - Story telling - Mechanical skills - IT	- Education - Gaining information and who to contact - Funding from government - Farming - Childcare - Teaching	- Unity/helping/understanding - Respect/parenting - Passion about building the community - Love for community VALUES - Help with unemployment - Reducing HIV infections - Prevention of drug abuse - Upcoming generation will benefit - Current generation will be better and transformed

T: Where did you learn them? Who did you learn them from? When? How? (Clarify, did you learn these at school, observing someone doing certain things . . . Or what?)

SL: I can say I leant skills mainly from observing people in the community, like we have said. But mostly I was blessed by God with skills to do many things. From the early age of six, I learnt to work with electricity. One day I was jumping in bed and accidentally broke the light bulb. That is where I learnt to do something, so that by the time my family came back home there was light.

All: (Laughter).

T: There is something else I saw in your WhatsApp status, please share with others. Why didn't you mention it, or do you not think it's an important skill?

SL: It's hip-hop music that we do. It's different. We are not like others. We focus on the message.

Th: Basically, it's storytelling.

SL: It's not about what we were or a car that one might drive. Even if we succeed.

Th: We are serious about this!! We compose, perform and do all . . .

T: Oh, do you get any money from doing this?

Th: For now, we are the one's losing.

T: So, you are still investing in it.

SL: Yes, but we are going somewhere with music.

T: Now, where did you learn this?

Th: We had the love, we saw what we needed. You just need to spend time and we will write.

T: I see. Was there a specific person who has mentored or helped you guys?

SL: Sometimes we get these from those recording. They tell us what to do in this genre as it is not like Gospel and others so that we can quickly get to where we want to.

T: Oh, thank you. Sunday, which skill do you have?

Sun: I have skills for working with HIV, leadership, mechanical and IT.

T: Where did you learn this?

Sun: I did IT in a learnership, and mechanical. I also know how to build.

T: Who taught you that?

Sun: My grandfather taught me. He's a builder. I won't even mention electricity 'cos if one has been in Slovo since 2013, they know how to use it. We all do.

Bk: Even climbing up the pole, we know how to do that.

All: Laughter.

T: Now please tell me, the skills that you told me that you have in the community, how did you get them? Let's start with electricity . . . how do you know how to use/work on it? Or how does one get the skills that one needs?

Sun: If there is someone doing something in the community that you are passionate about, you decide to observe them, then you learn.

T: What information or knowledge do you need in order to get these?

All: Facilities and places where we can access information.

Sun: We have skills, but sometimes we need places where we can get information about these.

T: Now, let me ask this. You may think that we are repeating ourselves. How do you think you can easily access the skills that you need? What form will that take? Could it be a training or volunteering or through someone mentoring you? Please explain.

SL: Blacky, for an example, has such knowledge and life skills in leadership, HIV and drug abuse prevention. I think people like them in the community can transfer to us or mentor us who have lesser skills in such areas. Then we will not just need an outsider who doesn't know about our situations affecting our community.

T: What role, if any, do you think the government can play in gaining these? And how?

Bk: I think the government, the only thing they can be giving us is funds, because there is nothing much that they are giving us. We vote anyway but don't get much. They can help us young people to succeed and let us know what to do and give us the funds.

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T: I hear you, do you know to access those funds from the government?

All: No.

T: Okay, we will discuss this later. But what does this make you think? I am so glad that we found that all of us here have so many skills and talents. We spoke about unity, working together and respect. There might be someone who might help us in accessing those funds. There was someone here who said they had been on a learnership?

Sun: It's me.

T: How did you learn of or get involved in the learnership?

Sun: I heard it through someone who was accepted there.

T: Were you able to tell others about it?

Sun: I only learnt of this at 8pm in the evening to start the following day.

T: How does this make you think? What can you say about this whole exercise that I have just done?

Bk: When I look at all these charts on the wall and what my fellows have said, it makes me realise a need for us to continue, maybe have a support group so we come together if we need help on how to do certain things. Maybe we can achieve these things that we want to do.

T: Who do you think can initiate this? What do you think you need to do to get to that support group? Whether it is from me or someone else?

Bk: It might not be easy coming just from us because some of our peers won't take us seriously. Maybe an older person can coordinate that.

T: So how will he go about doing so? Through a councillor maybe?

All: (Muttering)

T: I must ask because I don't know your community as well as you do. In some places you can't do anything in the community without going via such structures. Are there war room meetings [i.e. initiated by the councillor] there?

All: Yes.

T: Do you ever attend them?

All: Yes.

T: Please think about this. Remember I said that I hope that this research might help you think about what you can do about the things you have shared and need. I feel that there is nothing that another person can tell [you] that you were not aware of but they may guide you by helping you come together so that you may see clearly what you can do and how you can do it to move forward. What other avenues can you use to facilitate this?

SL.   I think if we can on our own spearhead something and be serious and committed to it, maybe others will join later as they see us succeed.

T: Yes, for example, in order to gather all of you here, it took one person that I initially spoke to, then they invited the rest of you. This shows an element of leadership. So you can capitalise on that. Help is what you will get when you ask for it, whether it is from outside or within your community. Lemon, what can you say about this whole exercise?

L: This made me think that in our community there are people that don't grow. Although they are older, they sometimes act like children. We can in turn teach others.

A: I learnt respect and patience

Th: What I saw as I was looking at our drawings, is that there is a lot that we can do if we can work together. Because our ideas about what we want to see are good but it needs us to come away with this enthusiasm about working together. If we can take what we have learnt to our community, we might see great changes.

T: Thank you, I want all of us to say what this meant for them.

Bn: What I learnt is that our ideas are good and even those who are in the community could help shape our community for the better. My desire is that if it was possible, what we have learnt today could be shared with the rest of the youth in our area. This is so that if we want to build this area of Slovo, we can know that this one can do this, and the other one that.

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A: I believe that one has to learn respect and put God before anything else. Respecting oneself first in order to respect others. I also learnt that there are many possibilities.

T: Thank you. Blacky?

Bk: To add to the point about support groups that I shared earlier on, the challenge that we face relate to the government or maybe because of not knowing how to do something, is that when we go about asking for help the people that we have elected into positions, tend to think the only things they need to deliver in the community must be tangible (material) things like RDP houses, toilets and roads. If we come with something that will help youth, we are not understood. We see children growing up in poverty, and needing our help, we can help them with the experience we have in life. They see investing in, for example, an NGO and children as a waste of time. We believe if we make these valuable investments, and are given space and resources like money to do so, then we can pass this to our children. Otherwise when you speak to them about such things, sometimes it is viewed like a waste of time.

Sun: What I learnt is that there are different people in Slovo. There are people like us, thinking the right things. And we have a desire to see our place come right (improve). This exercise has given me the stamina to continue with what I have been thinking about. We were talking with Thunder just now. I have a Facebook page from 2015. This is where we were advertising beautiful clothes. I was saying we can start a modelling agency. Someone who is running a modelling agency is willing to help us, but he's from the Free State. Many people want to look beautiful.

All: (Laughter).

T: Thank you all. Let's relax, take a break before the next session.

4.5 PEST analysis

In Chapter Three, I explained that another participatory visual tool which allows people to critically link issues and explore relationships that are not commonly seen by using verbal techniques alone, is a PEST analysis. It looks at political, economic, social and technological factors that may have an impact upon people. I used it with the hope that it would help the participants identify factors at the local/community, national and global level that currently, or will in the future, impact on community and on the skills, knowledge and attitudes that

they have and need for their lives.

T: Now we are going to look at political, economic, social and technological factors
        (also known as PEST analysis) which may impact on how you can access or learn the
        SKA [you think you need]. In pairs you can work at each of these issues on different
        charts. Some may have to work on their own, then we will all share as a group.

        For the PEST analysis, P stands for political, meaning which factors or things can
        prevent/limit us or that can affect or make things easier for us in order to access the
        skills we have mentioned. We will start with the local. If we mention local, we mean
        Slovo. You mentioned some of these issues and you will remember them when you
        need to put them in the right category. Social relates to issues that affect us in the way
        we live, our health, education, grants, and whatever aspects related. The other one, E,
        is for economic. What causes this, what happens to the economy? Then T, which is
        technological, many things, not limited to cell phones and social media, computers
        and even transport. So, we will look at these factors in our local community, Slovo, in
        South Africa, and globally.

SL: Technology is everywhere actually.

T: For now, I am going to give you a work paper and you will come and work here on
        this. Different people will look at different factors. Look at challenges that you might
        encounter, things that can support you. I want you to write both the negative and
        positive factors.

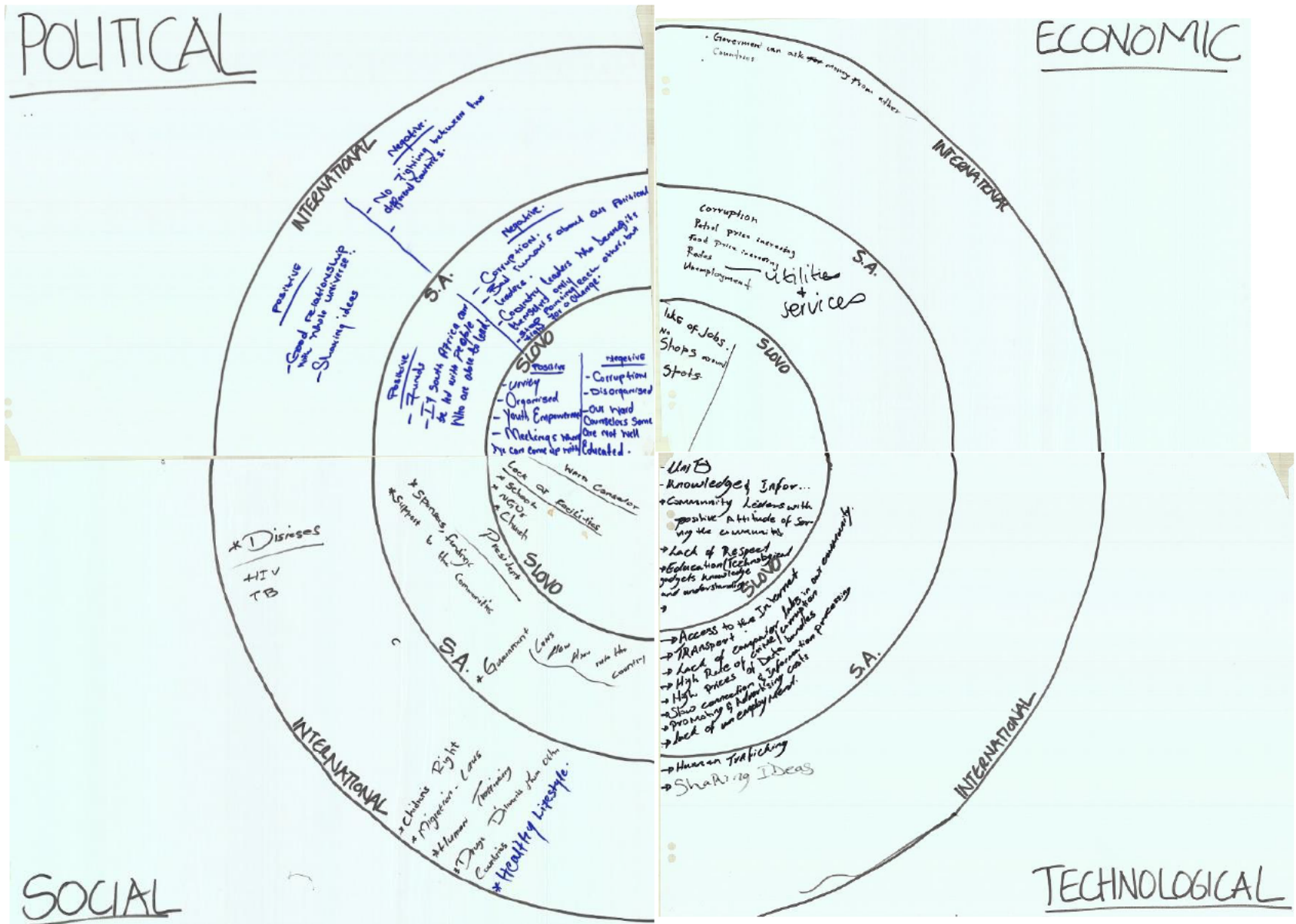The participants then filled in the prepared PEST analysis flipcharts in groups/pairs.

Figure 14:
Completed PEST
analysis

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4.5.1 Presentation of PEST analysis

This activity was then followed by a discussions and reflections on these aspects, and how they could most easily and usefully access and learn the 'valuable' skills, knowledge and attitudes they had identified.

T: What can we say about this exercise, how did it make you feel?

Bk: We are hopeful now because we can see things that we didn't realise before. If the government can play its role for South Africa, there could be a better change. We as the Slovo community can play our role and we can see changes up to the international level. I'm saying this because you cannot get funds here in South Africa but we can get funding outside the country.

T: Okay, let us look at the local level. We will look at what is included there. I see you included a ward councillor. What are you saying about him?

SL: In many things, we need the councillor. But he can't even give us facilities because he is the one who is supposed to give us the things we need in the community. Things like a school, NGOs . . . If we can get a school, we can be saved from many things. Right now, there are children that are at home because the school is too far. People don't want to let the children walk because they don't have money to pay for scholar transport. But if we can get an NGO that can give us the facilities we need, we can teach the skills we have and especially prevention of drug and substance abuse. Even though we warn people against using drugs, they don't seem to know the effects and consequences. Even a church is needed. We are what we are because the church helped us from the issues that were affecting us. But what I think affects us most is the president.

T: Anyone else?

Th: Our president has a problem just like the councillors. When we go to him, he claims the problem is with the president, saying he's also asking for many things which he doesn't get. The last time we went to ask for funds from him, he said they are in the 'red flag', [metaphor used as a warning or a cause for concern that there is a problem with the financial future and/or health of an organisation] he can't give us anything. Another thing is the government laws. Now that cannabis is legalized, many people are affected because it's smoked anyhow. Under the international, we included

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Children's Rights because that's another thing that creates problems is these rights that they have. These rights end up in conflicting with parents' instructions. There is also human trafficking. These drugs that are being trafficked are the main causes of problems. I wonder how can the prevent drugs from being smuggled mostly from other countries to ours. There is also a problem of HIV and AIDS as well as TB [tuberculosis]. If you get any of these diseases, your life and many things are affected including your own children.

