THE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH REGARDING YOUTH SERVICES IN KWAZAKHELE

BY

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I would like to thank everybody whose support has contributed to the completion of this study. My special gratitude goes to the following:

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ABSTRACT

This research study has been conducted to explore and describe the perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth regarding their access to the youth services available to them. A qualitative approach is followed and an exploratory, descriptive and contextual research design is utilized. The sample of the study was procured by means of purposive sampling. Data were collected by means of focus group discussions which were conducted using a questioning guide. Data were analysed according to the steps for qualitative data analysis provided by Tesch in Creswell (1994). To ensure the trustworthiness of the research findings, Guba’s model in Krefting (1991) was employed. The research findings were verified against the existing body of knowledge in order to compare and contrast the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the process of data analysis.

The main themes that emerged from the study are lack of knowledge regarding available services, Needs or desires of out-of-school youth, hindrances or obstacles to access available youth services, suggestions for services relevant to needs of out-of-school youth and suggestions to make out-of-school youth aware of available services.
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CHAPTER 1
OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM FORMULATION

Out-of-school youth, due to their specific situation, pose a challenge to society because they remain outside the focus of the majority of mainstream efforts geared towards upliftment and development of youth. Out-of-school youth refers to those young males or females of school-going age but who are currently not attending school (National Youth Commission, 1997:27). McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter and McWhirter (1998:7) refer to out-of-school youth as school dropouts, and define them as those pupils who leave school without completing their study program and become at risk of other negative behaviours. Everatt (in Helve and Wallace, 2001:321) describe out-of-school youth as the youth who are neither working nor in school. These youths are a major concern to their communities and exist in large numbers in society, as their plight of not schooling nor working places them at risk and has ramifications for them as individuals as well as for society at large.

McWhirter et al. (1998:8) define at-risk youth as those young persons who engage in behaviours or are in circumstances that place them in danger of negative future events if no intervention occurs in their lives. Everatt and Orkin (1993:3) refer to at-risk youth as marginalised youth who see themselves as having no future, alienated from school, work, and their families, are victims of abuse and/ or violence, and are not involved in any organisation or structure. Out-of-school youth are at-risk because having dropped out of school places them potentially in danger of other negative behaviours such as drug abuse and delinquency, teenage pregnancy and so forth (McWhirter et al., 1998:9). The South African National Youth Commission (1997:27) also supports this view and states that out-of-school youths are at risk of becoming street kids, victims or perpetrators of crime, may suffer great risks to their health or may undertake high risk behaviour such as alcohol or drug abuse.
Out-of-school youth present a major concern not only because of the risks that they are prone to but also because of the implications for society at large. Lunenburg (1999:9) states that dropping out of high school is a serious national problem that has social and economic implications for individuals and society. In the United States (US) it is estimated that school dropouts cost the government an estimated $250 billion annually in lost earnings, taxes, and social services. In the US dropouts constitute 52% of those who receive welfare or are unemployed, 82% of the prison population and 85% of the juveniles in court (Hodgkinson in Lunenburg, 1999:9). Lunenburg (1999:13) further states that the unemployment rate is twice as high among school dropouts and those who finish high school but do not enter college. McWhirter et al. (1998:101-102) support this view, in stating that dropping out of school has economic and social consequences for the individual as well as society, resulting in high unemployment and underemployment among high school dropouts, including loss of earnings and taxes, loss of social security, lack of qualified workers and lower socio-economic conditions for the dropouts as well as their children.

Research findings on the rates of out-of-school youth or school dropouts show that this is a problem across continents. In Great Britain school dropouts are estimated to range between 6-12% of 18-20 year olds. Although the percentages seem to be low this group seems to be of concern in the light of the changing structure of the labour market as their lack of skills makes them poorly prepared for the world of work thus disadvantaged (Merton, 1996:259). Wing-Lin Lee and Miu-Ling Ip (2003:89) in a study of young school dropouts found that in England out of 2,917,639 day pupils of compulsory school age in maintained secondary schools, in the year 1999-2000, 1% were classified as students with unauthorised absence. Although the percentage is not high relatively the actual number of 29,177 is alarming and to a certain extent highlights the situation of school dropouts in England. In the United States, data available show that in 1996, nearly half a million young people enrolled in 1995 left school by October 1996 without successfully completing their high school study program. In Hong Kong between the 1998 and the 1999 school year, 1362 (i.e. 0.57%) students out of 238,872 dropped out of school
In developing countries it has been found that lack of schooling results in poverty for children. In a discussion paper on Economic Growth, Poverty and Children (2002:33), Minujin, Vandemoortele and Delamonica (2002:34) indicated that children from poor families in developing countries do not complete schooling. Using a survey analysis of the proportion of children who finish the fifth year of basic primary education in developing countries, Minujin et al. (2002:34) paint the following picture: in Mali 40% of children from the poorest families do not finish their basic education, in Morocco 60%, 70% in Columbia and 75% in the Philippines, in Bangladesh 25% while Peru has the lowest rate at 10%.

Chisholm, Favish, Harrison, Kgobe and Motala (1996:1), in a report on out-of-school youth in South Africa, suggest that out-of-school youth remain the missing link in the national and provincial educational agendas which focus on schools and universities, since the evolving policy initiatives have little to say about those furthest removed from these centres of power and resources. Analyses of recent household surveys underscore continuing high rates of unemployment among school leavers with education levels below matric. Provision of education and work opportunities appears to be out of reach and out of touch with the needs of out-of-school youth. In spite of the provision of services by the government, non-government organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs) and the private sector, poor infrastructure makes this provision inaccessible for out-of-school youth who are marginalized and in need of these services.

The situation regarding out-of-school youth in South Africa reveals an alarming problem for South Africa. Everatt (in Helve and Wallace, 2001:321) provides the following statistics on out-of-school youth in South Africa:

1. Out-of-school youth comprise 21% of the total youth population which is estimated at 16 million, thus 3.5 million in total;
2. of the 3.5 million out-of-school youth, 3.1 million are African youth; and
3. women are more likely to be out-of-school than men and they are said to comprise 60% of the 3.5 million.
The National Youth Commission (1997: 11-12) also paints a concerning picture of the magnitude of the problem of out-of-school youth in S.A. This policy document indicates that 33% of young men and women have been found to either not be currently studying or in training or had discontinued studies earlier than they had wished despite the desire to return to some form of study. It is also estimated that one out of every eight young women has been forced out of the education system as a result of pregnancy, and that 23% of African young men and 16% of African women have received no formal education. To get a broader picture of the plight of out-of-school youth the researcher also looked at the statistics available on unemployment by age. According to the South African Survey (2001/2002), 32% of unemployed persons in S.A. are between the ages of 15-24 years and 41% are between the ages of 25-34 years. Based on these numbers one can deduce that South Africa faces a major problem of youths that are at risk because of their low level of schooling and being unemployed, particularly out-of-school youth.

As the above discussion shows, out-of-school youth constitute a group that have unique needs and unless there is intervention their plight may become worse. Government, NGOs, CBOs and the private sector all render services that are aimed at uplifting youth in general (Chisholm et al., 1996:16). Although all these services do make provision for out-of-school youth, they do not directly focus on them and the lack of integration and coordination among service providers makes it difficult to assess the impact on the lives of the youth. The fact that many youth service providers use schools as their point of entry in accessing young people this practice tends to further place out-of-school youth on the margins in accessing these services. Gerhard Lück of the Southern Africa Development Research and Training Institute (SADRAT), states in his study on out-of-school youth in the Nelson Mandela Metropole (2001:5) that much research has been done and good programs have been developed and implemented in the field of youth by different Youth Organisations. However, these initiatives are usually on a once-off basis and no holistic approach is used to tackle the complex issues of young people in South Africa. It becomes imperative then that research be done to assess the effectiveness of services rendered to out-of-school youth.
In retrieving information from South African studies, a search of the Ebscohost and Nexus databases revealed that not much research had been done regarding the perceptions of out-of-school youth regarding their access to services. Studies reviewed focused on the problem of out-of-school youth, their needs and policy provision, thus the researcher deemed it necessary to investigate the perceptions of out-of-school youth regarding access to available services.

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Social work research topics should come from the day-to-day activities of the practitioner/researcher and their interactions in the work situation (Fouché in De Vos, 2001:51). Arkava and Lane (1983:24) and Grinnell and Williams (1990:50) are of the opinion that identifying a research topic through curiosity or concern about the occurrence of certain social phenomena is a good basis for social research. The researcher's motivation for this topic was generated by her interest in development of young people and her experience as a practitioner in the Kwazakhele community where she has worked as a social worker. At the time the researcher was very concerned with the plight of out-of-school youth in the area as it appeared to her that though there were services in the Kwazakhele area, very little impact was seen in the lives of this target group. It was with this background then that the researcher wanted to explore with out-of-school youth themselves how they see available services in their area and to explore their experiences in accessing such services so as to provide recommendations to service providers in order to improve access to their services for this target group.

1.2.1 RESEARCH GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

1.2.1.1 Research Questions

For this research, the researcher formulated a grand tour question to provide direction to the study. According to Creswell (1994:70), research questions in qualitative studies assume two forms: a grand tour question and sub-questions. The author suggests that the grand tour question is a statement of the question being examined in the study in its
most general form. This question is posed as a general issue so as not to limit the study.

The following is the grand tour question that guided this study:

*What are the perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth regarding accessing available youth services and what are the factors that influence their accessing such services?*

### 1.2.1.2 Research Goal

Fouché in De Vos et al. (2002:107) defines a goal as “the end toward which effort or ambition is directed”. The author further states that the terms goal, aim and purpose are often used interchangeably.

The research goal for this study is:

*To explore and describe the perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth regarding their access to available youth services in the Kwazakhele area.*

### 1.2.1.3 Research Objectives

Research objectives are seen as the steps one has to take at grass-roots level, within a specified time span in order to attain the research goal (Fouché in De Vos, 2002:107-108).

The following are the objectives of this study:

- *To explore and describe the perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth in Kwazakhele in respect of their accessing of services available to them.*
- *To provide recommendations emanating from the findings for future service delivery or service provision.*
1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.3.1 Research Approach

The type of research study that one conducts is determined by a number of factors, according to Leedy (1993:139), namely the nature of the data and the problem for research dictate the research methodology to be utilised. Qualitative research deals with verbal data while quantitative research is concerned with numerical data.

In this study the type of research to be conducted is qualitative research. Rubin and Babbie (1997:377) assert that a qualitative inquiry attempts to understand those we observe from their own perspective in terms of their feelings, views and the meaning they attribute to life. This study employs a qualitative approach because the researcher wishes to hear from the out-of-school youth in Kwazakhele how they perceive and experience accessing available youth services.

1.3.2 Research Design

De Vos and Fouché in De Vos (1998:77, 123) assert that a research design is a "blue print or detailed plan of how a research study is to be conducted". Grinnell and Williams (1990:139-140) and Babbie and Mouton (1998:84) suggest that the design of any type of research depends on the amount of data already known in the particular problem area to be researched. Where there is a great deal known these authors state that the research conducted will be explanatory in nature and where there is less known, descriptive and where there is very little, exploratory. In this study the researcher used a qualitative, exploratory, descriptive and contextual research design.

This study is exploratory because little is known about out-of-school youth specifically in Kwazakhele and their perceptions and experiences of available youth services. This study will also be contextual in that it will seek to understand the perceptions and the experiences of the Kwazakhele out-of-school youth about available youth services in
their area. Creswell (1994:145) states that “qualitative research is descriptive because the researcher is interested in the process, meaning and understanding gained through words or pictures”. Due to the fact that there is so little literature about the current study a descriptive strategy is incorporated in order to gain understanding of perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth regarding available youth services in Kwazakhele.

1.3.3 Population and Sampling

A population is defined as the “totality of persons or objects with which a study is concerned” (Grinnell and Williams, 1990:118). Salkind (1997:96) further states that a population is the group to whom one would want to generalise the results of one’s study. The population of the study comprised out-of-school youth residing in the Nelson Mandela Metropole’s Kwazakhele Township. Because it is not possible to include all the out-of-school youth residing in the area, the researcher used purposive and snowballing sampling to recruit the participants for the study.

Purposive sampling involves the conscious selection of subjects to include in the study. Creswell (1998:148-149) states that in qualitative research “the idea is to purposefully select informants that will best answer the research questions”. In using purposive sampling the researcher has to think clearly about the criteria for the selection of participants in the study (Strydom and Delport in De Vos, 2002:334).

The inclusion criteria for participants in this study were: that they must be out-of-school youth not in formal schooling and not working, residing in the Kwazakhele Township, aged between 13-17 years and able to converse in Xhosa or English. The researcher specifically chose this age group of 13-17 years as an inclusion criterion based on their vulnerability to a variety of risk factors. Research conducted by Terblanche (1999:16) in the Port Elizabeth area, highlighted that this stage is a critical and vulnerable stage in human development and adolescents are known to engage in at-risk behaviours. Lefrancois (1993:396) supports this view and asserts that “risk-taking behaviour among adolescents is common due to their thinking that they are invulnerable and bad things
happen to older people”.

The researcher collaborated with the KwaZakhele Health and Welfare Forum and community-based youth leaders to assist her in contacting possible research participants. It is not possible at the beginning to determine the sample size as the participants may be difficult to access or may not be willing to participate. The sample size was therefore determined by data saturation, a stage whereby data become repetitive and no new data can be obtained (Tutty, Rothery, & Grinnell, 1996:81-82).