T: What does the other group say?

Bk: I also think what they are saying about the ward councillor is right. Next time, we need to choose the right person who will be willing to work for the community. What affects is that we take people from the community because we trust them, but you find that the person is not taught well.

T: Do you perhaps know of a councillor that has done well?

Bk: Yes, there are people that we know who do thing the right way.

T: Please give an example of where is this councillor based.

Bk: Ashdown and KwaPata. The Ashdown councillor knows how to care for people in the community. An easy example is that, he just took all these people who were using drugs and gave them jobs.

SL: Yes, Blacky, adding to what you are saying . . . Like we have said, it's not about just needing things like toilets in our homes but just as the councillor took people and gave them jobs, those people are the ones that need to make a difference in turn.

Bk: That decreases the crime rate. The more people are trained or educated, we are also making them councillors, then they will be able to understand us when we come to the table with suggestions.

T: So that is what you think? What do you mean by being taught/educated? You mean someone who has a degree? A Masters? Do you guys have these degrees?

All: No.

T: But these things were thought by you?

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All: Yes.

T: So, what do you mean being educated?

Sun: Being educated or learned is to know what is needed by your community, that doesn't
        mean that you will necessarily be highly qualified.

Bk: This is so that when people come to the table with something, they can be able to put
        it in a right way

4.5.2 Discussion of PEST analysis

I then led a discussion on the analysis they had done, using the following questions as a
guide:

a)   What are some of the aspects that might impact on the SKA that you need? Mention
        positive and negative aspects.
b)   What do you think can be done to minimise the impact on the lives of community
        members? Can you give examples/people and organisations?
c)   You may have seen or heard about this being done elsewhere? Please tell me more
        about it.
d)   Is there evidence of anything that the local government is doing to give the youth in
        your category some opportunities, especially in this community? Tell me more about it.
e)   If you were to have a chance to such opportunities, what would they look like?
f)   How do you think these will benefit you and your community?

T: Okay, we are doing a PEST analysis now. We are looking at factors that will impact on
        how we access these skills and attitudes. I will start with Group 1 (Political). Tell us what
        aspects will affect you, positive or negative, and if you have seen this being done
        somewhere else. Have you seen this happening in your community? Tell us what you
        meant by this one, funds… politically

Bk: Can I explain?

T: Yes.

Bk: We started by explaining from our small community how the political factors affect
        us positively or negatively. The unity that we see is positive as we need to be united

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so that we can be one thing all the time. Political parties also need to be organised. Structures and organised youth may help us to learn about politics.

T: Okay. Have you ever seen that happening somewhere?

SL: It used to happen back in the days. The previous councillor was facilitating this. But now we don't see it happening.

Bk: There used to be someone working with the councillor who would come to us. But in meetings, I don't ever remember hearing anything about life skills. We would only hear the ANC [African National Congress] saying "we are going to Jacob Zuma's rally, comrades' or else they will fight. That's why we are not attending these meetings because they don't really help us in the end.

A: Yes. Then on the negative side politically, we are dying because of corruption.

T: Is this also at the ward level?

Bk: Even at the ward level. Money that is supposed to do important community things gets used for things that serve their own interests. It is very disorganised. As it is there's been many talks about this community can be moved to another area.

T: Move to another area? Is that a possibility?

Bk: Yes, it possible for us to move to another area like Fedsem [the site of the Federal Theological Seminary] for example.

T: Why do they want to move it?

Sun: They say they want to make this place more urban, so they need to make roads, that's it! Some of these people are not well educated.

T: Now I want to move to the Technology [chart], what did you say about this?

Sun: Wait, wait, I can say that in this unit, there are both sides of the story. There is both good and bad. Maybe if we live in unity and connected to our brothers, because some just like gossip about others in social networks and other avenues. It might even help, maybe someone wants to go and do a B.Ed [Bachelor of Education degree], then I can know how many points I need. We also need to know what type of leaders we need. We also lack respect when it comes to technology. You will find people taking their

nudes to social media like they did to Gigaba. This shows lack of respect because you then don't respect people's privacy. In our area, I can say that not everyone has knowledge of the use of these gadgets like computers and phone. We need to be taught about these. Even our country South Africa, we can't even access the internet well. We can do so but it's not for everyone. Even transport, cars are so advanced nowadays, they could show you information or warnings that are so crucial. Another thing is computer apps, we need those to be able to teach people who do not have that knowledge. The level of crime and corruption is too much. If I know your bank card number, I don't even need your PIN. South Africa has the most expensive data (internet), way above many countries. Petrol is way too expensive.

T: Thank you, let us hear what others say about the economic factors.

Th: As you can see that employment opportunities are so scarce; this is what can bring us down. Rates and utilities.

T: Why do you say about these, how does it affect you, does it affect you positively or negatively?

Th: Negatively.

T: Negative in what way?

Th: As you can see that the economy is so weak. We are also affected by municipal rates which we can't afford; petrol price going up which means that cars will park now because people won't have enough. We use khombis/busses whose fares are going up. So now taking public transport and a private car is the same thing.

T: So according to you, we shouldn't be paying for municipal rates?

All: No, we can pay, but they are very expensive.

T: Okay. Anything else that you want to talk about whether it is internationally or here in our nation? . . . Okay, can you think how we are affected by access to all these things? As we are here in Slovo, we're not an island but part of an international community. Things that happen here on the international level can start there then get down to us. Just mention some of these. What is your role in changing the technology?

SL: What I can say that it is that it is not easy to change technology because applications are already created. For example, if you want to save your pictures, you have to go via that application. If your friend who is in Facebook wants to copy that picture, the app will report and ask for your permission to do so.

T: Okay, what do others say? What role will you play, what influence do you think you possess in these levels?

SL: I think that unemployment is everywhere, but the issue is what we do about it. According to me if possible, I will start a business, then employ people, create branches in many places so that I can curb unemployment. Maybe I can open branches in Durban, East London. . . . By doing so, I will be decreasing unemployment.

T: Okay. I know others will think differently about these things since there are many challenges that you can face before you get there. I want to ask about the skills that you said you have - which are the challenges or obstacles? One of you spoke about Information Technology. What will you do with those skills to reduce unemployment?

SL: Let me take from my life skills. If I can share my life skills with other people, it will change their attitude and the way they think about things and how they view themselves. So, self-confidence is a skill on its own. So maybe I can teach using the skills I have, hopefully they can get jobs.

T: Are there people in this community that are trying alternative means of employment? Many are having the challenge like many in South Africa, everyone has informal employment. Like this part time job that some of you have is not every day. Also, you are not sure if it will end tomorrow or what? So, looking at the alternatives, what will people do? We are seeing a lot in the informal sector. It is not formal, but you can live through that. You make a living. I'm talking about it. Isn't it so?

All: Yes.

T: You, Self-Love, I heard that you rent rooms out to people in your house?

SL: Yes.

T: Is that not a way of living?

All: Yebo.

T: I want to talk about and understand, the way that people live. Some people believe that in order to live or make a life, one can do so in one way only, through working for someone or being formally employed. What are other things….? I believe there are things that you have seen here in your community that can help others for them to earn income or make a living. (Looking at Banana) Did you say you grow vegetables?

Bn: At home we live off gardening, planting vegetables, and we also give others to eat.

T: That's very good.

Bk: I think that for one to be alright (do well) in life…Education is the key. If you're not educated, you're not going to get the right job.

T: Are there people that you know that are educated but do not have a job?

Bk: Yes, there are.

T: So, what kind of education do you think you need, as you are saying only education will help you? What kind of education is that? People go to study, but they are at home without jobs…

Bk: I think that the education that we need here in Slovo is this one: Yes, we need to go to basic education at school, we need to learn first before we get education/skills to do jobs, then go to tertiary institutions where we could get to learn theories, and practicals that we would have learnt at home.

T: As we are here, who has matric?

All: Not all of us.

T: Will you go back to school to finish your matric?

All: No.

T: What is limiting you right now?

Bk: Some of us have issues. For me, it's not going to be easy to go back to school when I have kids that I need to support.

T: Aren't we talking about people like you, who are not in education? I'm not saying it is impossible, but what can be done…? What can help you to get this the knowledge and the skills that you need in order to make your lives better even if you're not in formal education? Also, the things/skills that you said you possess, very few of you learnt those in school or formal education. Most of the things, you learnt from others through learning from what others were doing when you observed them, then you were able to do those things. I'm in no way discouraging you from formal education or training especially since I am also studying. For example, there are people who are raising children, who may say that since they're still at home, there is something they can do. How can all these structures help you get all those things, what can help you? You can mention knowledge, skills…

SL: Blacky spoke about us uniting as groups. So, for me as Self-Love, I don't think education can take you where you want to be in life. There are many people that are needy but it's all about sacrifices. If you hear that they are employing at a certain place, you can tell others and not keep it to yourself.

T: This means you need information?

SL: Yes, information that we can share if we are together. There are people working in Hulamin [one of the biggest factories in the area]. But you find that a person who works there earns more than a teacher who went to study at school. So, if we can form our own group, this thing of ours can continue and not just end here. My desire is for our organisation to succeed but if we approach companies about this unemployment issue, saying we're trying to fight unemployment…If we approach Hulamin, we ask as an organisation that if they have an opening, to take at least three people. That, I think companies would agree because they would see that we are a youth organisation trying to make a difference in the community.

T: Okay, now when you speak of an organisation, what skills or what help do you need for you to reach that level? What is holding you up from realising that?

All: We need funding, that's what's holding us up.

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T: There is funding available I believe, but ways of accessing it?

SL: Also, not to just run for funds when we don't have commitment, because if we were committed, we would have been far now.

Bk: In terms of the commitment that Self-Love is referring to, I think that it was caused by the fact that the things that we were asking from people, we were not getting. That discourages any commitment. Just like our community leader, our councillor, who didn't take our idea in the way that we hoped he would. It all ended up just dwindling down. We need people that can take our organisation and what we do seriously so that we can be motivated.

T: For you girls, with the skills that you have (gained) where do you want to be?

L: I would like to see myself running my own company and open job opportunities. There are people that live with children and you find that they have no food to eat.

T: What type of company will that be? What will you be doing?

L: Plumbing, because that's what I desire most.

T: Will you start by helping the community?

L: Yes, the community, we would also need building material so that we can learn how to build. You will need to know whether the type of soil you have can be able to be combined to wooden logs when building. For instance, loam soil causes termites. That way you find people living in a house that is slanted and about to fall.

T: Okay, so is it lack of knowledge that causes that?

L: Yes.

T: Who can give us this knowledge?

L: Not that I have all this knowledge, we need someone who is more experienced, an outsider who has more knowledge than me who will go out and not charge us.

T: Okay. There is someone who hasn't spoken . . . What do you say, Banana, what is valuable?

Bn: I need to learn more myself before I can even think of opening a company.

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T: When you say you want to learn, we need to think of where we want to learn and how we will learn, who will teach you.

Bn: I need to do research like it's been said, regarding technology. I need to make it a point that I take responsibility of gaining knowledge, asking people so that when I teach others, I am sure of what I'm doing.

T: What is it that you want to do/learn so that we can see where you can be able to get the information you need? I think the youth should be listened to so that what they say is important to them is given priority.

Bn: I want it to be electrical, but I need a way to get this knowledge. When I approach Thunder and ask him about electricity, he might tell me his way, but I need to research on my own so that I am sure and able to be do this on my own.

T: Anyone, last words about this ….?

SL: As we close, my desire is for the people of our community to have knowledge because many do not know and end up not succeeding. With limited opportunities, you find that one person needs knowledge/information, but they are unable to go to another person to say, please give me "experience". They end up judging themselves, which is a problem.

T: Now I will ask each to write in the sheets of paper that I have put on the side: What do you wish your community could be … maybe in 10 to 20 years; what did you find beneficial [about this session]; will you do anything differently (What will it be, and how will you go about doing it)?

4.6 Reflections

I gave them this exercise as chance for them to respond and think about what people have said, what they themselves have said, what they were thinking and how their thinking has changed (if it had).

T: Now I will ask each to write in the sheets of paper that I have put on the side. All to do with our exercise today and how it impacted on you.

The participants wrote on the pre-prepared flipcharts as follows:

1. Of all the things discussed, what is most important to you?
   - To know the youth of our community, everything they wish for the community is great.
   - To have different thoughts about our community - how it must look like in future.
   - Try and change the way of thinking for our community members.
   - Teach them of the benefits of learning, having knowledge, and to whom they can find information/knowledge.
   - To think positively.
   - Respect and listen to other people's thoughts.
   - I found the PEST analysis thought provoking. It taught me a lot.
   - The PEST analysis made me consider changing the way I look at things that affect/impact on me/us.

2. What have you found beneficial about this session?
   - There is a lot to learn from each and every person in this world.
   - From now on, I will give myself time to hear what another person can help me with.
   - Also understand what information or knowledge other people have.
   - There are also a lot people with different skills that we can use in our daily lives.
   - My peers and their ideas made me realise that we as the youth can change the world.

3. Will you do anything differently? What will that be? How will you go about doing so?
   - I will do my best to bring back our NGO, because it could have been a powerful organisation.
   - I believe everything we spoke about can be done.
   - If possible, I will change a lot of unnecessary things in our community and locate/create all the facilities we need.
   - I will try and find enough information/knowledge as I can.

4. What do you as the youth of this community wish shall happen in the future, like 10, 20, 30 years to come?

- To see youth coming together as one.
- Respect for one another.
- Believing in one another.
- Having a better community ever.
- To see community improved in areas of education - (youth going to school)
- Improvement in employment and social issues.
- Decrease in drug abuse.

T: Thank you so much for this knowledge and information that you shared. I had no idea how your community is. I believe it is rich! There is so much one can do through it. Like you have said there is need for people like you to organise yourselves so that you can be able to achieve that and more!

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the data collected using participatory tools, namely Drawing and a PEST analysis, and the FGD discussion on these. The next chapter will focus on the interpretation, analysis and discussion of this data.

Chapter Five: Data Analysis

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented the data I had collected as part of my study. In this chapter, I will focus on interpretation, analysis and discussion of this data, using the literature I reviewed, and my conceptual framework, as discussed in Chapter Two. I begin by considering the participants of my study in relation to the profile of NEETs as presented in Chapter Two. Then, in order to frame my analysis and discussion, I consider the context of the study - as explained in Chapter Three, because this is a case study, a careful consideration of the relationship between the case and its context is required. I then consider and attempt to answer my three research questions:

1. What do the NEETs think would be the most valuable skills, knowledge and attitudes to help them with their lives?
2. According to them, how could these be most easily accessed?
3. What do they think would be the most useful way to learn them?

5.2 Participants

As outlined in the previous chapter, the characteristics of the participants in the study are similar to those in the NEET literature I discussed in Chapter Two. That shows that in South Africa, women are more likely to fall into the NEET category than men (DHET, 2017). However, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, although I was expecting four women and four men, one woman had found a part-time job during the week of data collection. The other woman could not find anyone to leave her child with, so she could not attend. In Chapter Two, I referred to the DHET Factsheet as arguing that 'homemaking' is one of the primary reasons why someone is not in employment, education or training; and some of the youth indicated this as the reason why they are NEETs:

> Some of us have issues. For me, it's not going to be easy to go back to school when I have kids that I need to support. (Blacky)

However, according to DHET's statistics (2017), women are more likely to be homemakers than men; and while most of the participants indicated that they have children, none of the men referred to the problem of childcare, whereas this is clearly the case for the women: One young woman was unable to attend because of not having childcare, and Lemon needed to

leave the discussion early because "I had to leave my child with someone". Interestingly, while my study clearly shows the difficulties childcare presents for women in particular to participate (including in my study), this issue is not discussed in either of the DHET factsheets, nor is it a marked feature in current policy.

Only two of the youth involved in my study have completed matric. This is in keeping with the DHET statistics that show that NEETs tend to have relatively lower levels of education (DHET, 2017). While most of my participants have had various forms of informal or non-formal training, one has (incomplete) formal training from a TVET College. Most of the skills that they have had been gained either through NGOs that they have volunteered in, schooling, involvement in the community or where they have previously worked.

None of them were in full time employment during the time of the Focus Group Discussion. However, all were involved in a range of activities: Banana referred to living off gardening, "and we also give others to eat", Self-Love's family lets out rooms; he and Thunder are involved in making music; and he and Blacky and Lemon are all involved in volunteering in the community in some way. Self-Love, Blacky and Thunder have all taught life skills in NGOs. It would appear that almost all of the youth involved in my study have in some way been involved in electrical connections in the community.

I discuss in some detail below how the 'work' the youth are involved in reflects alternative forms of work (including socially useful labour) as opposed to 'work as waged labour', as discussed in Chapter Two. I also discuss how the youth in my study do not fit the discourse of the NEETs as a potential social threat.

5.3 Context

As explained in Chapter Three, Rule and John (2011) argue that in a case study, the case cannot be understood without situating it in a broader context. Using the spatial metaphor of 'ground', they identify four aspects, Background (the historical and social background of processes and situations); Foreground (the current reality informing the lives of people); Lift ground (public discourse); and Underground (personal and community discourses of people, often hidden and silenced).

Below, I consider what the youth said about their lived experience (foreground) in relation to the socio-economic history (background) which I discussed in Chapter Two. In this, the youth's 'underground' analysis is identified and contrasted with the dominant 'lift ground'.

5.3.1 Background

As explained in the first chapter, the Slovo community is in Plessislaer, an area about 8km from the central business district of Pietermaritzburg. Pietermaritzburg is the second largest city in the KwaZulu-Natal Province and the fifth largest city in South Africa, situated in the Msunduzi Municipality (Msunduzi Municipality, 2019). It is the province's capital city, where the provincial legislature sits, an administrative and economic centre. As discussed in my background section in Chapter One, the Plessislaer area was affected by apartheid legislation, in particular the Group Areas Act (Harkhu, 2014).

As discussed in Chapter Two, the forced removals of people were one of the gross injustices of apartheid in South Africa. However, although in this country it took on a particular racist character, the process of forcing people off land, where they had been surviving through subsistence farming, to the cities, is a global phenomenon closely tied to the emergence of capitalism (CIPSET, 2018; Fairlie, 2009; Jacobs, Lahiff, & Hall, 2003). Large numbers of people are forced to leave their rural land to move to cities. One of the reasons for this was to create a workforce that would be unable to sustain their daily needs except by working for someone else (Treat et al., 2012). The process of urbanisation continues (as does, tragically, the process of forced removals). As I have explained in Chapter Two, according to the *State of the South African Cities Report*, the objective of the RDP was to change the social alienation, injustice and inequality which were inherited in the country after 1994 from apartheid; however, this has not been translated into the fairer, inclusive and integrated cities that was envisaged.

A draft report released by the Msunduzi Municipality of Pietermaritzburg in July 2019 acknowledges that a constant challenge facing the municipality and South Africa as a whole is the need for permanent human settlements. According to the report, Msunduzi is experiencing relatively high urbanization rates, like most of the cities in South Africa. Population in the municipality is unevenly distributed among the 37 electoral wards with the majority living in the Greater Edendale area, of which Slovo is part. In the last two decades, the population of the municipality is said to have steadily increased, from 553 221 in 2001 to 679 039 in 2016, with a further population increase expected by the municipality to between 702 865 (low estimate) or 828 743 (high estimate) by 2021 (Msunduzi Municipality, 2019). The report notes that the high rate of urbanization puts pressure on the city to secure appropriate land for population growth. Part of the plan outlined in the report is the upgrading of informal settlements. The areas that were in the plan for development were those with

traditional dwellings, shacks, informal dwellings and backyard rooms, amongst others. Slovo is one of the areas earmarked for this plan (Msunduzi Municipality, 2019). The participants of the study, however, indicated that they were told that the community might be moved to another area:

> As it is there's been many talks about how this community could be moved to another area. (Sunday)

> Yes, it possible for us to move to another area, like Fedsem for example. (Blacky)

> They say they want to make this place more urban, so they need to make roads, that's it! (Thunder)

Evidence shows that the removal of people is not limited to rural land. Pithouse (2018) argues for a more robust discussion of the urban land issue.

> In an overwhelmingly urbanised country that is rapidly becoming more urbanised, the new willingness to confront the racial dimensions of the rural land question has not been equalled by a willingness to confront the urban land question. This elision is enabled by the elitism that fundamentally shapes how the history of struggle has often come to be imagined, and how the public sphere in which the question of land is contested is frequently understood. (n.p.)

Pithouse suggests that in order to deal democratically with the land issue, we have to take seriously its urban aspect and the knowledge, organization, and thinking of the people.

5.3.2 'Foreground' – participants' lived experience and their analysis of this

While doing the PEST analysis and other activities, the participants identified good things about the area that they like and see as current or potential strengths; but also, problems. In their discussion of the problems, they spoke about both the causes of problems as well as possible solutions, showing that they are able to reflect on their experience, and that they have a vision for their community.

The participants themselves were very open and willing to draw their community and participate in other activities and discussions. These activities showed that they had a positive outlook on life and about the community. None of the participants refused to draw the

community in the future, or suggested the task was a waste of time (since nothing would change); and none of their drawings showed a worse situation, or the same situation, i.e. as is currently the case. In their discussions, none expressed pessimism about the future. The way they worked together also portrayed unity and suggested that they value working together. They also seemed to hold as important what could be seen as positive values. Thunder for example introduced himself as 'a good person'. Some emphasised that they 'love to help' and have a concern for children. There was also faith in other members of the community; and, after the discussion of what SKA the community already possessed, some of the participants expressed good feelings about was already there:

> It made me feel happy because I saw that sometimes dreams can succeed since there are many talents in people. (Blacky)

There was also a sense that unity was one of the important values that the participants felt the community had and needed:

> The unity that we see is positive as we need to be united so that we can be one thing all the time. Political parties also need to be organised. Structures and organized youth may help us to learn about politics. (Blacky)

Furthermore, the participants identified more tangible 'good things' in the community. Most participants mentioned the infrastructure and the convenient facilities that were available to the community, namely, a playground, space for building, roads, passages for people going to work or to the mall which is a 'two-minute walk' (Blacky), municipal buildings, a hospital and a nearby police station.

Although the community itself actually occupies a relatively small area, participants still felt there was enough space for building new things:

> I was drawing my community and saw how it looks, how the spaces look, which allowed me to draw stuff there because I was able to see what can happen there in future in these unused spaces. (Self-Love)

Some of the participants expressed that they do not want to change much about the area. However, they do have a vison of what might make it a 'better place' for everyone. This included gardens that will help families, a school for the children so that they will not need to cross the dangerous roads, a tarred road and a sportsground for both girls and boys. Most see themselves as agents of that change in the community.

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It was evident in the discussions that people are engaged in many activities that are beneficial to them as individuals, but also to the community, and youth and children in particular. Many of these are directly related to 'making a living', either through some kind of income-generating activity, or to meeting a basic human need. These include running tuck (spaza) shops which sell goods to people in the community; selling logs (possibly for building) from the playground; operating shebeens; stealing; gardening for food; connecting people to the electricity grid; building houses; but also child care, youth development, making music and so on. While shebeens and stealing are things that are not valuable to all the members of the community, it seems that they are none the less seen as ways to help individuals with their various needs. The New Economics Foundation (NEF), as cited in Joubert, Smallhorne, Cowen, Ziniades, and Flow (2016), puts forward the argument that people running local economic activities are more likely to hire local people, offer services to enhance local quality of life, spend money locally, and thus maintain resources in the community. In doing so, they will foster community cohesion, and are likely to have a smaller carbon footprint by minimizing the transportation of goods from across communities.

This is corroborated by Motala (2009), as well as a recently published book investigating PSET (Baatjies et al., 2018), both claiming that people undertake a wide range of useful activities in their daily life. These in one way or another support the unemployed:

> These activities, if undertaken collectively, have the potential to graduate into co-operative forms of production and distribution. (Motala & Vally, 2014b, n.p.)

> From what people told us, almost all of those who rely on a cash income receive at least part of this (often the major part) from informal businesses or jobs, often multiple ones. Usually, these are extremely small-scale – providing employment for an individual, or possibly two people (often family members). In a few cases these businesses are more formal, and larger. For example, in Andriesvale, Northern Cape, a tourist attraction has been established allowing tourists to experience a traditional San way of life, and people also sell local crafts. (Baatjies et al., 2018)

While there were many good things happening in the community, the participants also identified a number of problems that they have in the community, but also identified causes and offered possible solutions for these. These included a lack of infrastructure,

unemployment, poverty and hunger, social problems such as crime and substance abuse, a lack of unity in the community, and a lack of faith in the local government to support the community. Many of these problems are interdependent and are also seen by participants as causes of other problems; for example, unemployment, drug abuse, and lack of infrastructure (streetlights, unsafe passages) are seen as causes of crime.

Infrastructure issues

In Chapter Four, the first activity that was done was drawing pictures of their community as they would like it to be in the future. Infrastructure was therefore not surprisingly the first thing that they talked about, since the task required them to think in concrete terms. While they identified infrastructure that was available to them as a positive thing for the community, they also emphasised the infrastructure that is not there or needs to be improved – indeed infrastructure emerged as a major theme in my deductive analysis of the data arising from the drawings. Some of the infrastructure and services mentioned by the participants as lacking were a school, tarred road, streetlights, taps, children's facilities, and RDP houses:

> Then all these houses surrounding the sportsground [should] be changed into
> RDP houses so that our community can look new and good. (Blacky)

Interestingly, Blacky's concern for the houses and spaza shops and so on seems to be beyond a basic need for infrastructure, but rather for the community to look good and new:

> We can also have at least one supermarket because a mall is nearby, a two-
> minute walk. This is so as to remove the number of tuckshops because I don't
> see the need for these. . . . We can even remove these brothers placing poles in
> the sports ground. . . . Shebeens can also be removed because I think we need a
> change. (Blacky)

This could be about social status or class (i.e. aspiring to what is considered 'middle class'). However, it also suggests that some of the participants have adopted dominant ideas about what 'development' means, in wanting a far higher level of formalisation and order, as is suggested by 'removal of tuckshops'; 'demarcations to create order' (Sunday); one big church (Self-Love, Banana); and so on. Some of these proposals clearly do not have a great deal to do with 'needing' a big supermarket, as opposed to local spaza shops, which is probably not really necessary, given the completion of a nearby mall and a shopping centre, both of which are less that 500m from the community.

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Services like electricity and water taps were also some of the things that were identified as lacking or limited in Slovo:

> Here in Slovo, we had a problem of having no electricity. Electrical installation is a new thing. (Thunder)

> Taps are also needed in homes... there are taps, but sometimes one has to travel if they need water because in most cases, these taps have no water in them, things like that. (Banana)

Participants expressed frustration about dealing with some infrastructural issues, because they cannot themselves deal with these. As Self-Love commented, "Regarding housing, I don't think there is much change a person like me can do because even the councillors are failing to solve it". While participants acknowledge a need to consult the councillor or local government, they seem to have little faith in government. Blacky noted that:

> I think that we should be one with the government so that we can be able to do all that we need to do. If we want to change the things that we need to change, we will need to involve the government because the way we do things is according to our laws.

But he later commented "there is nothing much that they [the government] are giving us. We vote anyway but don't get much". They have even less faith in their councillor:

> In many things, we need the councillor. But he can't even give us facilities because he is the one who is supposed to give us the things we need in the community. Things like a school, NGOs. (Self-Love)

They equate the ability of a person to serve the community to being educated:

> Next time, we need to choose the right person who will be willing to work for the community. What affects us is that we take people from the community because we trust them, but you find that the person is not taught well. (Blacky)

The idea of not being taught well in relation to the councillor is also used in relation to the potential removal of the community. Sunday comments that the removal is being proposed because "They say they want to make this place more urban, so they need to make roads, that's it! Some of these people are not well educated".

The term 'not taught well' (*ukungafundiseki*) is usually used in most African communities to refer to people or children who are wayward or those who are not trained well, who do not subscribe to communal values. People 'who are not well educated' do not treat people with dignity and respect, the values linked to *Ubuntu.* This meaning of "not well taught/educated" was explicitly what the youth meant in their discussion on the councillor. When I asked if this meant having a degree, they responded "No"; and when I then asked, "So what do you mean being educated?", Sunday said, "Being educated or learned is to know what is needed by your community, that doesn't mean that you will necessarily be highly qualified". The youth are suggesting that those in government, and in particular councillors, need to be educated to treat people with dignity and respect.