1.3.4 Methods of Data Collection

In this study the researcher used focus group discussions to gather the necessary data. A focus group is defined as a group discussion with specific activity or topic (Barbour & Kritzinger, 1999:4). These authors further state that focus groups are ideal for exploring people’s experiences, opinions, wishes and concerns (Barbour & Kritzinger, 1999:5). Krueger and King (1998:10) support this idea of focus groups and state that focus groups work because they tap into human tendencies. The interaction between members fosters in-depth discussion of attitudes and perceptions regarding concepts, products and services. The focus group was employed in this study because it provided the researcher with an opportunity to explore and describe the perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth regarding access to available youth services as they ascribe meaning to it.

The advantage of using focus group discussions according Barbour and Kritzinger (1999:5) is that they afford the researcher dynamic interaction not only to stimulate new ideas and create concepts in order to learn more about people’s ranges of opinions and experiences but also to direct the discussion in respect of the implementation of the particular topic under discussion. There are more advantages to this method of data collection and these are discussed in depth in Chapter 2 (see 2.4.3).

Data was collected by conducting three focus group discussions with out-of-school
youth between the ages of 13-24 years of age residing in the Kwazakhele area. The number of groups was determined by when the point of saturation was reached, that is at which additional data no longer generated new information (Morgan, 1997:43).

1.3.5 Pilot Study

A pilot study is defined as the pre-testing of the data collection tool "on a small number of persons having characteristics similar to those of the target group of the respondent" (Strydom in De Vos, 1998:179). The researcher is of the opinion that conducting a pilot study helped to pre-test the instrument of data collection to ensure that data gathered were relevant to the study. Bless and Higson–Smith (1995:50) state that the pilot study forms an integral part of the research and it involves testing the actual programmes on a small sample taken from the population for whom it is intended. Strydom in De Vos (1998:179) shares similar sentiments about pre-testing the data gathering tool and explains that its aim is to investigate the feasibility of the planned project and to bring to the fore possible deficiencies in the measurement procedure. For the purpose of this study the first focus group was used as a pilot study and it also formed part of the final data set as the questions were not amended.

1.3.6 Preparation of Participants

Participants in this study were prepared for the research during an information session held with them prior to the focus group discussion. Aspects that were covered in preparing participants have been explained in detail in Chapter two (see 2.4.5 paragraph 7).

1.3.7 Designing the Focus Group Guide

According to Krueger (1994:20) discussions in a focus group are carefully predetermined so as to appear spontaneous. The following questions formed the basis for discussions and were arranged in a natural and logical sequence.
Tell me about the available youth facilities or organised youth activities for example; recreational, educational, sport, support services, youth health care services etc. in your area?
Which of these services have you personally used?
Tell me what comes up when you and your friends talk about these services?
How easy or difficult is it for you and your friends to access these services?
If difficult, what stops you from accessing these services?
If easy, what helps you to access these services?
What do you see as the most important needs of out-of-school youth in Kwazakhele?
What advice or pointers would you give to organisations about how these needs of out-of-school youth can be met?

1.4 DATA ANALYSIS

To aid the process of data analysis the researcher used the eight steps proposed by Tesch as set out in Creswell (1994:155). Through using these steps data were analysed, themes were identified and categorised so as to provide a framework for the written report.
The eight steps involved the following actions:
(i) All transcribed interviews were read through in order to gain a sense of the whole.
(ii) One interview which seemed to be rich with information was chosen and read again, asking what was it all about and thoughts were written in the margin.
(iii) The next step was reading through each transcribed interview again and significant features were noted, similar ideas were grouped into categories.
(iv) The various categories were then given codes.
(v) The researcher then grouped together the most relevant categories and made a further distinction among identified categories.
(vi) The codes were allocated to each category and were then listed alphabetically.
(vii) The data pertaining to each category were cut and pasted together where necessary.
(viii) Recoding of the existing data took place.
1.5 DATA VERIFICATION

Babbie and Mouton (1998:276-278) assert that the eminence of any qualitative study is determined by the level of trustworthiness it portrays. Babbie and Mouton further define trustworthiness as the study being credible, transferable, dependable and confirmable. To establish trustworthiness or authenticity of the results of this study Guba's model as discussed in Krefting (1991:214-221)) was used. The model identifies four aspects of trustworthiness as truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality.

**Truth value** is concerned with checking the accuracy of information provided (Creswell, 1994:331). Truth value in this study was established through using the criterion of credibility. Refer to Chapter 2 (point 2.6 paragraph 3) for a more detailed explanation of this aspect of data verification.

**Credibility** was used to check whether what the participants said matched reality and if it rang true (Babbie and Mouton, 1998:276). Further details on how to establish credibility are discussed in Chapter 2 (see 2.6 paragraph 4). In this study triangulation of data sources and peer examination were used to verify credibility.

**Applicability** is established when the findings of the research can be applied to other contexts, settings and other groups (Poggenpoel in De Vos, 1998:349). See Chapter 2 (point 2.6 paragraph 6) for a more theoretical explanation on applicability and how it was applied in this study.

**Consistency** was a third criterion used to verify research findings in this study. This refers to whether the investigation would produce similar results if it were to be replicated with the same subjects or in a similar setting. Oka and Shaw (2000:16) indicate that replicability is impossible to achieve in qualitative studies since research findings are produced by changing interactions between researchers and participants. Guba (in Krefting, 1991:217) suggests a number of aspects that can be used in
establishing consistency in qualitative studies (refer to Chapter 2, 2.6 paragraph 7) for those aspects that were utilised in this study.

The fourth criterion of neutrality was also used to measure trustworthiness of data. According to Poggenpoel in De Vos (1998:350) the term refers to the degree to which findings are a function solely of the informants and conditions of the research. See Chapter 2 (point 2.6 paragraph 8) for an in-depth discussion of this criterion.

1.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The nature of social research, according to Babbie and Mouton (1998:521) means that it "often represents an intrusion into people's lives". This poses a number of challenges that researchers need to take into consideration. It therefore becomes imperative that social researchers adhere to some ethical principles if they are to conduct their studies according to acceptable standards. In this study the researcher undertook to uphold the following ethical considerations:

**No Harm to experimental subjects**

When conducting research, it is essential that care be taken not to subject participants in the research to any conditions that are viewed as detrimental to their well-being. Hence it is the researcher's obligation to take measures that will protect participants from any harm. For theoretical background on this ethical consideration and how it was applied in this study see (Chapter 2, point 2.7 paragraph 2).

**Informed Consent**

Gaining informed consent from participants is vital for research (Oka and Shaw, 2000:17). In this study it was essential that the researcher obtained informed consent from participants as well as parental consent as some of the participants were underage (refer to Chapter 2, point 2.7 paragraph 4 for relevant discussion)
Confidentiality

One of the cornerstones of the social work profession is confidentiality. Oka and Shaw, 2000:17) assert that research participants are entitled to confidential treatment of all information they supply to the researcher. It is thus important that during the research process participants are assured of the confidentiality of what they will share. Paragraph 6, point 2.7 in Chapter 2 outlines how confidentiality was upheld in this study.

Anonymity and violation of privacy

Linked to confidentiality is the assurance to participants that their identity and privacy will be protected and respected in the course of the research. Discussion on ensuring anonymity and privacy of participants is elaborated on in Chapter 2 (point 2.7 paragraph 7).

Debriefing

As discussed above about the potential to harm inherent in research, researchers are obliged to debrief participants to counter any harm that may have been experienced during their participation in the research. Refer to paragraph 8 (Chapter 2, point 2.7) for further discussion on this point.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is aimed at involving out-of-school youth as its participants. Access to this target group is one of the major problems faced by the researcher as by their nature out-of-school youth are not easily reached (Merton, 1996 and Kohn, 2002). The results of this study will be limited to the out-of-school youth in Kwazakhele as the sample used was too small to generalise results.
1.8 CONTEXTUAL CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

Youth

The National Youth Commission in the National Youth Policy 2000 (1997:7) defines youth as a young person, male or female aged between the years of 14 and 35. The White Paper on Social Welfare (1997) defines a young person as women and men aged 16 to 30 years. For the purpose of this study youth will refer to young persons, male or female, between the ages of 13-24 years. This age group has been specifically chosen as a sample population because youth in this age range are considered eligible for school.

Out-Of-School Youth

Out-of-school youth are those school-aged young people who are not attending school (National Youth Commission, 1997: 27). McWhirter et al. (1998:97) refer to this group as school dropouts, that is, pupils who leave school before their schooling program is completed without transferring to another school or educational facility.

At-Risk Youth

At-risk youth is defined as those young persons who engage in certain behaviours or are in certain circumstances that can place them in danger of negative future events in the absence of intervention (McWhirter et al., 1998:7).

Youth Services

Youth services refer to programmes and interventions aimed at the development needs of youth (National Youth Commission, 1997:16). These services could range from interventions aimed at prevention, early intervention or at the level of treatment (McWhirter et al., 1998:204-205).
NGO

Non-governmental organization. Non-governmental organizations are organizations that often render developmental services to address challenges faced by communities including out-of-school youth.

CBO

Community-Based Organizations are those organizations that are often initiated by community members to address their own challenges and development needs.

1.9 DISSEMINATION OF THE FINDINGS

The results of this study will be reported in the form of a treatise to be placed within the Library of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. An article will also be written for publication in an accredited Social Work or Youth Work Journal.

1.10 PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

The research report is presented as follows:
CHAPTER 1: Introduction and Orientation
CHAPTER 2: Research Methodology
CHAPTER 3: Discussion of research findings and literature verification
CHAPTER 4: Summary, conclusions and recommendations

1.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided an introductory overview of the rationale for the study and the research process to be followed. The study outlined employed an exploratory, descriptive and contextual design using a qualitative research approach to answer the
grand tour question formulated as follows:

*What are the perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth regarding accessing available youth services and what are the factors that influence their accessing such services?*

In the ensuing chapter the researcher describes the research methodology and its implementation in the actual study.
CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter the researcher gave an overview of the research problem and the research process. This chapter will discuss the research methodology employed in conducting this study. Methodology, in simple terms, refers to how one intends to go about studying a particular phenomenon. Silverman (2000:89) defines methodology as “a general approach to studying research topics”. Quoting Mason, Silverman further points out that the choice of method needs to reflect “an overall research strategy” (2000:89). Other research experts support the above statement as they maintain that a descriptive account of the research methodology that a researcher employed in her/his study should be given in detail (compare Arkava and Lane, 1983:194; Grinnell and Williams, 1990:279-280; and Strydom in De Vos, 1998:424-425). According to Strydom (1998:424-425), comprehensive description is essential in that it helps the reader acquire “confidence in the methods used”. In view of the above sentiments this chapter seeks to describe the methodology used in this study and provide a detailed account of how the researcher went about studying and answering the research questions as well as methods used in data collection and analysis.

This study aimed to explore and describe perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth regarding their access to available youth services in the Kwazakhele area. It is envisaged that data yielded by this study would provide recommendations to improve service provision to out-of-school youth. In order to realize this aim the researcher utilized a qualitative, explorative, descriptive and contextual research design. Data were collected by means of focus group discussions.
2.2 RESEARCH GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In Chapter 1, Section 1.1 the vulnerability of out-of-school youth and their plight were discussed. It is against this background that the researcher was motivated to undertake this study. The goal of this study is to explore and describe the perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth regarding accessing available youth services. In order to achieve this goal the following objectives were formulated:

- To explore and describe the perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth in Kwazakhele in relation to their accessing of youth services available to them.
- Based on the findings to make recommendations to guide future service delivery or service provision to out-of-school youth.

2.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Christensen (1997:311) defines a research design as “…the outline, plan or strategy specifying the procedure to be used in seeking an answer to the research question. It specifies how data will be collected and analyzed”. De Vos and Fouché (in De Vos et al. 1998:77) also define the research design as “a blueprint or a detailed plan for how a research study is to be conducted”. The authors further stipulate that in qualitative research, researchers tend to develop their own designs as they continue with the study, using available tools and strategies that suit their research needs.

Grinnell and Williams (1990:139-140) and Babbie and Mouton (1998:84) suggest that the design of any type of research depends on the amount of data already known in the particular problem area to be researched. Where there is a great deal known the latter authors state that the research conducted will be explanatory in nature and where there is less known, descriptive and where there is very little, exploratory. This study was conducted using the qualitative approach, and employed an exploratory, descriptive and contextual research design.
2.3.1 QUALITATIVE APPROACH

The type of research study that one conducts is determined by a number of factors, according to Leedy (1993:139), namely the nature of the data and the problem which dictates the research methodology to be utilized. Qualitative research deals predominantly with verbal data while quantitative research is concerned with numerical data.

In this study the type of research to be conducted is qualitative research. Rubin and Babbie (1997:377) assert that a qualitative inquiry attempts to understand those we observe from their own perspective in terms of their feelings, views and the meaning they attribute to life. This study employs a qualitative approach because the researcher wishes to hear from the out-of-school youth how they perceive and experience accessing available youth services.

2.3.2 EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

Mouton and Marais (1990:43) assert that an exploratory study is used to gain new insights into the relationship and dimensions of a phenomenon by investigating the manner in which the phenomenon manifests itself to other related issues to determine priorities for future research and to develop new hypotheses about an existing phenomenon. In this study the researcher used an exploratory design to gain insight into how out-of-school youth specifically in Kwazakhele perceive and experience access regarding available youth services so as to provide recommendations for future research and service delivery.