The data show that while the participants shared a belief in the need for basic services and infrastructure, they had other issues and needs that were much more important:

> The challenges that we face related to the government or maybe because of not knowing how to do it, is that when we go about asking for help is that the people that we have elected into positions, tend to think the only things they need to deliver in the community must be tangible (material) things like RDP houses, toilets and roads. If we come with something that will help youth, we are not understood. (Blacky)

As I have said above, their initial focus on infrastructure was probably influenced by the first activity. This focus could also be seen as a reflection of the lift ground of 'service delivery', which has dominated government discourse for decades. As Pithouse (2009) argues, for many years the government has labelled all protests by communities as 'service delivery protests'. This hides the extent to which local communities are protesting against the contempt shown to them by local councillors and government bureaucracy, in their failure to include communities in development planning processes and by threatening to remove them. However, the youth's discussion on 'not being taught well' is in fact a profound critique of this 'service delivery' discourse (and Blacky's quote above supports this) – and in that way, constitutes an 'underground' discourse. The youth's discussion also does not reflect some of the key issues that the Housing Development Agency (2012) identifies in relation to informal settlements. For example, HIV and AIDS (or health in general) were not identified as key concerns. However, poverty and unemployment did emerge as key themes from the data.

Poverty and hunger

In many of their comments, particularly in their PEST analysis and discussion of this, the youth expressed poverty and hunger as the lived reality of many community members:

> There are people that live with children and you find that they have no food to eat. (Lemon)

> We see children growing up in poverty, and needing our help. (Blacky)

Banana's plea that people "have gardens so that they can at least get food in their yards" because of a lack of jobs also reflects this high level of poverty and need; as does Thunder's assertion that people are unable to afford municipal rates and transport costs (something which Self-Love also raised).

In their PEST analysis, the youth showed that they understood that this very local context was not unique. Rather, they recognise much broader influences – in their PEST analysis, the youth identified rising food and petrol prices at a national level, and Thunder argued that "the economy is so weak", and this has resulted in the people in Slovo not being able to afford to pay for services, even though they are willing to: "No, we can pay, but they are very expensive" (Sunday). Rates and services are unaffordable given the high cost of living in general. This could be seen as reflective of the neoliberal processes described in Chapter Two. Kingsnorth (2003) claimed that within seven years of GEAR being introduced, "Up to 10 million people have had their electricity cut off; 10 million have had their water cut off, 2 million have been evicted for non-payment of rent" (Kingsnorth, 2003, p. 26). As is evident from the data, for an extended period, residents of Slovo (including the youth in my study) were connecting themselves to the electricity supply 'illegally' (showing a willingness to deal with infrastructural issues when they feel able to do so). Initially, this seems to have been because the community had not been officially connected to the national grid; however, it is unclear whether these 'people's connections' continue despite the fact that the community is now officially supplied with electricity. If they do, it is also not clear whether this is because of an inability to pay, or a refusal to pay (in contrast with the claim above about being willing to pay for services).

Discussions with the youth in my study showed that they see poverty as related to a lack of job opportunities (as opposed to deeper, structural causes), which reflects the dominant discourse. I discuss this in further detail below. As is also evident from their PEST analysis, the youth identified unemployment (at a national level) and a lack of jobs (within Slovo), as key issues.

Unemployment and 'work'

Most of the youth referred to the issue of unemployment and lack of work in the community at some point, showing their concern over this issue. Blacky claimed that "most people are unemployed", whilst Thunder referred to the fact that "employment opportunities are scarce". The statements show that this problem is common, and is not only limited to these young people in the community. However, they also suggest that for the youth, in our initial discussion at least (i.e. in their introductions of themselves), employment was seen in formal terms.

When introducing themselves, some of the participants referred to themselves as 'not working'. Banana, for example, said, "I'm just always at home", and Blacky said something very similar: "I don't work, I'm at home. I do piece jobs here and there. That's all". This suggests that the way that they view themselves is in relation to formal work or study. In other words, not being in a formal job, or enrolled for further study, means that they are doing nothing.

In terms of their analysis of the causes of unemployment, Thunder's statement suggests that at least some of the youth see a lack of job opportunities (in the formal sector) as the reason why people do not have jobs. Self-Love's suggestion that "If you hear that they are employing at a certain place, you can tell others and not keep it to yourself" also suggests a lack of information about job opportunities might be to blame. However, some also understand unemployment to be the result of low levels of education or lack of skills. Blacky, for example, said "I think that for one to be alright (do well) in life…Education is the key. If you're not educated, you're not going to get the right job". Lemon also suggested this in her argument that farming skills "might help some get . . . employment opportunities".

The youth's analysis thus reflects the lift ground skills discourse discussed in Chapter Two. In terms of this discourse, people need to seek skills so that they are employed; and it is often assumed that people are unemployed because they do not have skills, or the skills that they have are not those needed for the job (skills mismatch). Vally and Motala (2014) argue that the linear relationship between education, skills and jobs is directly or indirectly underpinned by the Human Capital Theory (HCT). The widely accepted view is that HCT is a prerequisite for economic growth and for solving the issue of unemployment.

Added to this is the fact that many thousands of students are fed the daily diet of nothing but HCT…thus they have no conception of any alternative framework by which to explain the social and economic phenomena 'captured' by HCT. (p. 40)

In terms of their analysis of (formal) unemployment, the youth do seem to have accepted this discourse; and this is also reflected in the solutions to unemployment proposed by the youth, which focus on providing more job opportunities (in the formal sector), and increasing skills levels. In their discussion of the future, many spoke about things that could provide formal employment. Lemon, for example, commented that she would love to see factories "so that people can have jobs". The discussion on what made the Ashdown councillor a 'good' councillor included the fact that he provided jobs for people. As can be seen from the discussion, the youth proposed various skills that could lead to formal employment.

However, the youth saw the creation of employment opportunities as their responsibility as well:

> I would like to see myself running my own company and open job opportunities. (Lemon)

> I think that unemployment is everywhere, but the issue is what we do about it. According to me if possible, I will start a business, then employ people, create branches in many places so that I can curb unemployment. Maybe I can open branches in Durban, East London. . . . By doing so, I will be decreasing unemployment. (Self-Love)

This idea – that they should help create formal jobs for others – appears to be part of a strong communal tendency that is evident from the youth's discussion. Even when talking about finding formal jobs, Self-Love proposes that this be seen as a communal rather than individual good:

> If we approach Hulamin [a local company], we ask as an organization that if they have an opening, to take at least three people. That, I think companies would agree to, because they would see that we are a youth organization trying to make a difference in the community. (Self-Love)

This speaks about how they see the potential benefit of one individual as being an opportunity for a community benefit. This resonates with the *Ubuntu* saying '*umuntu*

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ngumuntu ngabantu' as discussed in Chapter Two. This is clearly a very different understanding from the lift ground neoliberal discourse of individualism and competition; and in that sense, is an 'underground' discourse.

While in the FGD the youth spoke about many activities that they and others are engaged in, they clearly did not see these as 'work'. So, Banana's statement that she is always at home is in tension with a later assertion that, "At home we live off gardening, planting vegetables, and we also give others to eat". After I had specifically pointed this out to them, the youth identified a number of different ways that people (including themselves) were earning money (selling logs, letting out rooms, crime, etc.) or ensuring their survival (growing food, connecting themselves to electricity).

In addition, as is evident from the data, far from doing 'nothing', the youth are also involved in a wide range of activities for the good of the community. Some of the activities that they are doing are contradictory, thereby aligned with capitalist forms of production; as were some of the activities they proposed for the future – for example, Self-Love's statement that "if possible, I will start a business, then employ people". However, most of the activities that the youth were involved in were unwaged. For example, most of the youth spoke about caring for children and the NGO that they had been involved in running (Self-Love, Thunder, Blacky). This is also where they facilitated life skills to youth and children. All the youth that were part of the discussion admitted that they are able to do electrical connections (none spoke about being compensated for this). Some are writing and playing music (Thunder and Self-Love) and they claim that it is all for spreading the message. This is a rejection of the HipHop discourse of accumulation as a sign of success. Banana also spoke about her passion for gardening and that they do not just live off this activity but they "give to others to eat". Some activities may have accrued some income (although probably very little), but were always in some way of direct benefit to the community. For example, Lemon was involved in preparing and selling poles for building. She also uses the skill of plumbing in helping with blocked toilets. These activities thus focused rather on 'use value' than 'exchange value' (Holloway, 2010, citing Marx), as discussed in Chapter Two in relation to Marx's concept of the 'dual character' of labour/work. Labour, in Marx's understanding, can be expressed in two ways, either according to its 'use value' or according to its 'exchange value'. Use value relates to concrete labour which is qualitative; exchange value relates to abstract labour which is quantitative. Useful labour or 'productive activity' according to Holloway (2010) is needed in every society, although it can take different forms and is not separated from the social

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contexts of that society. The youth's 'work' thus seems to fit the definition of reproductive labour as "those labours and responsibilities associated with reproducing life" (von Kotze, 2009, quoted in Vally and Motala, 2016, p. 25). This supports Motala and Vally's (2016, 2017) contention that poor communities are generally involved in various forms of socially useful work to the benefit of the broader community; confirms the findings by Baatjes et al. (2018) and Maluleke (2013); and echoes the arguments made in the workshop on "Employment, education, skills and training", held by CERT in 2012. As discussed in Chapter Two, people at the workshop argued that many people living in informal settlements, townships and towns possess valuable life skills such childcare; skills for building things that are needed by communities such as houses, shops and other various things; homecare skills such as cleaning and cooking; taking care of the sick; making music; telling stories; and a range of other skills. People often provide these skills and services as part of 'informal arrangements'/ exchanges which do not always involve money (Treat et.al., 2012).

The youth evidently do see these as valuable; although not as 'work'. The youth's failure to see such activities as 'work', and to talk about themselves as 'doing nothing', reflects the lift ground discourse concerning the nature of work. By equating work with waged labour, those not formally employed are considered to be doing 'nothing'. It also reflects the dominant discourse that NEETs are "doing nothing and going nowhere" (CDE, 2017, n.p.). Some of the youth also reflect the lift ground claim that unemployed people are not profitably using the skills they have acquired to help themselves. This is evident, for example, in Banana's argument that "Other houses do not have gardens but people do not have jobs. So it is better for people to have gardens so that they can at least get food in their yards". It is also evident in Blacky's statement that "Most of the people with farming skills are mainly lazy. You know [removed to prevent identification] has just graduated. S/he studied agricultural farming at a local FET [i.e. TVET College], but I've never seen him/her doing gardening".

This statement reflects a number of things. Firstly, there seems to be a frustration that people that are educated are not working. Secondly, there seems to be a sense that certain vocations, like farming, are less useful, in that they do not translate into jobs or are not able to improve people's lives. Thirdly, it shows that Blacky uncritically believe that it is just pure laziness that prevents the person in question from using the skill s/he has in a productive way. This view that people are lazy reflects the notion that people have themselves to blame for not being employed or improving themselves in some way. It is part of the discourse which makes youth feel that the reasons for being unemployed are their own deficiencies, laziness,

lack of experience and inabilities, rather than broader structural issues, this deflecting attention away from these structural issues (Motala and Vally, 2014a). Self-Love, in referring to the youth that have dropped out of school also commented that, "Most drop out of school because of various issues they might be facing. Some it is just pure laziness, but these are some of the challenges we are facing." Self-Love further reflects the dominant discourse in his understanding that the youth needs formal education in order to change things:

> We can go to FET [TVET] colleges so that we can upgrade our education. So that the generation coming behind us, so that they don't go through the same challenges. If all this is done, they might gain from us.

Social problems

The youth suggested that unemployment and poverty in the community had resulted in a number of social problems, about which they expressed concern. One of these was substance abuse. Thunder commented that where they come from "most young people are so involved in drugs", whilst Self-Love said "Even though we warn people against using drugs, they don't seem to know the effects and consequences". In terms of what they believed should be done in response to this problem, Blacky suggested that there should be bylaws preventing shebeens from operating in the community, "because of the high rate of alcohol abuse that we see happening in our area". The youth thus seem to think that if laws were passed against the sale of these substances in the community, the problem of alcohol and substance abuse would be solved. Others saw the councillor as the one who should contribute to solving the problem of drug abuse by giving people jobs (Blacky, Banana). The churches are also seen as potentially helping to deal with risky behaviour (Self-Love).

Another social concern raised was that of crime. Crime was identified in their PEST analysis chart at various levels (global, national and local) and in various forms (drug trafficking, human trafficking, and corruption). In the discussions, the person that spoke about this the most was Blacky. He mentioned the word "crime" four out of the six times that the word was used, always at the level of Slovo, suggesting crime and violence as a significant problem. This was corroborated by Banana, an 18-year-old woman who claimed that:

> There is constant fighting, beating, stealing and so on. So that is why I drew the (big) streetlight so that one can see clearly because this place is so small and it doesn't have these lights.

However, this does not seem to have been the view of the other youths. The person (Self-Love) who had actually recently experienced crime in Slovo (he was mugged), for example, did not refer to this event until it was raised by someone else.

Blacky identified key causes of crime in the community as unemployment and infrastructure problems; and thus the solutions he proposed were directly linked to these. Blacky said "One is even afraid of meeting someone coming from work, as most people are unemployed", and that getting jobs "decreases the crime rate"; and that "In the dark it is easier to do crime" (referring to the lack of streetlights). During the brainstorming of how their skills could benefit the community, the others argued that lowering the crime rate was one of the things that these skills could achieve. Blacky seemed to reflect the skills discourse as well as dominant discourse regarding the causes of crime in saying, "Even crime can be reduced, because maybe people may stop stealing since they would then learn ways of earning/creating an income".

In referring to the broader context, Sunday describes one of the contributors to crime as being technology: "Technology also increases the level of crime. The level of crime and corruption is too much". Indeed, corruption came up prominently on their PEST analysis chart – it appears on the political, economic and technological charts, at both national and local level.

As already discussed, the youths expressed concern about hunger and poverty; but their greatest social concern related to the safety and well-being of children in the community. Almost all the participants have their own children, but all expressed a concern about children in the community more broadly in one way or another. This was particularly apparent when they started talking about the skills they possess, in relation to needs in the community. As already discussed, children living in poverty and having no food to eat was raised. There was also an evident concern about children's safety (although mostly in relation to traffic, rather than crime). The participants indicated that there is no school in the area. Most children have to either travel a distance of about 1.5km to the nearest schools or use scholar transport. Those who walk do so via very busy roads and can end up meeting with accidents. The other alternative, which is scholar transport via private vehicles, is not affordable to all the residents of the community as some are unemployed or have very little household income. As the participants pointed out, 'public' transport (i.e. minibus taxis) is also increasingly unaffordable.

The participants thus made a number of proposals about what should be done, including a playground and a school; but reviving an NGO, described as a drop-in centre for the children, was proposed by most of the participants (men and women):

> Things like a school, NGOs…If we can get a school, we can be saved from many things. Right now, there are children that are at home because the school is too far. People don't want to let the children walk because they don't have money to pay for scholar transport. But if we can get an NGO, that could give us the facilities we need. (Self-Love)

> I will do my best to bring back our NGO because it could have been a powerful organisation. (Unattributed comment on flipchart)

> We also need to have at least one NGO that can empower youth and teens that grow up in Slovo. (Blacky)

> The idea of an NGO is needed or a Community Centre because we do not have one. (Banana)

> I wish our organization could grow and help all the children. (Thunder)

From the discussions, it seems that the participants were lamenting over the 'failed' NGO and would like to revive it or start afresh. This once again reflects the ways in which these young people are making a contribution to their communities – i.e. engaging in social useful labour (as opposed to constituting a social threat). As Vally and Motala (2016) argue, many such initiatives are fragile, embryonic, and can fail; and certainly the NGO appears to have received little or no external support. The youth felt that government should have provided support for this kind of initiative. Self-Love complained that the local councillor is "supposed to give us the things we need in the community. Things like a school, NGOs", whilst Blacky commented that government focused on tangible services, and "If we come with something that will help youth, we are not understood". Blacky argued that funding was really the only way the government could help:

> I think the government, the only thing they can be giving us is funds, because there is nothing much that they are giving us.

The playing space for children was emphasised. Even Blacky who seemed to talk more of the development of the area for houses and shops, saw a need for a playground. The youth

reported that there is a playground in the community, but that it is used more and more by other people, for example, by those who are selling logs. While this shows that people are making a living using the spaces that are available, the participants feel that these should be used for the common good and especially for the benefit of children.

As discussed in Chapter Two, some of the literature shows that the concern about young people who are NEETs is not just about economic exclusion but that they might present social problems like 'risky behaviour' (Eurofound, 2012), or 'poverty, crime, violence' (National Treasury, 2011). While the participants shared these as part of their context, none of the data suggests that they themselves are directly linked to these. On the contrary, as I have shown above, the participants are involved in various socially useful activities in the community that are in fact helping with social problems.

Lack of unity

Community unity, or lack thereof, emerged as a key issue in the focus group. The issue was first identified by Self-Love in the discussion following the presentation of the drawings, on what they felt they could do to help create the ideal future community, when he said, "Firstly, we need the community to be united in order to work together". In her response to this, Banana suggests that the lack of unity relates to differences in opinion:

> We also need to agree and understand that there will be respect for people's opinions when we meet. (Banana)

In the discussion on the skills, knowledge and attitudes the youth already possess, they identified "unity/helping/understanding"; and unity was identified as a positive aspect at the local level in the PEST chart. This was contrasted to negative factors currently existing. In reporting on the chart, Blacky commented that, "The unity that we see is positive as we need to be united so that we can be one thing all the time". In their various comments, the youths were evidently contrasting the current situation with both a previous period (when they were organised in a youth project), and an ideal future. There was also a concern that in some of their efforts to forge unity as the youth, they might not be taken seriously by peers. Blacky suggested that, "Maybe an older person can coordinate that". Lemon on the other hand also voiced her frustration with others, especially those who are older: "This made me think that in our community there are people that don't grow. Although they are older, they sometimes act like children".

As is evident from the discussion above, in their portrayal of the problems they experience in their daily lives, and their analyses of the causes and solutions, the youth involved in my study relentlessly spoke about these in collective, rather than individual, terms. Their concern about poverty and hunger was invariably expressed as an issue affecting others (especially children), as was their concern about substance abuse and crime. This could be interpreted as a reluctance to acknowledge how these have personally affected them; but their discussions about unity, and their repeated emphasis on sharing their skills and knowledge (and, indeed, jobs as discussed above), as well as the extended discussion on some kind of NGO, suggests that there is a high level of communal commitment by the youths.

> If I can share my life skills with other people . . . Yes, information that we can share if we are together. (Self-Love)

> My desire is that if it was possible, what we have learnt today, could be shared with the rest of the youth in our area. This is so that if we want to build this area of Slovo, we can know that this one can do this and the other one that. (Banana)

> What I saw as I was looking at our drawings, is that there is a lot that we can do if we can work together. Because our ideas about what we want to see are good but it needs us to come away with this enthusiasm about working together. If we can take what we have learnt to our community, we might see great changes. (Thunder)

These statements suggest that they acknowledge that "even those who are in the community could help shape our community for the better" (Lemon), including themselves. As I have shared above, unity, sharing and being one came up many times in the discussions, showing the extent to which the youth value these traits. As discussed in Chapter Two, Ramose (2002a) defines *Ubuntu* as sharing and caring for others; ultimately, he says, this is humaneness. When people practise *Ubuntu*, they show compassion towards others, going out of their way to care, give and help those in need. This not simply about being well-mannered, or displaying good behaviour – it is an intrinsic part of being a human being, as is expressed in the saying *"umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu"* – that a person is a person through his or her interconnection with others (Letseka, 2012; Ramose, 2002b). The youth in my study consistently spoke in ways that went beyond caring for their own individual needs to express concern and care for children, fellow youth, and the community at large, and a desire to ensure that they are cared for and valued. In this, they expressed a connection to others.

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5.4 Skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to respond to this context

The youths' understanding of what SKA would be most useful to them, and how they could best obtain these, needs to be seen against their lived context and analysis of this, as discussed above. This brings me to my three research questions. Below, I consider my data in relation to each of these.

5.4.1 Research Question 1: What do the NEETs think would be the most valuable skills, knowledge and attitudes to help them with their lives?

In order to understand what the participants think are the most valuable skills, knowledge and attitudes that they need, I first focus on what SKAs they individually or collectively have and why they think these are useful for them. These include both soft and hard skills.

Valuable skills

The youth identified a range of skills that they felt that they collectively had, many of which they evidently valued. One of these is leadership skills. At least three of them (Blacky, Self-Love and Thunder) together with other youth in the community established an NGO which is not currently functioning. They also believed that they had skills such as child and youth care, HIV prevention education and counselling, facilitation and teaching. They felt that the life skills that they have gained were useful for the work that they started with the NGO, as well as in other organisations in which they have volunteered, in order to tackle the issues that they had identified in their analysis of their immediate context:

> If we can get an NGO that can give us the facilities we need, we can teach the skills we have and especially prevention of drug and substance abuse. (Self-Love)

In the context of unemployment and poverty, the youth believed that their own skills could be directed at helping people so that they could be employed or make an income. This was the case for both soft and hard skills:

> Let me take from my life skills. If I can share my life skills with other people, it will change their attitude and the way they think about things and how they view themselves. So, self-confidence is a skill on its own. So maybe I can teach using the skills I have, hopefully they can get jobs. (Self-Love)

Having said this, as discussed above, they do not necessarily regard this as 'work'. They seem to understand these kinds of activities as part of what they need to do as members of the community and of their families. As discussed above, the youth frequently talked about a concern for the children in the community, and skills that would enable them to help children in some way emerged as key. So, in talking about children growing up in poverty, Banana felt that "we can help them with the experience we have in life".

They thus saw a need for parenting skills for parents in the community. Their motivation for this was evidently also influenced not only by what they see in the community, but by their own upbringing, which many claim was challenging. Self-Love mentioned the fact that he was raised by a single mother who has since passed away. Thunder commented that "At home we were brought up differently, so I became different to others. I never used to receive the same love as others, so I then told myself how I would raise my child if I have one". The youth believe that one of the key skills that parents require is the ability to teach respect, which they felt was lacking amongst children.

The youth were also skilled in making their own music coupled with storytelling, but indicated that they would like be able to have recording skills as well. It was interesting that Self-Love did not immediately mention this skill until asked about it, suggesting that he has been influenced by dominant ideas of what constitutes a 'useful' skill (i.e. one that brings in money, but also possibly STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths)), as discussed in Chapter Two, in preference to creative arts. The extent to which these creative skills are considered 'valuable' is thus debatable.

There are also a number of hard (largely vocational) skills that various participants claimed to have, and those who did not have these skills agreed that they and their community needed them. These hard skills were thus considered valuable. These included skills in building, welding, plumbing, electrical work, carpentry, farming/gardening, mechanical work and IT. It is interesting that most of the skills that they mentioned are those that help them with their daily lives. For example, a number of them have building skills, including Lemon, a woman, which is relatively unusual. As I have mentioned, houses in the community are mainly traditional and informal structures, and this skill seems useful to them as they need it for shelter. Moreover, for people, like Self-Love, who make a living out of renting out rooms, building adds to their livelihood. As mentioned, 'legal' electricity was not available in the community until recently. A skill for using electricity is one that people believe they should

have, as it will help them when problems with connections and lack of services occur in informal communities.

Knowledge that is 'useful'

As is evident in the discussion above about skills, knowledge is connected to the skills that they need in their lives. For example, Lemon mentioned that it is important to know what materials are needed for building:

> You will need to know whether the type of soil you have is able to be combined with wooden logs when building. For instance, loam soil causes termites. That's why you might find people living in a house that is slanted and about to fall.

Her knowledge, of soil from farming, and of the poles used for building, is useful for constructing houses that are strong, durable and safe.

As is clear from the discussion on valuable skills above, it is evident that the youth value knowledge that will benefit other people in the community, and not only themselves. This is also clear in Self-Love's assertion that when people know about employment opportunities, "you can tell others and not keep it to yourself". It is also the case in the youth's identification of the need for political education for the community members, leaders (councillors) and the participants themselves:

> Political parties also need to be organised. Structures and organized youth may help us to learn about politics. (Blacky)

Whilst it is not clear (and I didn't probe) exactly what Blacky meant by learning about politics, the discussion following this statement suggests that, as in the case of the skills the youth consider valuable and the kinds of knowledge discussed above, Blacky was thinking about knowledge that would allow the youth to attempt to address an issue they were directly experiencing in their immediate context – i.e. what they perceived as the failure of the current councillor and the government more broadly to address their felt needs. The youth argue that the current councillor is not delivering and is unhelpful and unresponsive (as has already been discussed); but they see this as symptomatic of a broader political tendency. From what the youth say, political meetings in the area are largely dysfunctional:

But in meetings . . . We would only hear the ANC saying "we are going to Jacob Zuma's rally, comrades' or else they will fight. That's why we are not attending these meetings because they don't really help us in the end. (Blacky)

Blacky also claims that corruption at a ward level is prevalent:

Money that is supposed to do important community things gets used for things that serve their own interests. It is very disorganised.

I have shared above that while these young people had the leadership and life skills needed to run an NGO, it had failed. Whilst a lack of knowledge about how to access funds and how to lead an NGO were given as reasons, unity or a lack of commitment were repeatedly mentioned. This relates directly to what kinds of attitudes the youths value.

Attitudes that are valuable

As is evident from the discussion above, attributes such as respect, unity, commitment, people doing things for others, such as caring and sharing, parents loving their children, all emerged from the data as being valued by the youth. By contrast, there is little or no evidence that the youth value ambition, competitiveness, getting on in the world, wealth, and consumerism.

Regarding the NGO that many of them had been involved in, Self-Love claims that the failure of the organisation was not just because of a lack of funds, but also because of a lack of commitment of members," because if we were committed, we would have been far now". Blacky argued that commitment is hard to retain when there is little support:

In terms of the commitment that Self-Love is referring to, I think that it was caused by the fact that the things that we were asking from people, we were not getting. That discourages any commitment. Just like our community leader, our councillor, who didn't take our idea in the way that we hoped he would. It all ended up just dwindling down. We need people that can take our organisation and what we do seriously so that we can be motivated.

As already discussed above, unity was one of the most emphasised aspects in the discussions in the focus group, related to the NGO, but also to the community in general. One of the things the youth identified in their discussion of an ideal future community was increased unity amongst the churches. According to the youth, there are more than five churches in

Slovo itself, and this is dividing the community:

> In Slovo, most churches are in the Twelve Apostolic denomination which are all different, doing different things. You find many churches meeting in people's homes. (Thunder)

Banana thus argued for a single church, "One that is powerful because the other ones are not powerful. In some of them you find that they don't even read the Bible. So, they are all separated, saying different things". Self-Love also argued for a single, powerful church; and saw the potential for the church to help with social issues. However, he also critiqued some of the churches for not promoting good values:

> There are some [churches] but things that happen there do not encourage children to be who we expect them to be in future. Most of the ministers of these churches do so many bad things in front of us such that many people do not go to church because of that.

Nevertheless, most of the youth appear to value faith, and in particular Christian faith and values. Respect seems to be one of the values connected to this. Respect was identified right at the start of the FGD as a ground rule. At the end of the FGD, in their list in response to the question "Of all the things discussed, what is most important to you?", someone wrote, "Respect and listen to other people's thoughts"; and in response to "What do you as the youth of this community wish shall happen in the future, like 10, 20, 30 years to come?", "Respect for one another" was written.

In the FGD itself, respect was mentioned several times in relation to children, to peers and to community members. Respect was also frequently related to the issue of unity; for example, as referred to above, Banana argued that people's different opinions needed to be respected when Self-Love raised concerns about unity. Sunday also connected respect and unity:

> Maybe if we live in unity and connected to our brothers, because some just like gossip about others in social networks and other avenues. . . . We also lack respect when it comes to technology. You will find people taking their nudes to social media like they did to Gigaba. This shows lack of respect because you then don't respect people's privacy.

Respect, unity and commitment all relate to interpersonal and communal relationships; and as discussed above it is clear that the youth highly value such relationships and emphasise communal over individual traits. This is evident in their vision for their community as a place in which children are cared for, jobs and livelihoods created for all, no one goes hungry, everyone is safe, and skills and knowledge is shared. The youth also showed a relentless drive for the collective in order to do things for the community. Blacky commented that, "When I look at all these charts on the wall and what my fellows have said, it makes me realise a need for us to continue, maybe have a support group so we come together if we need help on how to do certain things".