2.3.3 DESCRIPTIVE RESEARCH

Creswell (1994:145) states that “qualitative research is descriptive because the researcher is interested in the process, meaning and understanding gained through
words or pictures. Strauss and Corbin (1998:15) define description as “the use of words to convey a mental image of an event, a piece of scenery, a scene, an experience, an emotion, or a sensation, the account related from the perspective of the person doing the depicting”. Rubin and Babbie (1997:109) state that the main purpose of many social scientific studies is to describe situations and events. To achieve this purpose the researcher observes and describes what was observed.

In this study the researcher aimed to provide a description of how out-of-school youth perceive and experience access to available youth services using findings derived from focus group discussions where participants were given the opportunity to share in their own words so as to provide a description of their perceptions and experiences (Rubin & Babbie, 1997:109; Mouton & Marais, 1990:44).

2.3.4 CONTEXTUAL RESEARCH

According to Mouton and Marais (1994:133), contextual designs study the phenomenon of interest in terms of its immediate context. This view is supported by Creswell (1998:62) who states that the context involves situating the object of study or phenomenon within its immediate setting. Mouton (1996:13) further articulates that in a contextual strategy a phenomenon is studied because of its intrinsic and immediate contextual significance, and it involves far more than the physical environment. The researcher in this study investigated the perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth in Kwazakhele (the specific geographic context) regarding their access to youth services available in their area (context of service provision).

2.4 RESEARCH METHODS

In Chapter One a brief overview of the research problem and proposed research process was provided. In this chapter the researcher will present a more in-depth description of the methods utilized in the execution of the study. Research methodology
refers to the process the researcher follows to answer the research question or to solve the research problem (De Vos et al., 1998:37).

The focus of this discussion will include: population and sampling, methods of data collection (namely, the use of focus group discussions), data analysis, data verification and literature control.

2.4.1 POPULATION

A population is defined as the “totality of persons or objects with which a study is concerned” (Grinnell and Williams, 1990:118). Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2002:98) agree with this definition, stating that a population is the “entire set of objects or people which is the focus of the research study and about which the researcher wants to determine some characteristic”. Orman, Krugman and Fink (2003:152) elaborate on the concept population and assert that the nature of population points to the location where the potential participants of the study can be found. The population of this study is out-of-school youth residing in the Nelson Mandela Metropole’s Kwazakhele Township. As it is not possible to include all the out-of-school youth residing in the area or the Metropole, the researcher used purposive snowballing sampling to recruit the participants for the study.

2.4.2 SAMPLING

Sampling is used to define parameters for data collection as it is impossible or impractical to collect data about the whole population under study. Orman et al. (2003:149) suggest that it is more economical and efficient to gather data from a smaller subset called a sample. A sample is defined as “a subset of measurements drawn from a population in which we are interested” (Arkava and Lane in De Vos, 2002:199). Stewart and Shamdasani (1990:25) add that a sample must include phenomena that are representative of the whole. It is therefore essential that when applying sampling one uses a method that is the most effective in the light of the nature of the particular study.
Bless and Higson-Smith. (1995:87) assert that good sampling entails:

- A well-defined population,
- An adequately chosen sample, and
- An estimate of how representative of the whole the sample is.

To achieve the above conditions of sampling in this study the researcher employed purposive sampling using the technique of snowballing to identify the unit of study. Purposive sampling involves the conscious selection of subjects to include in the study. Creswell (1998:148-149) states that in qualitative research “the idea is to purposefully select informants that will best answer the research questions”. In using purposive sampling the researcher has to think clearly about the criteria for the selection of participants in the study (Strydom and Delport in De Vos, 2002:334).

The inclusion criteria for participants in this study were that they must be out-of-school youth (not in formal schooling and not working), residing in the Kwazakhele Township of the Nelson Mandela Metropole, aged between 13-24 years and able to converse in Xhosa or English. Due to the nature of the target group (out-of-school youth) and the fact that they are not easily accessible, the researcher also used the snowball sampling technique to reach more participants. De Vos et al. (1998:254) confirm the appropriateness of snowballing by stating that when members of a sub-culture are being studied the researcher can make use of a chain referral to access other members for data collection.

To access initial participants for this study the researcher approached the Kwazakhele Health and Welfare Forum and social workers from the Kwazakhele Afrikaanse Christileke Vroue Vreeniging (ACVV) satellite office as well community-based youth leaders (Kwazakhele Afican National Congress/ANC Youth League and Kwazakhele Masikhuselane Youth Forum) to assist her in contacting possible research participants. After the first focus group interview, participants from the group were then asked for assistance to access more participants for the subsequent group interviews. In this manner a total of 13 out-of-school youth participated in the three focus group interviews.
2.4.3 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The researcher in conducting qualitative research has a variety of data collection methods to choose from to elicit information for this type of inquiry, namely: observations, interviews, surveys, documents and audio-visual materials (Creswell, 1998:120). In this study the researcher selected to use focus group discussions/interviews to gather the necessary data. Focus group discussions are defined as “carefully planned discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening, environment” (Krueger & King, 1998:6). Focus group discussions can be used for the following reasons as identified by Morgan (1997:2):

- First, as a self-contained method in studies in which they serve as the principal source of data;
- Secondly, as a supplementary source of data in studies that rely on some other primary method such as surveys; and
- Thirdly, they are used in multi-method studies that combine two or more means of gathering data in which no one primary method determines the use of the others.

For the purpose of this study focus group discussions were used as a self-contained method as the groups were the principal source of data.

Krueger & King (1998:10) state that focus groups work because they tap into human tendencies. The interaction between members fosters in-depth discussion of attitudes and perception regarding concepts, products and services. Focus group discussions work also because of the following advantages as identified by Stewart and Shamdasani (1990:16):

- Focus groups provide data from a group of people quicker and at a lesser cost than would be the case if individual interviews were conducted;
- Focus groups allow the researcher to interact directly with the respondents thus providing opportunities for the clarification of responses, follow-up questions and for the probing of responses;
The open response format of a focus group provides an opportunity to obtain large and rich amounts of data in the respondents’ own words;

Focus groups may be one of the few research tools available for obtaining data from children or adults who are not particularly literate; and

Focus groups allow respondents to react and build upon the responses of other group members and this results in uncovering of data and ideas that might not have been uncovered in individual interviews.

In this study using focus group discussions was advantageous as some of the participants were able to participate freely despite their lack of schooling.

However, despite the advantages outlined above focus groups also have limitations. It is therefore vital that the researcher keep these in mind when conducting focus groups. Krueger & King (1998:36-37) identify the following limitations of focus groups:

- The researcher has less control in the group interview and will need good interviewing skills to keep the group focused;
- Data collected are more difficult to analyze and the researcher must include the social context in the interpretation;
- Focus groups vary considerably and as each group tends to have unique characteristics, the researcher must have enough groups to balance these; and
- Focus groups are also difficult to assemble and must be conducted in an environment conducive to conversation.

In this study the researcher conducted three focus group discussions with groups of 4-6 participants identified as out-of-school youth in Kwazakhele. After the third focus group discussion the researcher felt that data saturation was reached and did not continue with interviewing (Tutty, Rothery & Grinnell, 1996:81-82).
2.4.4 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study is undertaken in qualitative research to ensure that data obtained are relevant to one's investigation (Strydom and Delport in De Vos et al., 2002:337). The pilot study is defined as the “process whereby the research design for the prospective study is tested” (New Dictionary of Social Work, 1995:45). Strydom and Delport in De Vos (2002:337) further state that in a pilot study a few participants possessing the same characteristics as those of the main investigation can be involved in the study, merely to ascertain trends. Krueger and Casey (2000:65) suggest that before using the route questions they must be tested using a few people who fit the focus group criteria and asking them the questions. In this research, the researcher conducted a pilot study with the first focus group discussion with out-of-school youth regarding their perceptions and experiences regarding access to available youth services. This pilot group was also included as part of the study’s sample. The pilot group highlighted some problems with regard to the questions used to facilitate the discussions and these were subsequently improved in the following groups. The specific amendments are discussed in 2.4.5 (Designing the focus group guide).

2.4.5 PROCESS OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWING

When conducting focus groups the researcher uses carefully formulated and sequenced questions in order to elicit a wide range of responses about the topic being explored. These questions are formulated in a focus group questioning guide (Krueger, 1994:54). The researcher utilized the questioning guide as a tool to facilitate the discussion with out-of-school youth to elicit their perceptions and experiences regarding access to available youth services.

According to Krueger (1994: 21), the following are important aspects in planning a focus group:
Selection and recruitment of participants

The researcher made use of the purposive sampling method to select participants with shared commonalities (Broth in De Vos, 2001:317). Based on the identified sampling criteria in 2.4.2 out-of-school youth residing in Kwazakhele who were both not schooling and not working were identified and selected for participation in this study. As stated earlier an executive member of the Kwazakhele Health and Welfare Forum, a social worker from the ACVV Kwazakhele satellite office, an ANC Youth League secretary as well members of Masikhuselane Kwazakhele Youth Forum were approached to assist with the selection and recruitment of out-of-school youth in Kwazakhele. The researcher then met with the potential participants and outlined the purpose of her research to allow participants to volunteer to participate.

Ensuring that participants will attend the focus group

Stewart and Shamdasani (1990:55) postulate that interviews and focus groups are time-consuming and the researcher has to provide incentives for ensuring attendance of participants by providing for example transport to and from the venue, issuing personalised invitations and serving refreshments. To ensure maximum attendance the focus groups were held in a venue in the Kwazakhele area which was easily accessible and convenient to participants. Focus group discussions were conducted for an hour to two hours and refreshments were served.

The size of the group

According to Morgan (1997:42), too small a size runs the risk of low participation and too large a group may be difficult to handle. Krueger (1994:78) suggests that the ideal size of a focus group ranges between six and nine participants. In this study the focus groups held consisted of 4-6 participants.
Designing the focus group guide

Krueger (1994:20) advises that questions in focus group discussions should carefully predetermined so as to appear spontaneous. These questions or themes form the basis for discussion and are arranged in a natural and logical sequence that comprises the questioning guide. The types of questions that go into the questioning guide are: opening questions, introductory questions, transition questions, key questions and ending questions. The first type of question introduces participants, the second introduces the general topic of discussion, the third question drives the conversation toward the key questions of the study, the fourth set of questions are those that drive the study and the last set of questions bring closure to the study.

In this study the key questions that were used to explore the perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth regarding the available youth services were:

- Tell me about the available youth facilities or organised youth activities for example, recreational, educational, sport, support services, youth health care services and so on in your area?
- Which of these services have you personally used?
- Tell me what comes up when you and your friends talk about these services?
- How easy or difficult is it for you and your friends to access these services?
- If difficult, what are the things that stop you from accessing these services?
- If easy, what helps you to access these services?
- What do you see as the most important needs of out-of-school youth in Kwazakhele?
- What advice or pointers would you give to organisations about how these needs of out-of-school youth can be met?

After the pilot group a need to amend the questions was identified and this was done by adding the following questions:

- How do you get to hear about things happening in your community?
• What should organizations do to ensure that out-of-school youth get to know about their services?

**Number of groups required**

The number of group sessions required depends on how much new information is generated (Morgan, 1997:43). In this study the researcher conducted focus group sessions until no new information was generated, that is saturation of data had been achieved. Saturation is defined as the point at which a researcher stops collecting data when no new information is produced (Zeller, 1993; Calder, 1977 in Morgan, 1997:43). Three focus group sessions were conducted in this study before the researcher stopped the process of interviewing.

**Selecting the interview location**

The environment for the focus group should be conducive to participation (Krueger, 1994:48). Morgan (1997:55) asserts that the interview site should balance the needs of the researcher and those of participants, and this factor must be considered by the researcher when setting up the focus group. Participants agreed that the venue for the interviews was convenient.

**Preparation of participants**

In preparing the participants Tutty, Rothery and Grinnell (1996:65) and Stewart and Shamdasani (1990:78-81) suggest that participants should be clearly informed regarding all aspects of the proposed research. In this study participants were prepared for what the focus groups would entail as well as being informed in detail of the purpose of the research during an information session that was held prior to the discussions. The following information was shared:

- Who the researcher is,
- The subject of the research,
• Who will be at the group sessions,
• What questions will be asked during the group sessions,
• The time and venue of the focus groups,
• What recording devices will be used,
• Who will have access to the transcripts,
• Where transcripts will be stored,
• What will be done to transcripts once the study is concluded,
• Ethical issues were discussed, for example that participants would remain anonymous or pseudonyms would be used, and
• The participants were asked to sign a consent form whereby they agreed to participate in the study, and in the case of minors parental consent was sought (see consent form in appendix B and C).

2.4.6 CONDUCTING THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

Krueger and Casey (2000:97) assert that the success of focus groups depends on well developed questions, a skilful moderator (interviewer) and requires preparation, mental discipline and group interaction skills. In this study the researcher employed the services of a co-facilitator to enhance observation of the interview process. In preparing for the focus groups the moderator needs to develop good interviewing skills, learn how to deal with focus groups of different sizes, have an understanding of the research problem and develop a good questioning strategy (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990:78-81).

The following are the stages that focus groups follow when they are conducted as suggested by De Vos et al. (2001:320):

**Purposeful small talk and pre-session strategies**

According to Krueger (1994:108) to help participants feel at ease informal but purposeful conversation at the beginning is required. Stewart and Shamdasani (1990:93) support
this view and suggest that small talk will facilitate a warm and friendly environment and also give participants a chance to build good rapport. The researcher introduced herself and her co-facilitator and shared the following to make participants feel at ease:

- That all names would remain anonymous
- That there would be no remuneration for participation
- An audio recorder would be used to record the session and solicited the consent of participants for its use
- The findings of the research will be published in the form of a treatise and possibly later in a professional journal
- The participants were reminded that they were free to leave at any time if they felt uncomfortable
- That participation was voluntary
- When participants had no objections to these conditions they were asked to introduce themselves and were also asked to suggest what else would make them comfortable and they suggested a few norms to be adhered to, for example, respecting each other, no laughing when one gives their input, and to give their full participation in the discussion.

**Physical arrangement of the group**

To ensure participation the participants were arranged in a circle and name tags were used to identify participants clearly. Morgan (1997:55) suggests that participants should be arranged in a U-shaped circle around a table to allow maximum participation.

**Handling unwanted participants**

During a focus group discussion some participants may arrive late or may not fit the criteria and this may disrupt the focus group. The researcher will therefore need to firmly and politely inform these participants that they are not needed (Krueger, 1994:110). Fortunately for the researcher this did not occur.
Recording the focus group

To ensure that information generated from the focus group is captured accurately an audio tape was used and field notes were taken (De Vos, 2001:321). Krueger (1994:112) maintains that when using audio equipment, participants should be informed about it and its importance. Participants were informed about the use of the audio equipment during the information session and their consent was also sought again at the beginning of the focus group.

Beginning the focus group

According to Krueger (1994:113) the first few moments in a focus group are critical and it is essential that the right mood is set from the start. Morgan (1997:49) suggests that it is helpful to use an icebreaker to set the mood. Stewart and Shamdasani (1990:92) agree and further suggest that it is important to set the goal and objectives clearly and set ground rules for participation. The purpose of the focus groups was explained to participants at the beginning of each session and participants were given an opportunity to set ground rules.

Techniques used by the moderator

To make sure the interview is a success the researcher has to employ various techniques. Knowledge of group dynamics will be important to ensure free-flowing discussion as well as focusing on relevant issues (Krueger, 1994:115). In order for the researcher to gain more insight about the various aspects of the topic under investigation and to encourage more discussion among group members to enhance varying viewpoints, facilitating techniques such as probing, clarification, reflection, focusing and questioning were used.
Concluding the focus group

To conclude a focus group discussion the technique of summarising the main points of the discussion was used where the salient points that came out were summarised for the participants. Morgan (1997:51) and Krueger (1994:120) maintain that a summary of the main points when ending the focus group is a useful technique and interviewers need to take a few minutes at the end to do this and invite comments from the participants.

2.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Creswell (2003:190) defines data analysis as the process involving “making sense out of text and image data”. This process involves preparing the data for analysis, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data, representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data. From this definition it is apparent that data analysis is a process that involves several activities simultaneously, such as collecting the data, sifting through the information and making sense of the data collected. Data analysis commenced once the researcher reached data saturation during the data collection phase. The goal of data analysis therefore is to try to make sense of and interpret the information collected from participants.

To aid the process of data analysis the researcher used the eight steps proposed by Tesch as set out in Creswell (1994:155). Following these steps data were analysed, themes and sub-themes were identified so as to provide a written report.

The eight steps involve the following actions:
1. Reading through all transcribed interviews in order to gain a sense of the whole. After each focus group discussion the researcher listened to the recording and transcribed the sessions verbatim, then read through transcripts carefully to get the sense of the whole.
2. Choose one interview which seems to be rich with information, read it again, asking yourself what is it all about, writing your thoughts in the margin. The researcher chose
the second interview as it seemed to have richer information and looked at underlying meanings.

3. The next step is then reading through each and everyone again, while any significant features are noted and similar ideas can be grouped into categories. The researcher re-read the other transcripts from other groups to identify similar themes and sub-themes for contrasting and comparing ideas.

4. The various categories are then given codes. The researcher then made a list of topics and linked grouped similar themes and sub-themes together

5. The researcher then groups together the most relevant categories and may make a further distinction among identified categories. Related themes and sub-themes were linked together

6. The codes allocated to each category are then listed alphabetically.

7. The data pertaining to each category will be cut and pasted together if necessary.

8. Recoding of the existing data will take place. If necessary the recoding of this data will be considered.

Copies of the transcripts were given to an independent coder to assist in the verification of the coding and categorising of the data.

**2.6 DATA VERIFICATION**

Data verification is described as the determining of the accuracy and generalizability of the results of a particular study (Creswell, 1994:157). Creswell argues that qualitative researchers have given their own terms to the issue of data verification and see it as establishing trustworthiness or authenticity of the results through establishing internal and external validity, generalizability and reliability of the data. Marshall and Rossman (1996:192) state that social research must respond to the following questions to authenticate its findings:

- How credible are the particular findings of the study?
- How transferable and applicable are these findings to another setting or group of people?
• How can we be reasonably sure that the findings would be replicated if the study were conducted with the same participants in the same context?
• How sure can we be that the findings reflect the participants and the inquiry itself rather than being a fabrication of the researcher’s biases and prejudices?

To establish the trustworthiness of this study the researcher used Guba’s model of trustworthiness as described in Krefting (1991:214-221). Guba’s model suggests four criteria for assessing and ensuring trustworthiness of research findings, namely: truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality.

**Truth value** asks whether the researcher has established confidence in the truth of the findings for the subjects or informants and the context in which the study was undertaken. Guba (in Krefting 1991:215) further states that truth value is usually obtained from the discovery of human experiences as they are lived and perceived by informants. The researcher is therefore interested in finding out the perceptions of the out-of-school youth regarding effectiveness of youth services. Truth value of the study is established through the criterion of credibility.

**Credibility** of research findings is established if the results match the reality of the participants (Creswell 1994:158). To achieve credibility the following strategies can be used: prolonged and varied field experience, time sampling, reflexivity, member checking, peer examination, establishing authority of the researcher, structural coherence and referential adequacy. For the purpose of this study triangulation of data sources and peer examination were used to verify credibility.

- Triangulation of data sources was achieved through conducting a number of focus group discussions to ensure data that come out are similar. The researcher conducted three focus group discussions until data saturation.
- Peer examination involved the use of input from others who have knowledge of qualitative research such as research study leaders, research colleagues and research promoters. The study leader and the independent decoder were utilized to ensure that the researcher’s opinion of the findings were credible.
**Applicability** refers to the degree to which findings can be applied to other contexts, settings or groups. The strategy to realise applicability is through transferability. Transferability of results occurs if they can be generalised to similar groups of people who did not participate in the study. In this study transferability was established through comparison of the sample to demographic data. The researcher compared the sample of out-of-school youth in terms of demographic data available on this target group. A literature control was used to ensure transferability.

**Consistency** is a third criterion used to verify qualitative research findings. Consistency refers to whether findings would be the same should the inquiry be repeated. To establish consistency the strategy of dependability is used for qualitative studies. Guba (in Krefting, 1991:217) suggests that to establish dependability the researcher can use the dependability audit, dense description of research methods, stepwise replication, triangulation, peer examination, and the code-recode procedure. To achieve dependability in this study the researcher used an independent coder to ensure themes identified were consistent. Peer examination was achieved through sharing the experience with the study leader and implementing the code-recode procedure.

The fourth criterion of **neutrality** is used to measure trustworthiness of data. Neutrality is described as the degree to which findings are a function solely of the informants and conditions of the research and not of other biases, motivations and perspectives (Guba in Krefting 1991:216). To confirm neutrality the researcher used the strategy of confirmability. Confirmability can be achieved through: confirmability audit, triangulation and reflexivity. In this study confirmability was achieved through triangulation as discussed above as well as the use of a co-facilitator for the focus group discussions. In addition, the researcher used a journal to reflect her own feelings and experiences within the focus groups.
2.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Strydom (in De Vos et al., 2002: 63) defines ethics as “a set of moral principles that are suggested by an individual or group, are subsequently widely accepted, and offer rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students”. Ethical guidelines also serve as standards and as the basis on which each researcher ought to evaluate his/her own conduct. In this study, the researcher considered the following ethical aspects:

Harm to experimental subjects

In research, there is a possibility that subjects can be harmed physically or emotionally. It is therefore the researcher’s obligation to be aware of the subtle dangers of the research project and guard against them (Rubin and Babbie, 1997:61). This then means that from the onset of research the researcher needs to take all necessary reasonable precautions to ensure protection of the participants with regard to any possible harm.

In this study the researcher informed the subjects about the content of the focus group discussions. During the recruitment and preparation phase participants were briefed on the types of questions to be asked during discussions, the length of groups and the total number of participants who would attend the groups. The researcher also conducted the groups in a venue that was safe, accessible and conducive to the comfort of participants. Participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage should they wish to during the beginning of the focus group discussions. All identifying information obtained from the study is regarded as confidential and names of participants will not be published. The participants were also informed as to who may have access to the transcripts of the focus group discussions, namely, the researcher herself as well as her study leader and the independent coder. The reason why the above-mentioned parties have access to the data was explained to the participants,
furthermore participants were pre-warned that all focus group discussions would be recorded and for what purpose as well as what recording device was to be used. Participants were informed as to what would be done with the recordings after the study was complete, namely that they will be destroyed after the examination of the treatise. The researcher contracted with each participant individually by asking of him or her to complete an informed consent form (see appendix C) by which they agreed to participate in the research. Following the focus group, debriefing occurred – this is discussed in a subsequent item overleaf. No debriefing was necessary, however, where participants revealed a need for assistance, referral was made to the relevant organization in the area.

**Informed Consent**

Obtaining informed consent according to Strydom (in De Vos et al., 2002:65) implies that all possible or adequate information on the goal of the investigation, the procedures that will be followed during the investigation, the possible advantages and disadvantages and dangers to which participants may be exposed, as well as the credibility of the researcher, be rendered to potential subjects or their legal representatives. Holloway and Wheeler (1996: 44) are of the opinion that the researcher should try to be as clear as possible in stating the demands of the research, be clear about the time of the participants so that participants can agree or refuse to take part on the basis of the information.

All potential participants in this study were briefed on the purpose of the research during the preparation phase, the content of the focus group discussions, as well as the negative and positive implications of being part of this study were also discussed. In the case of participants being minor informed consent of the parents was sought (see Appendix A for a copy of letter to parents). Participants were also requested to complete a consent form agreeing to their voluntary participation. Refer to Appendices A, B, and C as attached.
Confidentiality

Confidentiality is defined as keeping confidential that which the participants do not wish to disclose to others (Holloway and Wheeler, 1996: 46). This means that the researcher has an obligation not to reveal information that participants do not want to be known by others. The researcher will take every precaution during focus group discussions to create a climate that respects confidentiality, and also only reveal information that is necessary for the study and exclude any intimate or personal information participants revealed in the final report. Where it is necessary to use the information later the researcher will make use of pseudonyms.

Anonymity and violation of privacy

Anonymity means that the identity of participants is protected and not revealed (Holloway and Wheeler, 1996:46). It is inferred that ensuring anonymity is sometimes difficult in qualitative research due to the small samples that qualitative researchers work with and because of the detailed reporting of this type of research. To deal with this difficulty the researcher used pseudonyms.

Debriefing

Debriefing means giving the participants an opportunity after the study to work through their experience and its aftermath in order to assist them to minimize any harm that they may have suffered despite all the precautions taken (Judd, Smith & Kiddler, 1991:517). Should it have become necessary, participants would be referred to relevant resources for specific services after the focus groups were completed. Due to the fact that the researcher was not in a position to pay for any costs that might have been needed for debriefing, efforts would have been made to refer participants to services where they would not incur any costs. No debriefing was deemed necessary by the participants after the focus group discussions.
2.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the research design and methodology utilized in this research study, namely a qualitative study using an exploratory, descriptive and contextual design. The principal method of data collection used was focus groups, and data were analysed using Tesch’s framework in Creswell (1994:212). Data were verified against the constructs proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) in Krefting (1991:215). The findings emanating from the study will be discussed in Chapter Three and verified against existing literature to ensure trustworthiness of the study.
CHAPTER THREE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND LITERATURE VERIFICATION

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the results of the study investigating the perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth regarding available youth services in Kwazakhele, will be presented and subjected to a literature control. Undertaking a literature control after data collection is supported by research experts in qualitative studies. Creswell (1994: 22-23) asserts that researchers need to review existing research and previous studies to ascertain whether their findings apply to their data.

In Chapter One it was stated that a qualitative, exploratory, descriptive and contextual study was undertaken in order to understand the perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth in Kwazakhele regarding their access to available youth services because very little seems to be known about this topic. In order to obtain this information, focus group discussions were held as a method of data gathering.

The focus group discussions were used to answer the following grand tour question which focused the study:

What are the perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth regarding accessing available youth services and what are the factors that influence their accessing such services?

In order to facilitate the collection of the required data the following key questions were formulated to guide the focus group discussions:

- Tell me about the available youth facilities or organised youth activities for example: recreational, educational, sport, support services, youth health care services and so on in your area?
- Which of these services have you personally used?
- Tell me what comes up when you and your friends talk about these services?
• How easy or difficult is it for you and your friends to access these services?
• If difficult, what stop/hinders you from accessing these services?
• If easy, what helps you to access these services?
• What do you see as the most important needs of out-of-school youth in Kwazakhele?
• What advice or pointers would you give to organizations about how these needs of out-of-school youth can be met?
• How do you get to hear about things happening in your community?
• What should organizations do to ensure that out-of-school youth get to know about their services?

For the purpose of analyzing data in this study, the researcher adopted Tesch’s eight step approach (as discussed by Creswell, 1994:155). This chapter also provides a brief summary of demographic information regarding the research participants in order to contextualize the data.