The youth, however, recognise that their values are generally not those of political leaders in particular, as has already been made clear in the discussion about the councillor being 'not well taught'. Blacky also commented about the councillor and political leaders that:

> If we come with something that will help youth, we are not understood. . . . They see instead of investing on e.g. NGO and children as a waste of time. We believe if we make these valuable investments, and are given space and resources like money to do so, then we can pass this to our children. Otherwise when you speak to them about such things, sometimes it is viewed like a waste of time.

In their discussion of what they consider to be valuable SKA, it was also evident that the SKA they already have were accessed in various ways other than through formal education.

5.4.2 Research Question 2: According to the participants, how could these SKAs be most easily accessed?

In explaining how the participants thought they could easily access the SKAs they feel are needed (i.e. where they could go to get these), it is important to note how they have accessed skills previously, what they thought about this, and whether they think there are other useful ways of doing so.

As mentioned above, most of the participants did not complete matric and therefore had few skills that had been formally acquired. Sunday, who has more formal skills than others (he had mechanical engineering and IT skills), had accessed these through studies at a local TVET College as well as through a learnership that he recently attended. Some also got skills from school:

> I have plumbing and carpentry skills. I learnt these at Edendale Technical
> High School. (Lemon)

> Electrical skills . . . I didn't do any formal studying for this, but at school . . .
> Mthethomusha Primary School . . . we did some lessons. I just like doing
> electrical things even though I am scared of it. (Banana)

Although the youth did not speak extensively about formal education as having provided them with the SKA they have, they do seem to believe that it remains an important avenue for learning. This is evident in their emphasis on the need for a school in the community, and their concern about children not being able to get to school safely. Blacky's suggestion that they perhaps start with Grade RR also suggests at least some of the youth feel that children should be in school from a very young age. In response to the question, "What do you as the youth of this community wish shall happen in the future, like 10, 20, 30 years to come?" at the end of the FGD, they wrote "To see community improved in areas of education (youth going to school)".

Many of the youth said that they had learned the skills that they have through organisations in which they volunteered:

> Going to Golden Gate helped me a lot. I even learnt to love children because
> the organisation we were working with taught us about love. (Thunder)

> Maybe one would need to learn life skills that can be passed onto children. I
> learnt these skills from an organisation called Golden Gate. I think that all
> those skills could be used to develop the lives of the children. In terms of life
> skills, I do have life skills because I did life skills at an NGO that was teaching
> us that. . . The life skills that I have are about Child and Youth care; HIV
> Counselling and Testing; and we also facilitated our sessions. (Self-Love)

Some of the skills were learnt in church; although, as discussed, not all of the youth are of the view that all churches are valuable to the participants and the community. As discussed, Self-Love is critical of some of the churches; but also argues that churches can play an important role. Self-Love was also one of the most outspoken about the need to revive the NGO, specifically because "we can teach the skills we have" (and thereby tackle substance abuse). Self-Love, at least, seems to believe that there is a need for avenues that can provide valuable SKA. In the discussion, however, Self-Love mentions that he is blessed with these skills. This

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may, however, mean different things. It might mean that he is appreciative of the skills that he has gained, or it might mean that he was born with skills and did not necessarily learn from anyone.

The youth had learnt most of the SKAs they have from family members, neighbours, and work colleagues, and had also taught themselves when they needed to solve issues. Lemon, for example, gained a lot of other skills in the neighbourhood while helping others there:

> There is also a brother from [anonymous] family near the logs, he used to ask me to help him and that's how I knew how to cut pipes.

Thunder learned from a co-worker:

> Another skill that I have is fitting ceiling boards. I also didn't learn this at school but through a job that I had… I was taught by a co-worker. (Thunder)

Others learned from family members:

> My grandfather taught me. He's a builder. (Sunday)

> I learnt to operate electricity from my brother. (Banana)

While Banana had mentioned earlier on that she learned about using electricity from primary school, she also emphasised that she mastered this skill through observing her late brother:

> I learnt to operate electricity from my brother. Every time when he would do something, I would be right next to him. I would then see what to do if I see that a wire is in a certain way. So, one day I tried that, and I proved that I could do that even if he's not next to me. So, I believe that one day, if I can be given a chance to work with electricity, I will be able to use my hands.

A value that Thunder had learned from a bad family background was love and respect. He claimed, "I never used to receive the same love as others, so I then told myself how I would raise my child if I have one."

By the end of the FGD, the youth seemed very clear that they had recognised that not only they, but others, had useful SKA. When I asked them "Of all the things discussed, what is most important to you?", some of their answers were:

- There is a lot to learn from each and every person in this world.

- From now on, I will give myself time to hear what another person can help me with.

- Understand what information or knowledge other people have.

- There are a lot people with different skills that we can use in our daily lives.

When asked of the role of the local government in helping them access SKA, the youth argued that whereas some skills training used to be offered, this is no longer the case:

> There used to be someone working with the councillor who would come to us. But in [recent] meetings, I don't ever remember hearing anything about life skills. (Blacky)

The little faith the youth have in the ability or willingness of local government is presumably why no-one suggested that this was a useful mechanism to deliver any meaningful SKA.

5.4.3 Research Question 3: What do the participants think will be the most useful way to learn the necessary SKAs?

As is clear from the discussion above, most of the youth learnt the SKA they have outside of formal education institutions. They thus learned informally and non-formally rather than being educated/trained through formal education and training. Whilst the youth did not explicitly argue that others in the community would most easily access useful SKA this way, they did suggest this would be a useful way to pass on the SKA already available within the community; and that such 'teachers' and SKA were more likely to be useful, because they were located within their context. Blacky, for example, was identified by Self-Love as having

> such knowledge and life skills in leadership, HIV and drug abuse prevention. I think people like him in the community can transfer to us or mentor us who have lesser skills in such areas. Not that we will just need an outsider who doesn't know about our situations affecting our community.

The youth showed that learning by doing is an important feature of people's informal learning (Baatjes et al., 2018). For example, skills like working with electricity, building and others were learnt by observing others and then practically doing the activities. There was also an emphasis on peer learning where those who are skilled amongst the group are seen as those who could teach others. Some even spoke about a need for a support group that would help facilitate the learning space. Having identified their needs, the participants realised that

the community had enough resources for co-learning: Self-Love said, "I can say I leant skills mainly from observing people in the community".

Blacky, however, seems to be emphasising a more formal route, whilst recognising the importance of 'practical' learning in the home:

> I think that the education that we need here in Slovo is this one: Yes, we need to get basic education at school, we need to learn first before we get education/ skills to do jobs, then go to tertiary institutions where we can get to learn theories, and practicals that we would have learnt at home. (Blacky)

Moreover, for some of the youth, like Self-Love, it seemed that learning was a result of a direct experience related to a real or perceived need and as a way of problem-solving:

> From the early age of six, I learnt to work with electricity. One day I was jumping in bed and accidentally broke the light bulb. That is where I learnt to do something, so that by the time my family came back home there was light.

Both Thunder and Self-Love learned the skill of writing and playing music through doing and learning from others already doing it. Thunder claimed, "We had the love, we saw what we needed". Self-Love concurs that, "Sometimes we get these from those recording. They tell us what to do in this genre as it is not like Gospel and others so that we can quickly get to where we want to".

5.4.4 Discussion on Research Questions

As I have argued above, there are many ways of contributing to society other than through formal labour. The literature which critiques the dominant discourse reviewed in Chapter Two shows that people in communities do things that are valuable to others or with others. These young people defy the assumptions regarding NEETs, that if they are not in formal employment or education and training, they are not doing anything useful, and are a potential social threat (Avis, 2014; DHET, 2012; NPC, 2012; NT, 2011). This challenges the assumption that the only way of making a contribution to society is through the formal economy. People who have been exploited by the system are not sitting back but are finding ways to be useful, and to make a living by doing activities that are fulfilling. As is clear, the youth are involved in activities which are termed as 'doing' (Holloway, 2010), and 'making life' (Baatjes et al., 2018; CIPSET, 2018) or socially useful labour (Motala, 2009). Socially useful labour helps people contribute not just to their livelihood but to those around them

(Baatjes et al., 2018; Vally & Motala, 2017). Socially useful labour involves supporting people who need care (such as the children in the Slovo community); music and arts; building; repairs; and so on (Vally & Motala, 2017). This "wide diversity of work . . . takes place in the interstices of capitalist production even though it is often wracked by contradictory forms" (Vally & Motala, 2016, p. 24); and "these activities are undertaken collectively" (Motala, 2009, n.p.).

As I will explain further below, the value system of my youth participants really does not seem to 'fit' the 'ideal human being' a la current neoliberal hegemony. These young people show that they do not just care for themselves but for the good of others and their community in general. As I explained in the second chapter, Murithi (2007) explains *Ubuntu* as people being available to serve and be available to others because they know they belong to the greater community. That in turn makes them human. When *Ubuntu* is practised, one sees people who are compassionate, going out of their way to care for, give to and befriend others. Respect is also one of the key values espoused in the *Ubuntu* philosophy:

> It is *botho* [*Ubuntu*], understood as being humane, respectful and polite
> towards other human beings, which constitutes the core or central meaning of
> the aphorism; '*motho ke motho ka batho*' [*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*]
> (Ramose, 2015, p. 70.)

It was apparent throughout, that the youth needed information on how to get resources or engage government and relevant people for such. Motala (2014) suggests that active citizenry is needed in order to access public goods and services while maintaining democratic accountability and informed decision-making for themselves and society.

Almost all the participants saw that the skills that they have (soft and hard) can help improve the lives of people living in the community if there is respect and unity. As was found in the EPC research (Baatjes et al., 2018), there is a desire to 'build character' and learn values; for developing and nurturing talent through music. They also realised that if they and the community receive these SKA, this can improve the lives of all. This is in keeping with what Maluleke (2013) found in his study - the NEETs stressed that while learning how to survive in society is important for individuals, it is also important for them to know how the other members of their communities survive. This means people must not be individualistic, but must use their abilities, knowledge and resources to help the people around them.

Baatjes et al. (2018) report that the EPC study found that people value learning that is not distant from the daily lives and realities, something which Maluleke (2013) also found. Maluleke, based on his study of NEETs in a Limpopo village, argues that vocational education must be 'context-dependent', equipping people with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in their daily lives. This is clearly a view held by the youth in my study.

In terms of how people prefer to learn, according to Baatjes et al. (2018):

> Many people we spoke with identified peer learning and learning communities as preferred learning modalities. Peer learning and learning communities create space for people to critically engage with new information, learn from one another and through dialogue, and emphasise the co-construction of new knowledge and skills. (Baatjes et al., 2018, p. 237)

As with the participants of the EPC research, the youth showed that learning by doing is an important feature of people's informal learning (Baatjes et.al., 2018). This seems to give them confidence with what they can do with their own hands, heart and 'head' (CIPSET, 2018). This they see as relevant in helping them to make a living, given the level of unemployment; but also to help them in building their community. Given their focus on community, it is not surprising that the youth in my study mentioned the fact that they prefer learning from people in the community who understand their situation better. This is in keeping with Baatjes et al.'s (2018) argument that PSET should be 'co-constructed' by the people involved in learning so that it responds to their felt needs (Baatjes et al., 2018).

As I have shared above, there was a positive attitude toward the activities and towards their community, despite the challenges that it has. One of the things that I noticed was that few of them mentioned formal learning or institutions, either in relation to how they learned the SKAs they have, or in terms of how they could access or learn the SKAs they still feel they need. When asked about the information or knowledge they needed to get these skills, they all answered, "Facilities and places where we can access information". Sunday further clarified that "We have skills, but sometimes we need places where we can get information about these". Throughout the entire FGD, there was barely any mention of CET. This is despite the fact that there is a Youth Centre created for this purpose and a TVET College all within a 5km radius from the community. This might have been caused by the fact that most have not completed schooling, although most had the necessary level (Grade 9) to enter a TVET College. It is not necessary to complete their matric before going to a TVET college.

While they have many skills at their disposal, they were still not comfortable with mentioning that they do not have matric. This shows that formal qualifications are still regarded as superior to practical skills. However, there was also absolutely no mention of the Community College or any adult education initiative. OECD (2019) claims that the Community Education and Training (CET) colleges continue to be affected by high dropout rates, low quality, low visibility and poor image; and my study certainly confirms its apparent invisibility, and suggests that the intention to use the colleges as the primary mechanism to deal with the NEET 'problem' is not being met. Nonetheless, I believe that the improvement of this CET system could provide the necessary information, skills and education needed in these young people's lives. The CET system in South Africa is more specifically targeting precisely people like those in this study, yet none of them mentioned this system at all. Either (as is likely), DHET in general and the KZN Community College have been unsuccessful in getting any information to people about this system, so that they do not know about it; or, if they have heard of it, they cannot see that it has any relevance to them.

CIPSET (2018) argue that "students should go through an educational process and exit that process as concerned citizens - concerned citizens as in those who have a greater understanding of socio-economic and political (as in power) issues and who act for change" (p. 16). Whilst my participants clearly show understanding of socio-economic and political issues at the micro level, in general, the participants seemed to have relatively little international or even national knowledge or an understanding of the impact of global events in their PEST analysis. This could reflect a lack of exposure to or interest in such discussions; but given their interest in local-level issues, it seems more likely that their formal education (and possibly non-formal education) has not encouraged this kind of concerned citizenship.

While there are many things that the youth feel the same about, like the infrastructure issues, care for the children, social issues affecting them and a need to be united as I have shared above, there are considerable differences as well. As seen in their PEST analysis and the discussions about their drawings, they seem to differ in their understanding or the role that the government should play in their community. Firstly, some like Blacky, see the councillor as individually to blame for not supporting them in what they need, for example when they needed support for the NGO. Some (Self-Love and Thunder for example) seem to see no need of going to the councillor since he fails to provide them what they need. They see themselves needing to be committed in what they can do. They seem to have no hope in the government to provide the infrastructure (service delivery), funding or other support that they

need for the NGO, for employment, or for their lives more generally. Blacky, when comparing with their own councillor, commented that "the Ashdown councillor knows how to take care of people in the community". There is also a strong sense that the councillor is a wrong person "akafundisekanga' (not learned/ taught) (Sunday) instead of the seeing the system as a problem.