3.2 Biographical Profile of Participants

The table below provides an overview of the biographical profile of the participants in this study.

Table 3.1: Biographical Profile of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Dropped out/complete high school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>17 years</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Dropped out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>17 years</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Dropped out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Dropped out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>16 years</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Dropped out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be seen from the above table, 13 out-of-school youth participated in the three focus group sessions that were conducted by the researcher. The participants consisted of 8 males and 5 females who were all Xhosa speaking, residing in the Kwazakhele township in the Nelson Mandela Metropole. At the time of the focus group discussions all the youth were not in school and were unemployed. The majority of the participants dropped out of school before they completed their high school education and only four participants had completed their high school education and held a grade 12 certification.

### 3.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table 3.2 below depicts the five major themes and their sub-themes as emanating from the analysis of the data gathered during the three focus group discussions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME 1: Lack of knowledge</th>
<th>Never heard about them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>theme</td>
<td>suggestions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THEME 2: Needs or Desires of Out-of-school youth</strong></td>
<td>To secure employment/income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To return to school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To get skills that will help secure employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial assistance to further education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To be educated about HIV/AIDS, alcohol, drugs and crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THEME 3: Hindrances/obstacles to accessing available services</strong></td>
<td>Do not know about them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Available services not relevant to own needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fear of being questioned or judged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No adult/Guardian to accompany one to services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THEME 4: Suggestions for services relevant to out-of-school youth</strong></td>
<td>Services that will provide financial assistance to return to school/further education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recreational services such as choirs or organised sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information/awareness raising services on HIV/AIDS, drugs, alcohol and crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organising out-of-school youth into community-based projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Services that will provide skills training to out-of-school youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THEME 5: Suggestions to Publicise services effectively to</strong></td>
<td>Publicise services effectively to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
organisations to make out-of-school youth aware of services
reach out-of-school youth

In the ensuing discussion the researcher will discuss each theme and sub-theme and verify these findings against the existing body of knowledge.

3.3.1 Theme One: Lack of knowledge regarding available resources/services for youth

Chisholm et al. (1996:1) report that out-of-school youth remain a missing link in the national and provincial agendas and though service provisions are made by various NGOs, government, CBOs, and the private sector, access for out-of-school youth remains difficult. Kohn (2002) in an article about out-of-school youth in Peru and reproductive health services states that the urban out-of-school youth in Peru have many concerns among which is lack of knowledge about available reproductive health services and despite their vulnerability they are a difficult target to reach. The participants in this study confirmed the sentiments of the above statements about out-of-school youth and services, as they voiced a lack of knowledge about available services for youth in the Kwazakhele area. When the researcher posed a question to the participants asking them if they knew of any available youth services in their area, all groups responded that they had no knowledge of any available youth services. The participants reported that they had no knowledge of any educational, health or recreational services offered for youth in their area. This lack of knowledge about available services is demonstrated in the following responses by participants when asked about available youth services in Kwazakhele:

“No, we do not know of any organizations that educate young people here in Kwazakhele.”

“No, there are no services we know of.”

“No, we do not know of any services that help young people in our area.”
The following sub-themes give credence to the reasons why the participants lack knowledge about available youth services in their area.

### 3.3.1.1 Never heard about available services

The participants in this study stated that they had never heard of any available youth services in the Kwazakhele area. When the researcher probed further in this regard this is what one of the participants said: “*No, there are no such services that we know of and we never heard of any here in Kwazakhele.*” When asked if out-of-school youth talk about youth services, one participant responded with the following statement: “*We do not talk about these services in my area because we lack general knowledge about them, also if they are available they are really not known by OSY because they are scarce.*”

Williamson, Programmes Director of YouthNet (in a paper by August Burns, Daileader Ruland, Finger, Murphy-Graham, McCarney and Schueller, 2004:2) on out-of-school youth and their access to Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS information, writes that out-of-school youth by their nature miss out on basic education and lose out on opportunities to hear about information available on other issues as well, and that they need to make informed choices regarding their health. Merton (1996) in a discussion paper on employment challenges facing out-of-school youth in Britain also asserts that drop-outs are isolated from available services as they are a hard group to reach and more effort needs to be made to reach out to them with information. It is therefore not surprising that the out-of-school youth who participated in this study expressed not hearing about services as one of the obstacles hindering access to available services.

### 3.3.1.2 Misconceptions regarding the available services

To further probe the question of not knowing about available services the researcher mentioned that there are certain services and asked participants if they had ever heard
of social workers that help people in KwaZakhele. To this question the participants responded that yes they had heard about social workers but did not realise that those social workers could help them but thought they were for children with problems in their families. One of the participants stated: “We know about social workers that work at Enkuthazweni but we thought they are for children that go to foster care or are having behavioural problems.”

In all three focus group discussions that were held only two participants knew about the social workers but also when asked about available services they did not make a link that these social workers can also assist out-of-school youth. The following statement shows the misconceptions that participants had of the services: “I have heard about the social workers at Enkuthazweni from hearing from other people but I did not know that they can help me, I thought that when children are giving problems to their parents, parents come to social workers.”

When asked the question regarding available recreational services one participant did mention that there were soccer clubs in the area but did not see these as providing services to out-of-school youth as membership is voluntary and their lifespan normally is not long. The following response reflects the participant’s view about soccer clubs in the area: “There are soccer clubs in our area and we are free to join them but they do not normally last long because there are no facilities to develop them in the township.”

Expressing a similar view, Merton (1996) states that when out-of-school youth in Britain were asked their views about schemes and programmes aimed at helping them in a survey they responded with scepticism, many saying that opportunities provided by these were short-term and at best unhelpful and offered poor quality experience.

The UNFPA (2003:2) advocating youth friendly services in the provision of sexual reproductive health services identified that misinformation and misperceptions about services can be a barrier to youth utilising such services.
3.3.2 Theme Two: Needs or Desires of out-of-school youth

Van Zyl Slabbert et al. (1994:169) in their recommendations for a youth development policy in South Africa quote Nelson Mandela’s opening address to the first democratic parliament where he said the following about the position of youth: “Their needs are immense and urgent... to address these needs the government will have to act with youth themselves”. According to the World Youth Report (2005), the youth of today are faced with many challenges and the needs of youth need to be at the centre of governments’ initiatives. This report identifies ten priority areas for national and international action aimed at improving the situation and well-being of the world’s youth as education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure time activities, girls and young women, and the full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making. The above priority areas show the extent and the vast nature of youth needs. It is therefore important that services that are developed should address these needs. The South African Youth Policy (National Youth Policy, 1997:7) supports the idea that services for youth should be designed in a manner that addresses youth development needs and opportunities. It is against this background therefore that the needs of out-of-school youth were explored.

As this study aimed at understanding the perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth regarding available services in order to provide recommendations for current and future practices, the participants were also asked a question to generate information regarding what they consider as the priority needs of out-of-school youth to compare them with what they see as relevant services that will meet these needs. The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) asserts that the needs of youth in South Africa include the following:

- A secure family life and the recognition of different types of family units
- Protection from violence and abuse
- Opportunities to reach their full educational and human potential
- Opportunities for career guidance
• Opportunities to participate in the economy and to be productive and self-sufficient
• Basic amenities such as water, housing and access to affordable sources of energy
• A safe environment
• Recreation and leisure
• Meeting the specific life tasks necessary for development of adolescents and young adults
• Information and education on reproductive health and rights.

The above needs were echoed by the out-of-school youth who participated in this study as they identified the needs that are a priority for them and other out-of-school youth. The needs articulated by youth, as identified during the process of data analysis, comprise the five sub-themes which will be discussed below. The sub-themes are:

• The need to secure employment/income
• The need to return to school
• The need to get skills that will help in securing employment
• The need for financial assistance to further education
• The need to be educated about HIV/AIDS, alcohol and drugs, and crime

3.3.2.1 Out-of-School Youth express the need to secure employment/income

Youth unemployment is one of the challenges facing youth in general. Wignara (2003:5,6) paints the picture that the number of youth in the world searching for employment is estimated at approximately 500 million and of this 500 million, 300 million are poor youth. In South Africa according to the National Youth Policy (National Youth Commission, 1997:12,13) the overall rate of unemployment for youth by October 2005 was 43% and of this percentage 30% had been unemployed for over one year, 21% for two years and 15% for more than three years. From these statistics it is further indicated that African youth are more likely to be unemployed than other youth in South Africa. A report on young people in South Africa (2005) commissioned by the
Umsobomvu Youth Fund also confirms the above scenario about youth unemployment in South Africa, and states that two thirds of South African youth who are unemployed, are between the ages of 18 and 35 years. The latter report further asserts that unemployment impacts more on black youth due to imbalances of the past, and that those with little education are the worst affected by unemployment. In Chapter One it was mentioned that out-of-school youth who do not complete their education are more likely to be unemployed than their counterparts who do complete high school (refer to 1.1). The reader is also reminded that of the participating youth in this study nine have not completed their high school education. It is therefore not surprising that, when asked what they see as their most important needs, the participants in this study expressed getting a job as one of their needs. This need is expressed in the following statement:

“I would like to get a job so that I can have income to help my parents....”

Another participant echoed this feeling and said: “I would like to get a job so that I can have an income which I will save so that I can go back to school and complete my education.”

Another participant responded simply to the question of what their needs/wishes were by saying “I wish to get work.”

Lück (2001:19) confirms that one of the greatest needs of out-of-school youth in his study of the out-of-school youth in the Nelson Mandela Metropole is to secure employment. Results indicated the following: 38% of his respondents in Motherwell, 27% of the Walmer Township respondents and 42% of his Kleinskool respondents reported the need for employment as a primary need.

Kohn (2002) providing information on lessons learnt in working with out-of-school youth in Peru, found that for this group of young people, their economic situation takes precedence over all other needs. The report on young people in South Africa (2005:14-15) recommends that the South African government’s plan to halve unemployment by
2014 should focus strongly on providing employment for young people as the youth comprised about 70% of the unemployed and special attention should be given to providing for those with little education.

### 3.3.2.2 Out-of-School Youth express the need to return to school

Another need that was identified by the participants is the need to go back to school and complete their education. This need is supported in the following sentiments articulated by the participants:

“I wish to go back to school, I wish I have everything I need to go to school and finish my schooling and be successful in my future.”

“I have completed my grade 12, I wish to continue with my education and I would like to go back to school and finish my education.”

The above statements lend credence to one of the realities that is facing out-of-school youth, namely that they realise in order for their prospects to improve they may need to complete their schooling. This view is supported by those engaged in youth development with out-of-school youth. Ibrahim (2002:17) states that there is a need to provide a second chance for education to out-of-school youth by providing them with appropriate educational opportunities. The South African National Youth Policy (National Youth Commission, 1997:29) also supports this idea and states as one of its objectives in its strategy on education and training “…to respond with urgency and determination to the issues faced by out-of-school youth so as to ensure this group of young men and women are given new opportunities to engage in education and training”. Chisholm et al. (1996:196) also recommend that access to education and training for out-of-school youth must be looked at when providing for this target group by reintegration of the youth of school-going age back into school and the provision of education and training for older youth through flexible and accessible education pathways. Lunenburg (1999) suggests that one of the ways of addressing the drop-out problem should be the reintegration of school drop-outs into the school system by using
innovative techniques such as providing schooling that meets the special needs of this group.

3.3.2.3 Out-of-School Youth express the need to acquire skills that will help secure employment

As it was stated above in 3.2.2.1 the first need identified by the participants was to secure employment. Another need which is linked to finding employment that was identified is that of acquiring skills that will help find a job. In this expressed need it is clear that out-of-school youth realise that for them to access employment they need to have more skills. The participants expressed their need to be trained in skills that will improve their chances of getting employed in the following statements:

“My wish is to learn about electricity, engineering tubing and computer skills…”

“If we can get help with a place like a training centre where we can be trained in skills like woodwork and electricity so that we can be able to live independently.”

“If out-of-school youth can be trained in skills such as Home-based care skills, nursing, carpentry, and electricity they can use these skills to get income for themselves.”

The above statements agree with the findings of a CASE Youth study in 2000 where it was found that, while education plays an important role in finding a job, work experience and the acquisition of skills can also significantly increase employment prospects. Twenty-six percent of the respondents in the above-mentioned study suggested that lack of skills is one of the factors contributing to youth unemployment. Providing training with practical skills and Information Technology skills was identified as one of the solutions to getting employment.

Osterman (1998) in his paper recommending the reform of employment and training policy for out-of-school youth and adults in America stated that efforts to increase the
skills of this group need to be encouraged so that the youth are not be trapped in low-
earning jobs. The report on young people in South Africa (2005) also recommends that
provision of education and training to youth in South Africa should be holistic in its
approach so as to reflect the requirements of the world of work by providing technical
skills, life skills and preparation for work.

3.3.2.4 Out-of-School Youth express the need for financial assistance to further
education

The CASE Youth Study (2000) found that one of the reasons given by youth for not
furthering their education is lack of money. Thirty-six percent (36%) of their respondents
cited lack of money as the reason for not pursuing further education. Ibrahim (2002:13)
identifies poverty as one of the reasons for exclusion of out-of-school youth in
Bangladesh and states that for those youth who dropped out of school the opportunity to
stay in school is too costly. The National Youth Policy also identifies student financing
as one of the objectives to ensure that access to education is achieved for South African
Framework for 2002 to 2007 (2000:17) proposes that there must be facilitation of access
to a national system of bursaries and loans while paying special attention to increasing
access to higher education.

Many of the participants in the focus group discussions in this study expressed their
need to obtain financial assistance to return to school and complete their education.
The following was stated in support of this need:

“I would like to get financial assistance so that I can study further as I was unable
to continue with my studies because of lack of money....”

“Some of us have finished their grade 12 but were unable to continue their
education because our parents have no money to pay for us, if we can get money
to help with our education we can go back and finish.”
“I stopped going to school because I did not have all I needed to go to school. Sometimes I had to wash myself with cold water, and go to school without eating anything, also when certain things for example money for stationery or school outings were needed I had nowhere to get them so I stopped going to school.”

The above statements show the extent to which lack of finances leads to youth dropping out of school and the need to provide financial assistance to retain youth in schools.

3.3.2.5 Out-of-School Youth express the need to be educated about HIV/AIDS, alcohol and drugs, and crime

In Chapter 1 it was stated that out-of-school youth are at risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of crime, may suffer great risks to their health, or may undertake high risk behaviour such as alcohol or drug use (refer to 1.1). It appears that out-of-school youth themselves are aware of this as the participants in the current study also identified a need for education about HIV/AIDS, alcohol and drugs and crime.

The report on young people in South Africa (2005), has this to say about the state of health and well-being of young people:

- Youth comprise the healthiest section in the community, however
- Substance use and sometimes abuse is increasing and the gap between young women and men is narrowing
- Suicide and mental health are significant problems in the well-being of youth
- HIV/AIDS remains a major threat to the survival of young people though there is an increase in numbers of those taking preventative measures
- Young people are the most prominent victims and perpetrators of violence and crime and there are large numbers of young people in prison.

A UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team on Young People Report (2004) paints the following picture about the challenge of HIV/AIDS facing the youth in our world today:

- Everyday, an estimated 5000-6000 young people become infected with HIV
• Globally, almost one-fourth of those living with HIV/AIDS are under the age of 25
• Of the 15-24 year old young people living with HIV 63% live in sub-Saharan Africa and 21% live in Asia Pacific.

The latter report in discussing the issue of access to information and prevention programmes on HIV/AIDS for youth further states that:
• Fewer than one in four people at high risk have meaningful access to life-skills based HIV/AIDS information
• In many regions of the world both in-school and out-of-school youth lack access to prevention programmes and this can be especially so for out-of-school youth.

The participants in this study also seemed to be concerned about HIV/AIDS as they identified the need to be educated on this issue as one of their needs and that of other out-of-school youth. The participants expressed their need to be educated about HIV/Aids in the following statements:
“*I need to get knowledge about HIV/AIDS so that I can protect myself from getting this disease.*”

“*We as out-of-school youth sometimes talk about HIV/AIDS, we talk about needing to protect ourselves, we need advice on how we can protect ourselves.*”

“*Out-of-school youth in our area use drugs and alcohol and I think we do need education about this.*”

Everatt (in Helve and Wallace 2001:325) profiling youth in South Africa states that the youth form a high proportion of the prison population. According to the Department of Correctional Services statistics (2007), there are 62 215 youth in prison between the ages of 14 and 25 years and 2097 children in detention. The above scenario highlights that youth are vulnerable to crime and this is more so for those who are out-of-school as they may use crime as a means of keeping occupied. It is therefore the views of
participants in this study who also identified the need to be educated on the prevention of crime as one of the most important needs of out-of-school youth in their area. The following statements give credence to this need:

“Because out-of-school youth have nothing to do and loiter around the township, sometimes they involve themselves with crime and they need to be educated to prevent this....”

“Some out-of-school youth in my area engage themselves in criminal activities because they need money and because they are bored, I think it can help if we get information on preventing crime.”

Van Zyl Slabbert et al. (1994:18) also cite juvenile crime, substance abuse and ignorance about the problem of HIV/AIDS as some of the challenges facing youth in South Africa. In the CASE Youth Study (2000: 68) 11% of the youth also identified HIV/AIDS as one of the main concerns of youth in South Africa and 14% identified crime as one of the key problems. The National Youth Policy (1997:36) also proposes education and awareness on HIV/AIDS and other health issues as one of the areas that need to be addressed when addressing the needs of youth.

3.3.3 Theme Three: Hindrances /obstacles to accessing available services

Chisholm et al. (1996:23) in their report on policy provision for out-of-school youth found that although there is a large amount of information available in relation to provision for out-of-school youth there were problems regarding its accessibility to the target group. It is therefore of note that when participants in this study were asked questions regarding their access to available youth services a number of obstacles or hindrances were also identified. Merton (1996) states that in a review of policy provision for out-of-school youth in Britain it was found that this group of young people are poorly served by current arrangements in their country. The following sub-themes give clarity about the obstacles as identified by the participants in this study that lead to out-of-school youth not being
able to access the available services.

3.3.3.1 Do not know about them

In all the focus group discussions that were held in this study all the participants expressed that they do not know of any available youth services in the area of Kwazakhele and this has prevented them from going for assistance when they needed it.

This can be deduced from the following statement of one of the participants when asked a question about where he thinks he can get help to learn the skills he had stated he would like to learn:

“That is my problem exactly, I really do not know where to go for help to achieve my wishes but I would like to get help.”

Another participant supported this stance as follows:

“I stopped going to school because I did not have all I needed to go to school and I did not know where I can go get help…”

According to UNFPA (2003: 1-2), out-of-school youth are a challenge to reach with information about available sexual reproductive health issues as they often have no knowledge of available services and have no access to such services.

3.3.3.2 Available services not relevant to own needs

Though the participants did not know about available youth services in Kwazakhele when the researcher probed further about any other available services that the youth know a few participants remembered that there are some social workers in the area but did not see these services as relevant to their needs. One of the participants mentioned: “I do know about the social workers at Enkuthazweni but I thought they are for children who misbehave or those who need a grant….”
Another participant confirming the same view stated that “Yes, we know of the social workers here at Enkuthazweni but we did not know they can help us as we normally hear that parents come to them when their children are causing problems at home.”

McWhirter et al. (2004:13) identify one of the contributing factors to at-risk issues and problems as inadequate interventions directed to those who are vulnerable and underserved. The authors further state that children and adolescents of colour do not usually receive culturally sensitive, relevant and appropriate interventions. Ibrahim (2002:11) also states that the one of the reasons behind the problem of the exclusion of out-of-school youth in Bangladesh is irrelevance of education to their needs. Many out-of-school youth who dropped out of school did not see how education met their needs hence they dropped out. It is apparent therefore that out-of-school youth are a group that need to see services/school being relevant to their needs if they are to see value in such services.

3.3.3.3 Fear of being questioned or judged

Participants in the focus group discussions also articulated their fears of being judged or questioned as one of the reasons for not approaching the social workers at Enkuthazweni. This is evidenced in this statement made by one participant when the researcher tried to probe as to the reasons why they had not approached the social workers when they needed help:

“Maybe one does not come because of she/he is afraid of being asked too many questions about why you are not schooling and such things.”

Another participant stated: “We do think about coming here (Enkuthazweni) and talk about our problems but then if you come the social workers may go to your home and investigate more and then at home you will be reprimanded for bringing social workers.”
August Burns et al. (2004:22) discussing contributing factors to success of reaching out-of-school youth with reproductive health information, state that youth friendliness and non-judgemental attitudes of the service encouraged out-of-school youth in seeking such services. Out-of-school youth were found to be hesitant to seek services where there was likelihood of being judged. Wilson and Deane’s study of adolescents’ opinions about reducing help-seeking barriers and increasing appropriate help-seeking engagement (2001:358) supports the view that youth are more likely to seek help where they will be treated with friendliness and dignity.

3.3.3.4 No adult/Guardian to accompany one to services

Another reason which was seen as by the participants as a hindrance to accessing available services was the lack of an adult person to accompany them to the available services. The following statement was made by one participant: “To go for help to these services one needs an adult to accompany you and I have no one to accompany me so I do not go.”

Lack of parental involvement was found to be one of the contributing factors to the problem of out-of-school youth (Abrahamse, 2000, Lunenburg, 1999 and Wing-Lin Lee & Miu-Ling Ip, 2003). Due to lack of parental involvement in their lives, out-of-school youth are said to experience further marginalisation. It therefore confirms the sentiment that the participants in this study articulated as one of their obstacles to accessing services as being lack of an adult to seek such services. According to Abrahamse (2000:201), the youth in her study on the needs of at risk youth in Mitchell’s Plain reported that lack of parental support made them more vulnerable and at risk. In a study on promoting success for at-risk African-American Youth, Spitler, Kemper and Parker (2002:50) also agree with the above views as they also identified a lack of adequate adult guidance as a key factor in the failure of the at-risk youth and as a barrier in utilising community resources.
3.3.4 Theme Four: Suggestions for services relevant to out-of-school youth

As stated in Chapter 1 (refer to 1.3.2) one of the objectives of this study was to provide recommendations for future service delivery. Those who work in the field of youth development agree that youth needs and challenges are immense and propose that efforts should be made to develop services that will address these needs of youth (compare Everatt, in Helve and Wallace, 2001:326; National Youth Development Policy Framework, 2002 National Youth Policy, 1997, & White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997). In an article on Youth Development, the Centre for Conflict Resolution (1998) makes the following assertion about the need for placing youth development at the centre of efforts of all those involved with youth:

“Those of us who work in youth development argue that it is the most important issue facing South Africa. Unless we can ensure that young people grow up with a sense of belonging and worth and a willingness to participate fully in South African society the nation cannot achieve its social and economic objectives”.

The National Youth Policy (1997) in recognising the need for substantial, informed and practical strategies to address major needs, challenges and opportunities facing youth, suggests the following main areas for intervention along which services for youth development should be developed:

(i) Education and training
(ii) Health
(iii) Economic participation
(iv) Safety, security and justice
(v) Welfare and community development
(vi) Sport and recreation
(vii) Arts and culture
(viii) Environment and tourism
(ix) Science and technology

It is of note therefore that when participants in this study were asked a question
regarding what services they deem relevant for out-of-school youth they echoed the majority of the above sentiments. Services that were identified as needed to address the needs of out-of-school youth are discussed below in the following sub-themes:

- Services that will provide financial assistance to return to school/further education
- Recreational services such as choirs or organised sports
- Information/awareness raising services on HIV/AIDS, drugs and alcohol and crime
- Organising out-of-school youth into community-based projects and
- Services that will provide skills training to out-of-school youth

It is also important to note that the services suggested seem to be directly linked to the needs that were identified by the participants.

3.3.4.1 Services that will provide financial assistance to return to school/further education

One of the service areas identified by the participants during the focus groups was services that will assist to finance their return to school or to further their education. This is what was said by the participants:

“…Most of us dropped out of school because of our families were not able to afford all the cost of the schooling….so if we could get help to meet these needs to attend school.”

“We said that we would like that organizations must also bring financial assistance for those out-of-school youth who would like to further their education but had to stop due to not having funds to do so.”

Everatt (1994:212) in his policy recommendation for education and training for youth in South Africa recommends that bursaries need to be made available for youth to facilitate
access to education. The National Youth Policy (1997) and the National Youth Development Framework (2002) also (refer to 3.3.2.4 above) see access to finance for furthering education as one of the priority areas for youth development in this country. It is however essential that this service of financial assistance be made available during primary and secondary education not only for further education as the policies seem to be proposing. Both the National Youth Policy and the National Development Framework seem to emphasise access to financial assistance for further education, whereas from the input of the participants in this research it seems that financial assistance is needed also to meet needs during primary and secondary education. One participant shared the following to demonstrate this need: “I dropped out of school while doing my primary education because I did not have means nor money for the necessary school needs such as books and pencils and sometimes school uniform.”

3.3.4. Recreational services such as choirs or organised sports

During the focus group discussions participants highlighted the challenge of boredom, stating that out-of-school youth because they have nothing to do end up being involved in criminal activities (refer to 3.3.2.5 above). It is against this background that the participants also recommended that services be initiated for recreational and/or organised sport. The need for recreational services is voiced in the following statements by participants:

“In my view if it was according to me, the OSY can be helped to do something for example starting a singing choir, where we can come together and sing and go to different places to perform and earn some income.”

“We must not sit around and do nothing we must be helped to do some dancing, maybe start a dancing group.”

“We must be helped to start a soccer club.”
“We need also to be developed in sport so that we can be involved in professional sport, not just for the sake of playing sport.”

“We think that some OSY here in KwaZakhele have talent but there are no facilities here in KwaZakhele to develop their talents and skills professionally. Sport such as cricket, rugby and athletics.”

Research that was undertaken by the Youth Centre Project of the Centre for Social Studies and Development of the University of Natal between 1988-1991, found that leisure has an important role to play in the new South Africa and that it means much more than recreation or play to young people. This report further cites that marrying semi-leisure and pure leisure activities may go a long way towards meeting youth demands for constructive leisure at home, in youth groups and in the community. Scholtz in Van Zyl Slabbert et.al. (1994:412) in a study of leisure preferences and needs for South Africans in the age group of 15 to 30 years recommended that the provision of appropriate leisure facilities and services should be one of the priorities of the new government.

The National Youth Development Policy Framework also supports the development of sport and recreation for youth as one of the areas to be addressed by the youth development programme (2002:15). The National Youth Policy (1997) motivating for the strategy of sports and recreation in youth development services quotes the following statement from the UNESCO International Charter of Physical Education and Sport:

“There is a strong need for young people to be involved in sport and recreation because sport, leisure and recreation contribute to the maintenance and improvement of health, provide a wholesome leisure-time occupation and enable mankind to overcome the drawbacks of modern living”.