While most were confident that they have the skills that they needed, some still felt that they needed formal education to be able to find jobs which is the lift ground of the skills discourse. This is in keeping with the finding of Baatjes et al. (2018), that whilst people were largely critical of the existing formal PSET system, and imagining something very different, people did also express a desire for formal education that is accredited, and work experience in order to enter the job market. The youth in my study mentioned studying further at a TVET college so that they can get better jobs. Some on the other hand also argued that some have studied but are not necessarily working. As I have mentioned above, they have not spoken much about CET. Because of lack of unity, they see a need for someone who can assist with helping them to work together towards something they can do collectively, but do not see a councillor fulfilling that role.

The data shows very little reference to gender, although some gender issues were evident. Lemon, for example needed to leave early since she had left her child with someone temporarily. While other participants were also parents, they did not have the same issue. The fact that gender was not raised in the discussion might be due to the fact that there were more men than women. There was no discussion about how the issues of unemployment are affecting each of the genders and what challenges or alternatives each is exploring. As I have mentioned above, the reason, that some of the participants shared for not continuing with education was that they have children that they need to look after. This means that they need flexibility for their situations. A number of them have been trained by other organisations, showing that they are capable and are willing to learn and improve their lives.

Because there were some high talkers who tended to drown other voices, girls in particular were not as confident with talking about their skills as the boys. For example, Banana argued that she needed more education, and to do more research herself, before she could teach anyone anything. Lemon, who went to a technical high school, also still feels that she is not able to teach building skills to others - "we need someone who is more experienced, an outsider who has more knowledge than me".

In the discussions, the youth seemed to recognise the skills that they have and felt they could unite and do something collectively for the benefit of the whole community. However, they could not clearly articulate what form this could that take; whilst some spoke about an NGO, some still felt that they needed formal education or create jobs for people. They however recognised that there are also others in the community with a variety of SKA that are useful.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to answer my three research questions by reflecting on the data as presented in Chapter Four in the light of my literature review and conceptual framework as presented in Chapter Two. In my final chapter, I conclude my study by summarising the unfolding argument, including my key findings, and providing a personal reflection on the study. I also identify possible further areas for research.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This study focused on six youth, living in the Slovo informal settlement, Pietermaritzburg, who are not employed, not in any formal education or training, and are between the ages of 18-30. I aimed to find out what skills, knowledge and attitudes these young people value to allow them to respond to their personal, social and economic challenges; how they think they could best access these; and what they think will the most useful way to learn them.

In Chapter Two, I argued that the NEET discourse is part of the dominant linear discourse of the relationship between education, skills and employment, underpinned by Human Capital Theory (HCT). I critiqued this discourse, proposing an alternative discourse, based on the concept of socially useful labour and the principles of *Ubuntu*. In Chapter Three, I discussed the research design used, a case study framed within the critical paradigm. Purposive and snowball sampling and participatory research methods were used to answer the research questions. I presented the data collected through the Drawings, PEST analysis and Focus Group Discussion in Chapter Four. Chapter Five was an interpretation, inductive and deductive analysis, and discussion of this data, using the literature I reviewed, and my conceptual framework, as discussed in Chapter Two. In this chapter, I provide a brief summary of and reflections on the findings, before considering what I have learned from the process of doing this study and proposing further related research.

6.2 Summary of argument and findings

As I have argued in the previous chapters, the neoliberal skills discourse argues that there is a direct relationship between unemployment and (formal) education and training. Since the dawn of democracy in South Africa, education in general, and post-school education in particular, have been measured in terms of their relationship with the market – i.e. the degree to which education and skills development brings economic growth and job creation (Balwanz & Hlatshwayo, 2015) – and education has been found wanting. As a result, various policy initiatives targeting NEETs have been implemented in the last decade to tackle, among other things, issues related to the susceptibility of young people to poverty (and hence to early school leaving or not continuing their education); their low participation in the labour market because of the lack of necessary skills; and greatly expanding post-school education and training opportunities for youth. As many have argued, to some extent, the skills

discourse is an attempt to deflect the issue from a demand one (i.e. there are not enough jobs because of the structural unemployment necessary within a capitalist system) to a supply one (i.e. the problem is with the 'potential' workers, not the workplace). In reality, structural unemployment makes it unlikely that many young people will get formal jobs, even with skills for the marketplace; and yet, because of the skills discourse, the variety of 'work', both paid and unpaid, that young people are doing, and the range of skills, knowledge and attitudes that young people might find useful in pursuing them, is largely ignored by current policy (Motala & Vally, 2014a, 2014b).

Rather than concentrating on the needs of the economy or human needs as narrowly understood (and thus met by employment income), I argue that it is necessary to discuss human needs in relation to dignity, hope and capabilities (Treat et al., 2012). Looking at skills, knowledge and attitudes outside the 'jobs' paradigm as is essential in the current context of high structural unemployment, opens up the possibility of really 'valuable' skills, knowledge and attitudes (SKAs) – which can only by explored by listening to NEETs themselves.

I thus sought to listen to the voices of those young people personally affected by unemployment, poverty and inequality. It was evident in the discussions that, as Motala and Vally (2014a, 2014b) argue, the young people are engaged in a range of activities ('socially useful labour') that are beneficial to them as individuals, and to the community more broadly, youth and children in particular. Many of these are directly related to 'making a living', either through some kind of income-generating activity, or to meeting a basic human need; but many of them appear to have more to do with the dignity and hope that Treat et al. (2012) talk about.

In answering the question of what they think are the most valuable skills, knowledge and attitudes to help them with their lives, almost all the participants saw that the skills that they have (soft and hard) can help improve the lives of people living in the community if there is respect and unity. There is also a desire to 'build character' and teach values, suggesting the kinds of attitudes they value. They thus value a range of practical soft and hard skills, from plumbing to parenting; but, in contrast to the discourse that emphasises the STEM subjects, they also value music and storytelling and the ability to teach or nurture these talents. They value knowledge on where they might acquire these skills, and that could help them with using and teaching these skills; and values related to unity, hope, dignity and community.

They also realised that if they and the community receive these SKA, this can improve the lives of all – in other words, they saw these as communally valuable, rather a means for personal advancement.

Most of the participants did not complete matric and therefore had few skills that had been formally acquired. Interestingly, they did not see re-entering the formal system as the best ways to increase the SKA they wanted – and none of them referred to the new Community College system. In explaining how they thought they could most easily access the SKA they feel are needed, it was evident that they value learning from peers, in flexible spaces where they can use their indigenous and everyday knowledge. This showed their connectedness with others as espoused by principles of *Ubuntu*. Participants also pointed out that they prefer to learn from people in the community who understand their situation better. This meant that they preferred knowledge that is 'co-constructed' by people involved in learning, to respond to their felt needs (Baatjes et al., 2018). They also proposed learning non-formally through organisations and/or the church.

The participants argued that one of the most useful ways to learn the SKA they valued was through learning by doing, which seems to also be an important feature of people's informal learning (Baatjes et al., 2018). This confirms other work which argues that through this method, people are given confidence about what they can do with their own hands, heart and head (CIPSET, 2018).

My findings are in keeping with much of the current literature on the need from an alternative PSET in South Africa. As Motala (2009) argues, we need to rethink "what kind of knowledge and skills best serves humanity?" (n.p.). I think the youth in my study are already engaging in this thinking; and help us with coming up with an answer.

6.3 Reflections on the findings

My own experience in NGO sector dates back to 2008, when I joined the sector after teaching for 17 years (1991-2008). As a teacher, I experienced working with communities from rural areas to urban townships to informal settlements. The socio-economic issues faced by children and the impact of HIV and AIDS in the communities that I worked in as a teacher presented a number of social and behavioural problems coupled with learning difficulties which affected learning and development. With the task so huge and the Education department lacking resources, many of us, as teachers, were faced with the burden of teaching as well as helping children with these social issues. My desire was then to see

myself out of the teaching field so that I could be able to better help and work with children and communities. My first and current job after teaching was basically working for an organisation that amongst other things sought to offer psychosocial support to children and families.

As discussed in Chapter Two, some of the literature indicates that the concern regarding young people who are NEETs is not just economic exclusion and the effects of this, but potential social issues such as 'risky behaviour' (Eurofound, 2012) or 'poverty, crime and violence' (National Treasury, 2011). While the participants of this study shared similar social issues as part of their context, none of the data indicates that any of them have been directly involved (other than as victims of crime). On the contrary, as I have shown above, the participants are engaged in a variety of socially useful activities in the community that actually help with social problems.

Most of the participants of my study spoke of an NGO that they had started to work on community issues and mainly with children. The participants themselves were affected by social issues (poverty, unemployment, inequality, lack of services and infrastructure, crime etc.) as mentioned in Chapter Five. When I left teaching, I sought to work directly with children, youth and communities facing socio-economic issues as mentioned above. Initially, my (the NGO's) idea of working with people living in the communities was to 'help' them get skills so that they can access jobs and be able to deal with their social issues. While I don't see that as entirely irrelevant, my experience in Adult Education studies transformed my thinking in relation to development, learning and the broader purpose of education in the context of structural unemployment.

Moreover, doing this study also showed me that while the youth needed information and skills so that they can get jobs, it is also evident that they do not just need these for themselves but so that other people in the community can also benefit. I also learnt that there is a lot of 'work' and activities that people in the community engage in to make a living. I admired their ability to not only focus on what was negative but also on what is positive and what they possess as individuals or collectively to help them with their lives. The useful ways that they perceive are needed for their learning were not only corroborated by the literature but also changed the way I see my role in working with theirs and other communities and NEETs in particular. This challenged me to shift my perspective from seeing myself as a 'helper' that will give them SKA to cope with the system to thinking on how communities

can use local SKA collaboratively to solve local issues; how education should respond to their felt needs; how their initiatives can be supported by the government and relevant structures (like CETs) so that they can thrive.

6.4 Reflections on the research process

As expressed in the previous chapter, conducting the study with these young people was a rewarding experience for me. This was simply because they were very open and willing to participate in the activities and discussions. These showed that they had a positive outlook in life and about the community. None of the participants refused to envisage or draw the community in the future, or suggested the task was a waste of time (since nothing would change); and none of their drawings showed a worse situation, or the same situation, as is currently the case. In their discussions, none expressed pessimism about the future. The way they worked together also portrayed unity and suggested that they value working together. They also seemed to hold as important what could be seen as positive values.

I found that the environment and structure of the FGD was both conducive and relevant. They were made to feel that they themselves (since they were the ones who were not in employment, education or training) and the knowledge that they were sharing was important and relevant to me, the researcher, to them and their community. They actively wanted to share what they felt they had learned with other youth in the area, and possibly with other young people or structures that might find it relevant. I also found that the activities allowed active participation and enabled them to answer the research questions adequately.

I did however feel that there were other factors that may have posed limitations on the research. Firstly, I had hoped for at least four men and four women; as discussed, only two young women participated. Two other women were initially recruited, but one had since found a job (temporary) and the other one could not find someone to look after her child during the FGD. Had I learnt of these dynamics in time, I would have planned a conducive time to accommodate them. The two women that were there were the least vocal of the participants, and part of the reason could have been that they were outnumbered by men. While the venue was convenient for the process, possibly if it had been in the community itself, I would have been able to get more people; and this would have allowed us to have more time to do the activities without the limit of travel time to and from the venue.

Another important and participatory data collection method for doing community research is a transect walk. While I have been and worked in the community in the past, doing a walk

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with the participants could have helped me better understand their context, seeing the community with their eyes, and have provided richer data for answering the research questions.

I also feel that my instruments and/or the actual questioning and probing during the FGD could have specifically focused on the other facilities like the youth centre that is in the community. I could have asked further about what is offered there, as opposed to what they would like to see as SKA needed for their lives. In other words, I could have grounded the research more/as well in what is already present, and might be used/built on, than in envisaging something unrelated to what already is. Nevertheless, this opens up possibilities for further research.

6.5 Possible further research

Rule and John (2011) suggest that one of the ways of concluding a case study is 're-opening it'. This may involve aspects of developing theory, improving practice, policy reform and critique, and further generalisation of research. As I discussed in Chapter Two, the CET system is still affected by low quality, low visibility and poor image (OECD, 2019). Despite the extraordinary level of intervention in this area over the seven or so years, my study suggests that the system has either been spectacularly unsuccessful in getting any information about this programme to people, so they don't know about it, or, if they have heard of it, they cannot see that it has any relevance for them. I believe that the CET sector could provide the knowledge, skills and attitudes that these young people value; but clearly, far more will have to be done.

Clearly, this presupposes a much broader understanding of the role of education that should boost ideas of citizenship and social justice while playing a major role in helping to develop viable livelihoods and the production of goods and services related to productive, useful work for NEETs (Vally & Motala, 2017).

However, beyond 're-opening' the case, in the light of my study I can also see the benefit of undertaking a different research project, rather than simply focusing on what constitutes the kind of education and training we need, and how we should be providing this. My research suggests that provisioning of grassroots initiatives is also an issue that needs further scrutiny in a context of high structural unemployment. From my own experience, I believe that youth or community-led NGOs, structures or initiatives need support so that they continue to exist and make the impact that is greatly needed by our communities; and my research showed

how fragile youth/community-led structures and initiatives can be. As Motala (2014) claims, most community initiatives are still at the stage of conception and are prone to failure. I have shared in the previous chapter that there was an obvious concern by some of the participants that they needed knowledge on how to access funding, how to access infrastructure, and how to involve the government (councillor) and related stakeholders to do so. They also mentioned that the councillor needs to be 'educated' so that he is able to listen to the felt needs of the people in the community. Motala (2014) emphasizes the need for active citizenship to access public goods and services while ensuring democratic accountability and informed decision-making for themselves and society. Research which looks at how already-existing community initiatives can best be supported, including the most productive relationship with government, would thus be useful. Sustainability and support of community initiatives like the ones that are undertaken by the youth in Slovo could be also one of the roles of the CET sector, and how this might be done could be included in such research.

6.6 Conclusion

I have shared above that the participants, while affected by social issues, in contrast to the NEET discourse do not pose a social risk but are engaged in a variety of socially useful activities in the community that actually help with social problems. Furthermore, rather than demonstrating dependence on the state, they have a vision of seeing their community improve through their own efforts:

> My desire is that if it was possible, what we have learnt today can be shared with the rest of the youth in our area. This is so that if we want to build this area of Slovo, we can know that this one can do this, and the other one that. (Banana)

When asked to write what they as the youth of this community wished would happen, 10, 20 or 30 years in the future, they responded that they wanted 'to see youth coming together as one'; 'respect for one another'; 'believing in one another'; 'having a better community ever'; 'to see the community improved in areas of education - (youth going to school)'; 'improvement in employment and social issues'.