The National Youth Policy further places emphasis on targeting young people who have been denied access, or only given limited opportunities to participate in sport and recreation as priority for sports and recreation services.
3.3.4.3 Information/awareness raising services on HIV/AIDS, drugs and alcohol and crime

As the need for education on HIV/AIDS, drugs and alcohol and crime was identified by the participants (see 3.3.2.5 above) they also stated that services for providing information on these issues must be made available to out-of-school youth.

Van Zyl Slabbert et al. (1994:18) paint the following picture about the challenges facing youth in South Africa especially what they term “marginalised youth”. They are faced with a chaotic education system, high failure rate, juvenile crime and violence, high teenage pregnancy, ignorance about HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, amongst others. The authors’ view therefore confirms opinions articulated by participants in this study who identified the need to be educated about these issues as vital and asserted that such services should be made available for out-of-school youth.

The following was stated by participants motivating this kind of service: “We said that out-of-school youth especially those who passed their matric find themselves getting involved in drugs, alcohol and crime because they have nothing to do therefore this means OSY need to be educated about these issues.”

“We as out-of-school youth we sometimes talk about HIV/AIDS and I think we need to get information on how to protect ourselves from this disease.”

“Some of out-of-school youth are using drugs and alcohol, it is important that we are educated about the danger of using drugs and alcohol.”

August Burns et al. (2004: 1,2,8) state that many out-of-school youth spend their time on the street where they are vulnerable to risky behaviours such as drugs and alcohol abuse. This abuse of drugs and alcohol is also associated with risky sexual behaviours which place this group at risk of HIV/AIDS and other health-related illnesses. The aforementioned authors therefore motivate for innovative programmes to reach out-of-
school youth with relevant information that will help them make better choices for themselves.

The Centre for Conflict Resolution (1998) also supports the idea that services for youth should provide knowledge that will help youth to make informed choices and lead healthier lifestyles. In a discussion paper on youth development the latter authors recommend that programmes for youth development must be integrated and acknowledge and allow for the economic, educational and psychosocial needs of young people.

3.3.4.4 Organising out-of-school youth into community-based projects

The participants in this study supported the idea of services that will organise out-of-school youth into community-based projects. This suggestion was stated as follows: "Organizations must organise the OSY youth in Kwazakhele in community projects such as community gardens, cleaning of schools and community and train them in skills in Home-Based Care and nursing skills."

"We must be helped to start an organization that will deal with health issues for out-of-school youth."

"There are not enough youth activities here in Kwazakhele, it can help us if we can be assisted to start projects that will deal with youth issues especially for out-of-school."

Contrary to the assumption that young people are not interested in being involved in their communities, Everatt (in Helve and Wallace, 2001:322) states that young people are found to be concerned with spiritual, social and economic issues and are willing to be involved. The South African Youth Report (2005:29, 31) supports this view and reports that many young people in South Africa are found to participate voluntarily or informally in civic activities. The latter report further recommends that efforts should be made to encourage participation of young people in their communities by:
1 Establishing forums where young people will be given meaningful opportunities to participate in decision and policy making in their communities; and
2 Greater opportunities should be given to youth to interact with government, particularly local government to participate in and shaping community priorities and service delivery.

The National Youth Policy (1997) also advocates the encouragement of youth to participate in community development efforts as one of its objectives in carrying out youth development activities. It is also important to note though the participants expressed interest in being involved in community-based activities, when the researcher probed further on this issue of community involvement there seemed to be an element suggesting that income from such projects should also be made available. This is evident in the following statements from the participants who stated that:

“Yes, as out-of-school youth we are interested in being involved in the projects if we know that we would get some income from being involved in these projects.”

“If we can be trained for example in Home-based Care skills and nursing and then be organised in a project that will help generate income for us.”

Sisulu in her foreword to “Creating a Future: Youth Policy for South Africa” in Everatt (1994) states the following regarding youth involvement in South Africa: “Young people are clear about what they want for the future and have endless ideas about how they would like to participate in the society. Youth themselves are both accessible and available”. Everatt (1994:216) agrees with the notion of youth involvement in community programmes and states that awareness programmes should encourage youth involvement in community work. The National Youth Policy (1997:46) also highlights promotion of youth involvement in community initiatives as one of its strategies and states that initiatives that are youth driven are fundamental to youth development.
3.3.4.5 Services that will provide skills training to out-of-school youth

As the need to acquire skills that will help secure employment was mentioned in an earlier sub-theme as one of the needs of out-of-school youth (see 3.3.2.3.), services that will provide skills training for out-of-school youth were also identified as one of the services that should be made available to out-of-school youth. The views of participants in this regard were expressed in the following manner:

“We suggest that there must be organizations that will help regarding skills training for out-of-school youth that will assist them to get employed.”

“I need help to develop my skills in working with electricity and engineering.... I need help that can improve the skills that I have.”

“If we can get help with a place like a training centre where we can get trained in skills so that we can be able to live independently.”

It has been mentioned above that in the CASE Youth Study (2000) a lack of skills was identified as one of the most significant concerns of youth in South Africa. Youth expressed the view that getting trained in skills that will help them secure employment is seen as a solution to youth unemployment. The National Youth Policy (1997:38) and the National Youth Development Framework (2002:18) in South Africa recognise that skills training should be a vital part of any youth development endeavour. It is stated as one of its strategies that employment programmes should be established for youth that cover both soft skills (that is life skills) and hard (vocational) skills. In working with out-of-school youth it is recommended that skills development should be part of the services that are provided for this target group (Merton, 1996; National Youth Policy, 1997; and South African Youth Report, 2005).
3.3.5 Theme Five: Suggestions for organisations to make out-of-school youth aware of services

During the pilot interview when the researcher tested the original questions guiding this research it became apparent that the out-of-school youth did not know about available services in their area though there are some services available. The researcher deemed it necessary therefore to add the question regarding how the youth think they can be assisted to become more aware of services as lack of knowledge appears to hamper access. Participants made the following suggestions as captured in the sub-theme below, namely that youth services should be more effectively publicised.

3.3.5.1 Publicise services effectively to reach Out-of-School Youth

When asked how the organizations can ensure that out-of-school youth know about their services the participants stated that organizations should use loud speaker announcements, distribute pamphlets and written notices in communities as this is a way that they would get to hear about things happening in their community. It is important to note that these participants recommended the use of varied marketing media that are likely to reach them and some stated that some of their homes do not even own radios. Those who work with out-of-school youth find that this group of young people is one of the hardest groups to reach and innovation needs to be utilised in reaching them with services. Kohn (2002), and Kahuthia and Radeny (2006) found that they had to use creative means to reach out-of-school youth with reproductive health services. In Peru, Kohn used drama and rap sessions to take information to the streets where they were able to reach their target group. Kahuthia and Radeny (2006) in Kenya, used scouting to bring services to out-of-school youth.

Chisholm et al. (1996:27) also recommend that there is a need for all information producers and people working in the area of youth development to come together for the purpose of coordinating information provision and access by out-of-school and unemployed youth. The following statements were expressed by the participants
suggested how organizations can ensure information about their services reaches them:

“I will advise that the organizations to distribute notices in our communities about their services.”

“They should also use loud speakers and put posters up in shops.”

“Organizations must also use radios to share information about their services.”

3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In the above discussion, findings from the focus group discussions have been discussed according to the five themes which emerged during the process of data analysis. The five themes that were identified from the data were as follows:

- Lack of knowledge regarding available resources/services for youth
- Needs or desires of out-of-school youth
- Hindrances/obstacles to accessing available services
- Suggestions for services relevant to out-of-school youth and
- Suggestions to publicise services effectively to reach out-of-school youth.

Each of the themes was supported by sub-themes and relevant participant quotations from the focus group discussions. In turn, each theme and sub-theme was verified by comparing the findings to available literature. In Chapter Four attention will be focused on summarising findings, drawing conclusions and generating recommendations.
CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves to complete the research process by providing a summary of the main points in the previous chapters, drawing conclusions based on the main findings of the study and to making recommendations pertaining to the use of the research findings.

The following aspects will be discussed to provide summaries, conclusions and recommendations:

- The research methodology,
- The findings concerning the perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth in Kwazakhele regarding access to available youth services, and
- Conclusions and recommendations based on the findings.

4.2 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY USED

Chapter One gave an overview of the plight of out-of-school youth in general and in South Africa, providing a background highlighting the vulnerability of the target group for this study. This background was given with a view to providing motivation for the study to be undertaken. An overview of the research plan and procedures followed in the execution of the study were also discussed. The research plan highlighted that a qualitative approach would be utilised and that focus group discussions were used as the primary method of data collection. The goal of the research study was stated as follows; to explore and describe the perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth regarding access to available youth services in Kwazakhele. To realise this goal the following grand tour question was formulated:
What are the perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth regarding available services and what are the factors that influence their accessing such services?

Chapter Two outlined the research methodology to be used in the implementation of this study. A more in-depth discussion was provided to motivate the choice of a qualitative, descriptive, exploratory and contextual research design that was used in executing this study. The qualitative paradigm was used as it was deemed appropriate in the context of this study which was concerned with understanding the perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth regarding accessing available youth services in Kwazakhele. This chapter further provided the rationale for the use of focus group discussions to gather data and the steps followed in the process of implementing the data collection phase of the study. The researcher also provided an explanation of how the focus groups were set up and conducted and challenges faced were also highlighted in this chapter.

Chapter Three gave a description of the findings of the study using verbatim quotes from the participants and contrasting these with available literature. A brief demographic profile of the participants was provided in order to contextualise the main findings which were in themes and sub-themes.

The research design and methodology employed in this study were deemed appropriate for the current research as they provided the researcher with the applicable tools to conduct her research. The qualitative, descriptive, exploratory and contextual design that was used in this study was suitable as it allowed the researcher to gain insight by exploring the perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth in Kwazakhele regarding accessing available services in their area.

The use of focus group discussions as a data collection tool was helpful to the aim of this study as it allowed participants to share their views in their own words regarding how they perceive and experience access to available youth services in their area. This
method also allowed for the varied views of members to come through as it provided a conducive non-threatening environment. It can however be highlighted that from the researcher’s experience of conducting the focus group discussions it is essential for the researcher to be well prepared and to be equipped with the requisite skills to optimise the use of this method of data collection. A pilot study was conducted as a precursor to the process of data collection and this afforded the researcher an opportunity to test the data collection questions in order to make necessary adjustments. The researcher therefore recommends the use of a pilot study to ensure one’s tool of data collection is yielding the necessary depth and breadth of information needed to answer the research question.

Data analysis was undertaken using Tesch’s eight steps framework (Creswell, 1994). This framework helped the researcher to make sense of the data collected by reducing the data into themes and sub-themes. These then were in turn subjected to a literature control and this helped the researcher to gain confidence in the findings of her study. The researcher recommends the use of this framework for data analysis in qualitative studies as it helped the researcher as a novice qualitative researcher due to its clarity in assisting in qualitative data analysis.

Using Guba’s model of trustworthiness (in Krefting, 1991), findings of the study were verified according the four criteria: truth value, credibility, applicability, consistency and neutrality. To ensure trustworthiness of this study, the researcher made use of a number of strategies: a co-facilitator during focus group discussions, the audio taping of participants’ responses allowed for accurate transcription and these have been kept as an audit trail of the data collected and the process of data analysis. Discussions with other professional peers were also held and the services of an independent coder were employed. In ensuring trustworthiness of a qualitative study this model is recommended as it provided specific strategies to guide the novice qualitative researcher.
4.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In Chapter One the situation of out-of-school youth was highlighted (refer to section 1.1: Introduction and Problem Formulation). In discussing the plight of out-of-school youth it became clear that the literature and policies reviewed emphasise that unless interventions appropriate to their needs are provided, this group of youth are in danger of being further marginalised (McWhirter et al., 1998; National Youth Policy, 1997). In South Africa a number of NGOs, CBOs, Government and private sector organizations make provision for the needs of out-of-school youth but access for out-of-school youth continues to pose a challenge to service providers (Chisholm et al., 1996). It was against this background that the study was conducted to ascertain how out-of-school youth perceive and experience available youth services. In the previous chapter the five major themes that were generated from this study have been discussed. In the following section a summary of the main findings based on these themes and their sub-themes will be presented.

4.3.1 LACK OF KNOWLEDGE REGARDING AVAILABLE YOUTH SERVICES

The first theme highlighted that out-of-school youth in Kwazakhele had no knowledge of available youth services in their area. This theme revealed that the out-of-school youth in Kwazakhele had never heard of services available to assist them in addressing their needs. Participants had no knowledge of any educational, recreational or health services available. With regard to available services in the area the participants also demonstrated some misconceptions and they did not realise that the existing social work services could also assist them. This lack of knowledge regarding available services also resulted in the participants forming perceptions about available services which resulted in their not accessing any services.

4.3.2 NEEDS/DESIRE OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH

The second theme, which was concerned with what out-of-school youth deemed to be
their needs or desires, generated a variety of identified needs. Needs that were identified were as follows: to secure employment, to return to school, to get trained in skills, to access finances for further education and to be educated about issues such as HIV/AIDS, crime and substance abuse. These needs identified by participants showed the complexity and the varied nature of the concerns of out-of-school youth and also demonstrated that despite the fact that out-of-school youth have no access to services they are aware of their needs and they are able to verbalise them.