The data reveal that the youth see themselves as very much part of any process of building a community underpinned by communal values, rather than seeing themselves as excluded or expressing disaffection or hopelessness.

This necessitates a radical rethink of the current conceptualisation of education and training in South Africa, preferably undertaken together with youth themselves, to provide them with the skills, knowledge and attitudes this study has revealed they believe will help them to build better communities and a better society for all.

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Appendix 1: Informed Consent (English)

Patience Thandi Gumbi

20 Mason Road, Manor, Pietermaritzburg, 3201

Cell: 082 488 5603/ 033-3941546 (w)

thandigumbi@gmail.com

University: UKZN- PMB Campus
Course of Study: Masters in Adult Education
Year of Study: 2017-2018
Supervisor: Anne Harley; Telephone number: 033-2606296; Email:
HarleyA@ukzn.ac.za

Dear Sir/Madam

TITLE

Exploring 'valuable' knowledge, skills and attitudes: Perceptions of NEETs in an informal settlement in Pietermaritzburg

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the ideas of youth who are not currently studying, and who do not have a job, about the kind of things they want to learn. This is very important, because there are so many youth in South Arica who are not in any form of employment or any form of education and training (NEETs). I want to understand the kind of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are valuable to NEETs living in Slovo settlement, near Pietermaritzburg.

HOW THIS STUDY CAN BE USEFUL TO YOU AND/OR TO SOCIETY

You were identified because of my understanding that you are one of the young people who are not in any form of employment or any form of education and training. Your age group (18–30) is my focus in research. I chose you with the hope that you might be prepared to provide useful information for the research.

What will you have to do if you agree to participate?
- You will be asked to attend the two sessions which will include group discussions on the above topic. Each of these will last about two hours.
- The sessions will be held at a place and time that will be suitable to you and the group
- Be willing to participate in discussions

- Be committed to confidentiality – in other words, not tell other people any of the private things that might be talked about in the discussions
- Respect other participants

I hope you will benefit from my study in the following ways:

- You will be more aware and understand more about skills, knowledge and attitudes that are 'valuable' to each of you and your community. I hope that this knowledge could be useful to you and community as well as others who may learn from the study.

Other factors to consider

- No one will be paid to participate in the study. However, I will pay you back for any money you spent if you had to use public transport or for any other costs of attending the sessions
- The audio recordings that we might make will only be for the purposes of this research
- All information that we collect during the study gathered will be kept in a locked office known by my supervisor. It will be destroyed five years from now
- I will protect your identity by giving you and your area a different name (pseudonym) in my research report so that people cannot identify you. All that you share will also be kept in confidence.
- If you decide not to participate, this will not affect you in any negative way,
- You are free to participate, and you must also be aware that if at any stage, for whatever reason, you decide not to be part of the study, you are free to do so.

If you would like more information about my study, or have problems with the research, please contact me: Patience Thandi Gumbi
Cell: 082 488 5603/ 033-3941546 (w)
Email address: thandigumbi@gmail.com.
Or my supervisor: Dr Anne Harley
Tel: 033-2606296
Email: HarleyA@ukzn.ac.za
Or, you may contact: Phumelelo Ximba, UKZN research office
Tel: 031-2603587/4609
Email address: HssrecHumanities@ukzn.ac.za

DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT

I………………………………………………………………(full names of participant)
confirm that I understand what is written and explained in this document and how the
study will be done, and I agree to participating in the research study.
I understand that I am free to stop participating in the study at any time, if or when I
feel I need to do so.

Additional consent, where applicable

I give permission for the following:
Audio-record my focus group discussion YES NO

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT   DATE

………………………………………………………………………………………………

**NOTE: Potential participants will be given time to read, understand and
question the information given before giving consent. This will include time
out of the presence of the researcher and time to consult friends and/or family.**

Appendix 2: Informed Consent (isiZulu)

Patience Thandi Gumbi

20 Mason Road, Manor, Pietermaritzburg, 3201

Cell: 082 488 5603/ 033-3941546 (w)

thandigumbi@gmail.com

University: UKZN-PMB Campus
Course of Study: Masters in Adult Education
Year of Study: 2017-2018
Supervisor: Anne Harley; Telephone number: 033-2606296; Email:
HarleyA@ukzn.ac.za

Mnumzane/ Nkosazane

ISIHLOKO

Ukuhlola kolwazi, amakhono nezimo ezibalulekile: Izimvo zama NEETs endawen yomphakathi waseSlovo eduzane nase Mgungundlovu.)

INHLOSO YOCWANINGO)

Inhloso yalolucwaningo ukuhlola izimvo zabasha abangasebenzi, abangafundi noma abangekho ekuqeqeshweni okuthile, mayelama nolwazi, amakhono nezimo ezibalulekile kubo. Inhloso ukubuka abasha abahlala emphkathini wokuzakhela oseduze nase Mgungundlovu.

OKUBALULEKILE KULABO ABAZOBA YINGXENYE, NOKUNGABA YINZUZO)

Wena ukhethwe ukhethwe ngenxa yokuba ngicabanga ukuthi ungakwazi ukunikeza ulwazi olubalulekile esichaziwe ngesimo samaNEETs

Okulindelekile uma uba yingxenye

- Uyocelwa ukuba yingxenye yazo zonke inzikhathi zokuhlangana. Izinsuku ezimbili zamahora amabili ngosuku. Loku kuzoba sendaweni nesikhathi esizovumelana nawe neqembu
- Ukuba yingxenye uma kuxoxwa)
- Ukugcina kuyimfihlo obekuxoxwa
- Ukuhlonipha amanye amalunga

Ongazuzwa uma uzimbandakanya kulolu cwaningo

- Ulwazi nokuqonda ngolwazi, ngamakhono nezimo ezibalulekile kumuntu ngamunye nasemphakthini omelwe. Lolulwazi lungaba wusizo kumuntu Kanye nomphakathi wonkana ongafundo emiphumeleni yocwaningo

Okunye okungaqashelwa

- Akuzuba nankokhelo yokuzimbandakanya kwakho kulolucwaningo. Kepha, uma kukhona izindleko odlule kuzo njengokugibela, uyakubuyiselwa imali yakho
- Konke okuqoshiwe nokubhaliwe kuyosetshenziselwa ucwaningo kuphela
- Okutholakele njengolwazi ngesikhathi socwaningo, kuyogcinwa endaweni ephephile eyaziwa ongiphethe, onemininingwane ngasenhla. Kuyocekelwa phansi emuva kweminyaka eyishumi
- Ngizoqikekela ukuvikela ukwaziwo kwabayingxenye ngokuthi ngisebenzise amagama angesiwe awabo uma sekushicilelwa
- Uma uhlela ukuyeka ukuba yingxenye yocwaningo, loko akuzukufaka esimweni esibucayi noma yingayiphi indlela
- Ukuba yingxenye kungokuzithandela, ngakho unelungelo lokuhoxa noma ingasiphi isikhathi nganoma yisiphi isizathu

Uma ufisa olunye uwazi noma ukubuza imibuzo, ungathintana name kulemininingwane:

Patience Thandi Gumbi
Cell: 082 488 5603/ 033-3941546 (w)
Email address: thandigumbi@gmail.com.

Noma uthinte: Phumelelo Ximba in the university's research office
Tel: 031-2603587/4609
Email address: HssrecHumanities@ukzn.ac.za

ISIVUMO SOYINGXENYE

Mina……………………………………………………………(Amagama aphelele), ngiyavuma ukuthi ngiyaqonda konke okubhalwe lapha nangohlobo locwaningo, bese ngivuma nokuba yingxenye yalo.

Ngiyaqonda ukuthi nginelungelo lokuhoxa nganoma isiphi isikhathi socwaningo, uma ngifisa.

Ukuvuma okunye, lapho kufanele

Lapha nginikeza imvume ukuba:

Kuqoshwe engixuxoxayo eqenjini locwaningo engikulo YEBO/CHA
Kuqoshwe ngokubonakalayo (video) okuxoxwa eqenjini locwaningo YEBO/CHA

KUSAYINA OYINGXENYE   USUKU

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

OKUBALULEKILE: Labo abazobe beyingxenye bayonikwa isikhathi sokufunda imininingwane, baqonde babuze ngako ngaphambi kokunikeza imvume. Lesi kobe kuyisikhathi lapho beyobe bengenayo low ocwaningayo futhi kube yisikhathi lapho bengathola ikwalulekwa abangane noma umndeni.

Appendix 3: FGD Schedule

Introduction:

1.   Welcome

Good day, my name is Thandi Gumbi. I will be facilitating discussions today. XXX will be assisting me with other logistics. Can you tell us your name and a bit about yourself?

2.   Explanation of the process

TITLE FOR ME TO BEAR IN MIND: Exploring 'valuable' knowledge, skills and attitudes: Perceptions of NEETs in an informal settlement in Pietermaritzburg

You were selected because of my understanding that you are one of the young people who is not in any form of employment or any form of education and training. Your age group (18–30) is my focus in my research. I chose you with the hope that you might be prepared to provide useful information for the research. We will be asking you to participate in these activities:

- Drawing a picture
- Participate in a Political, Economic, Social and Technological (PEST) Analysis
- We will then engage in discussions and reflections on these aspects, and what skills, knowledge and attitudes you think are really valuable and how you think you could most easily and usefully access and learn these 'valuable' skills, knowledge and attitudes you have identified.

The reason for using these tools is that we can get more in-depth information

I hope you will benefit from my study in the following ways:

- As a group from the same area of Slovo, you have an opportunity to make sense of common issues, together, discuss topics related to your own experience, culture and settings.
- There are millions of young people in South Africa who do not have a formal job and are not studying. There are also many different ideas about learning that might be most useful to them, but often these ideas are not from young people themselves.
- I would therefore like to hear your views on this. They will be most useful since you are young people who may have similar experiences.

3. Logistics and Ground Rules

- Each session of the focus group will last about 2 hours
- Feel free to move around
- See the signs to the bathroom
- Help yourself to refreshments

I will ask the group to suggest some ground rules. After they brainstorm some, I will make sure the following are on the list.

- Everyone should participate.

- Information provided in the focus group must be kept confidential

- Stay with the group and please don't have side conversations

- Turn off cell phones if possible

- Have fun

4. Turning on the Tape Recorder

5. Are there any questions before we get started? If there are any, these will then be addressed.

(Detailed instructions for each session are on the next page)

6. Topics to be covered in discussion

- Skills, Knowledge and attitudes (SKA) that individuals and community have
- What are "Valuable" SKA in the community
- Training needs
- Access to training and education
- How can these SKA be learnt
- Where can they learn these skills
- Political, Economic, Social and technological factors affecting access to SKA
- Alternatives to unemployment

SESSION 1

RESEARCH QUESTIONS (RQS) FOR ME TO BEAR IN MIND:

4. **What do the NEETs think will be the most valuable skills, knowledge and attitudes to help them with their lives?**
5. **According to them, how could these be most easily accessed?**
6. **What do they think will the most useful way to learn them?**

Tool 1. Drawing

I will ask each member to first draw a picture of their community as they would like it to be, with themselves in it. I will then get them to present their drawing to the whole group, asking questions and probing and encouraging the other participants engage.

Discussion begins, I will make sure to give people time to think before answering the questions and won't move too quickly. I will use probes to make sure that all issues are addressed, but move on when I feel I am starting to hear repetitive information.

RQ1:

1. Let's start the discussion by talking about your community. Briefly tell me about this community now. What is different about it now, from the pictures you have drawn?
2. What do you think you will need in such a future community?
3. Why do you think you need these? Explain further…
4. What skills do you need to get there (to the kind of community that you need)? What knowledge? What attitudes?
5. Apart from the SKA that you need, what SKA do you (commonly or individually) have?
6. Of what value are these SKA to your community?
   Give examples? Who will benefit from these and how?

RQ 2:

7. How do you think you gained these SKA that you already have? E.g.
   Where did you learn them? Who did you learn them from? When? How? (Clarify, did you learn these at school, observed someone doing certain things…Or what?)

Probes for Discussion:

- *Personal skills, information and knowledge needed*
- *Community skills needed*
- *Benefits to individual and community*

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Thinking about how you got the valuable SKAs you already have, how do you think you can get the SKAs that your community needs?

- *What knowledge and information will you need to get there?*

RQ 3:

According to you, how could these be most easily accessed?

Depending on the responses, I will probe further, for example:

- What form will they take (training, volunteering, mentoring, etc)?
- You haven't mentioned anything about the government? Do you think they have a role to play?
- You have only talked about people/ organisations/ government outside the community. Is there no one already here, who could help?

SESSION 2

Tool 2 –PEST Analysis

Now we are going to look at political, economic, social and technological factors (also known as PEST analysis) which may impact on how you can access or learn the SKA

Questions:

Before starting with what you have included, how was it to do this activity? How did it make you feel?

1. Let's start the discussion what you have included in your local/ community level.
   a) What are some of the aspects that might impact on the SKAs that you need? Mention positive and negative aspects.
   b) What do you think can be done to minimise the impact on the lives of community members? Can you give examples/ people and organisations?
   c) You may have seen or heard about this being done elsewhere? Please tell me more about it.
   d) Is there evidence of anything that the local government is doing to give the youth in your category some opportunities, especially in this community? Tell me more about it.
   e) If you were to have a chance to such opportunities, what would they look like?
   f) How do you think these will benefit you and your community?

2. Let us now discuss the factors that you included at the national and global level.

   a) What factors (political, economic, social and technological) did you come up with?
   b) How do they affect your access to SKAs needed by you and your community?
   c) What do you think is your role or influence at this level?

3. Given the fact that not everyone can be in formal employment or education, what alternative means are there for people to make a living or a valuable contribution to the community?
   - Are there people in this community participating in these alternative means? Give examples.
   - If you were to participate in such, what would it look like for you?
   - How valuable are these to you and the community?
   - If given an opportunity, what resources or SKAs would you need to be able to do this effectively?

Other reflections

1. Of all the things we've discussed, what is most important to you?
2. What have you found beneficial about this session?
3. Will you do anything differently? (What will that be and how will you go about doing so?)
4. What do you as the youth of this community wish to happen in the future, like 10, 20, or 30 years to come? What do you wish your community to achieve by then?

That concludes our focus group. Thank you so much for coming and sharing your thoughts and opinions with us. If you have additional information that you did not get to say in the focus group, please feel free to contact me using the details in the information sheet.