4.3.3 OBSTACLES/HINDRANCES TO ACCESSING SERVICES BY OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH

Theme three dealt with factors preventing out-of-school youth from accessing services and generated a number of such factors that influence the lack of access of out-of-school youth to available services. A number of obstacles were identified hindering out-of-school youth's access to available services. It is clear that though this group has needs they are unable to have these needs met as the services that could help them do not reach this target group. The following sub-themes emerged from this theme indicating factors blocking access for out-of-school youth to available services:

- Youth indicate not knowing about services
- Available services not relevant to identified needs
- Fear of being questioned or judged
- No adult/guardian to accompany youth to services.

The above issues highlight specific areas to be addressed in order for out-of-school youth to be able to improve access to services available to them.

4.3.4 SERVICES RELEVANT TO OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH

Though the participants had no knowledge of services available in their area and identified a number of obstacles that prevented them from accessing available services, this theme showed that they however do have an insight into what services they need to
address their varied complex challenges. The services that were identified as relevant for out-of-school youth are also linked to the second theme, that of needs/desires that the participants expressed. The services that were highlighted as relevant to meet the needs of out-of-school youth are:

- Services that will provide financial assistance to enable out-of-school youth to return to school/further education
- Recreational services such as choirs or organized sports
- Information/awareness raising services on HIV/AIDS, drugs and alcohol, and crime
- Organising out-of-school youth into community-based projects
- Services that will provide skills training to out-of-school youth

4.3.5 OTHER SUGGESTIONS HOW ORGANIZATIONS CAN MAKE OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH AWARE OF SERVICES

As it became clear from the first theme that out-of-school youth in KwaZakhele had no knowledge nor access to available youth services a theme emerged that could aid in ensuring that services reach out-of-school youth. It is important to highlight that participants suggested such services specifically be accessible to them as out-of-school youth. To ensure that out-of-school youth know and hear about services in their area participants suggested that organizations should publicise services through loud-speaker announcements, pamphlets and written notices distributed in the community where out-of-school youth reside.

4.4 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the above research findings the following conclusions can be drawn about perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth in KwaZakhele regarding access to available services in their area:

- Out-of-school youth in KwaZakhele lacked knowledge about available youth services in their area and this resulted in their having no formed perceptions
about this topic. It can also be concluded that no knowledge leads to inadequate or lack of access to available or existing services.

- A number of factors such as their having perceived irrelevance of services, fear of being judged, not knowing where to go and no guardian or adult to accompany them influence access of out-of-school youth to available services and this results in youth being further marginalised as they are not able to receive the assistance which they need.

- Though out-of-school youth have no access to services they are very much aware of their needs as they were able to verbalise these in clear and concrete terms. Needs that were identified by out-of-school youth were: to secure employment, to return to school, to access finance for returning to school/furthering one’s education, being educated on HIV/AIDS, crime and substance abuse and to be skilled in skills that will help secure employment.

- As out-of-school youth are aware of their needs they are also clear about what services they require to meet these needs and these should be taken into account when services are rendered to this group by service providers.

- Service providers need to use media accessible to out-of-school youth to make their presence known in communities. Out-of-school youth suggested making loud speaker announcements, distribution of pamphlets and the use of posters around the community.

4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions drawn from the main findings emanating from the study the following recommendations are offered:

- **Efforts by service providers in the Kwazakhele area should be made to ensure that out-of-school youth have knowledge and access to their services.**

It is clear that out-of-school youth are a hard to reach group and services providers need to be creative in ensuring they reach this group that is in need of intervention. Kohn
(2002), the Texas Workforce for Youth Programme Initiatives (2003) and PATH (1999) in working with out-of-school youth found out that one needs to find creative ways of reaching this unique target group. In their programmes for reaching out-of-school youth they recommend the use of the following innovative ways:

- Use of street communications such as informal rap sessions,
- Drama and dance programmes linked to the services being rendered,
- Pro-active approaches that go to where out-of-school youth are,
- Use programmes such as mass media to reach youth in the street, and
- Using scouts as a means to reach youth in the street.

- Services that are offered should take into consideration the complex nature of the needs of this group. As the second theme revealed that out-of-school youth have varied needs, service providers would have to be sensitive to this in designing programmes to address effectively the needs of this group.

Proponents of youth development advocate the designing of services for youth that are appropriated to address the many challenges faced by young people. The Centre for Conflict Resolution (1998) in discussions with other key players in youth development (Joint Enrichment Programme and Institute for Pastoral Education) suggests that programmes designed for youth development should be integrated and acknowledge and allow the opportunity to address the economic, educational and psychosocial needs of young people. Kohn (2002) also in the lessons of working with out-of-school youth in Peru, supports this idea and states that successful programmes working with out-of-school youth were those which integrated also the economic needs of this group in their service provision.

Merton (1999) suggests that in order to ensure services are to address effectively the needs of out-of-school youth, those who work with out-of-school youth should
collaborate in reaching this target and efforts must be made to design programmes that will be sensitive to such needs. Lunenburg (1999) asserts that for services to reach school drop-outs they need to be community based and designed with the intention to meet the needs of those they serve.

Services that are recommended for out-of-school youth need to address the following needs as identified by the participants:

- The need of out-of-school youth to have an income
- The reintegration of the school-going age out-of-school youth with education together with financial assistance,
- Financial assistance for further education of those who have completed their schooling and wish to further their education,
- Skills training that will provide better opportunities of those who are not able to continue with formal education,
- The need of out-of-school youth to be involved in upliftment of their community
- The need of out-of-school youth to be involved in constructive leisure activities, and
- To be informed and educated about HIV/AIDS, crime and substance abuse.

- Service providers should ensure that barriers or obstacles that hinder out-of-school youth in accessing their services are removed to make their services reachable by this unique target group.

As stated before in Chapter One, despite improvements in many areas of service provision, out-of-school youth remain the missing link in these improvements (Chisolm et al., 1997). The factors identified by participants that prevent them from accessing services show that more effort must be made by service providers to ensure that their services are within reach of those they claim to serve. The Texas Workforce
Commission for Youth Programme Initiative (2003) recommends that those who work with out-of-school youth would have to be more proactive to reach their target group. These authors assert that out-of-school youth are not likely to come to the doors of organizations but rather service providers would have to reach out to out-of-school youth. Once one has reached out-of-school youth it is necessary to work on encouraging them to continue to use one’s services as they are also not likely to remain for long.

The Centre for Conflict Resolution (1998), and the Joint Enrichment Programme and the Institute for Pastoral Education (1999) also support the idea of ensuring that service providers encourage youth participation in services that are long term and sustainable. The authors advise that an effort should be made to remove barriers to youth participation, such as communities not supporting youth development efforts.

- **Further research needs to be undertaken to understand the dynamics involved in providing services to out-of-school youth and best practice models implemented in other countries need to be researched so that practised guidelines can be provided to those who work with youth to ensure that their services reach those who seem to remain on the periphery despite many initiatives in place for addressing the needs of young people.**

As stated in Chapter One, the researcher conducted this study because very little is known about out-of-school youth in Kwazakhele and their access to available youth services in their area. It is therefore recommended that given the findings of this exploratory study, further research needs to be done to identify best practices to provide guidelines for this hard-to-reach group.

**4.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

In this chapter the last stage of the research process was carried out and a synopsis of the entire study was presented. Conclusions from the implementation of the research process and the main findings of the research were discussed. Based on the
aforementioned conclusions specific recommendations were offered.

This study draws attention to the plight of out-of-school youth and their vulnerability for engaging in high risk behaviour when they are unable to access appropriate services. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, in his foreword to the book: Reclaiming Youth At Risk: Our Hope to the Future by Brendto, Brokenleg and Bockern (2002) states: “Children from difficult circumstances need someone to throw them a lifeline since it is difficult to pull oneself up by one’s own boot strings. Without help, too many young people will drop out of school, become involved in substance abuse, and increase the populations in jails. We must realise that it is very, very short sighted policy if we fail to redeem and salvage our most needy young people”.

The former president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, in his foreword to the National Youth Policy, 1997, stated that the country and government “must recognise and acknowledge the contributions that young people made to our society and we must build upon the imagination, energy, vibrancy and talents of this, our national asset”.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Young People in South Africa 2005: Where we’re at and where we’re going. Johannesburg: Umsobomvu Youth Fund

APPENDIX A

Letter to Gate Keepers

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONS

Enquiries: Dr Blanche Pretorius

Tele.: 041-5042353

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Assistance to recruit out-of-school youth residing in your area/known to you

My name is Buyiswa Mpini and I am a Master's student in Social Work at the University of Port Elizabeth. As part of the requirements for my degree I am expected to undertake a research project and for this reason, I have chosen to investigate the perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth regarding available youth services in the Kwazakhele area.

In order to realise this research I need to recruit out-of-school youth (youth who are not attending school and not working) between the ages of 13 and 24 years as participants in a 2-hour focus group discussion. I therefore request your assistance in identifying and recruiting such youth who meet this criteria. The focus group will be conducted at a venue within the Kwazakhele area that will be convenient for the participants.

Your assistance in this regard will be greatly appreciated as the information that will be yielded by this research may contribute towards better service delivery to this particular target group. For more information and clarity you are welcome to contact Dr Pretorius, my supervisor, at the contact number listed above and myself at 041-452 6789/072 0910 371.

Thank you

…………………….

B. MPINI

Researcher and Social Worker
APPENDIX B

Parental Consent letter

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONS
Enquiries: Dr Blanche Pretorius
Tele.: 041-5042353

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Participation in Research Study on Out-of-school Youth’s perceptions and experiences regarding access to available youth services

Your child has indicated that (s)he is willing to participate in a research project that aims to hear from Out-of-school Youth about their perceptions and experiences regarding access to available youth services.

My name is Buyiswa Mpini and I am a Master’s student in Social Work at the University of Port Elizabeth. As part of the requirements for my degree I am expected to undertake a research project and for this reason, I have chosen to investigate the perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth regarding available youth services.

Your son/daughter will be expected to participate in a 2-hour focus group discussion conducted by the researcher at an agreed time and venue. I would like to point out that your child has the right to withdraw from the research project at any time and that this decision will be respected and no pressure placed upon him or her.

Since your child is under the age of eighteen years, I need you to grant your consent as parent/guardian if you are willing to allow your child to participate. Please indicate your willingness by reading and signing the attached consent form.

Your help in this research project will be greatly appreciated as I believe that your child’s input is vital in informing professionals about the perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth regarding available youth services as it will assist in planning of appropriate social work services.
Yours sincerely,

..........................................................  (Signature of Parent/Guardian)

I ...................................................................... (Name of Parent/Guardian) agree that my child ........................................................................ (Name of Child) can participate in the aforementioned research.

..........................................................  (Signature of Parent/Guardian)
APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:
The perceptions and experiences of out-of-school youth regarding youth services in Kwazakhele

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: …Ms. Buyiswa Mpini…

ADDRESS: …72 Keurboom Crescent, Algoa Park, Port Elizabeth 6001

CONTACT TELEPHONE NO.: …041-452 6789……or 072 0910 371

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT:</th>
<th>Initial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I, THE UNDERSIGNED,……………………………………………..(name)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[I.D. No:………………….…..] resident at the following address:</td>
<td></td>
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<td>……………………………………………………………………………..</td>
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<td>……………………………………………………………………………..</td>
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<tr>
<td>(address).</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A. HEREBY CONFIRM AS FOLLOWS:

1. I, The participant was invited to participate in the abovementioned research project which is being undertaken by Buyiswa Mpini………..
of the Department of Social Development Professions in the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Port Elizabeth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. The following aspects have been explained to me/ the participant:</th>
<th>Initial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aim: The investigators are studying:…………………………………………………………………………………</td>
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<td>………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The information will be used to/for

Procedures: I understand that

Risks:

Possible benefits: As a result of my participation in this study

Confidentiality: My identity will not be revealed in any discussion, description or scientific publications by the investigators.

Access to findings: Any new information / or benefits that develop during the course of the study will be shared with me.

Voluntary participation / refusal / discontinuation: My participation is voluntary. My decision whether or not to participate will in no way affect my present or future medical care/ employment / lifestyle.

3. The information above was explained to me / the participant by (name of relevant person)
   In English / Xhosa
   And I am in command of this language / it was satisfactorily translated to me by (name of translator)
   I was given the opportunity to ask questions and all these questions were answered satisfactorily.

4. No pressure was exerted on me to consent to participation and I understand that I may withdraw at any stage without penalization.

5. Participation in this study will not result in any additional cost to myself.
B.  I HEREBY CONSENT VOLUNTARILY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE
ABOVEMENTIONED PROJECT.

Signed / confirmed at  ………………………… on ……………………………  20…
(place) (date)

.................................................................................  ......................................
Signature of participant  Signature of witness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENT BY OR ON BEHALF OF INVESTIGATOR(S):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I,  <strong>Buyiswa Mpini</strong>, declare that</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| •  I have explained the information given in this document to  |
| (name of the participant)  .................................. |

| •  he/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions; |
| •  this conversation was conducted in Afrikaans/English/Xhosa/Other…………… |
| and no translator was used / this conversation was translated into  ..................... |
| (language) by.............................................................. (name). |

Signed at  ………………………………………… on …………………………  20……
(place) (date)

.................................................................................  ......................................
Signature of investigator / representative  Signature of witness
IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO PARTICIPANT:

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your participation in this study. Should, at any time during the study,

- an emergency arise as a result of the research, or
- you require any further information with regard to the study, or
- the following occur

…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………

(indicate any circumstances which should be reported to the investigator) kindly contact

…… Buyiswa Mpini

at telephone number 041-452 6789……or 072 091 0371(where help will be available on a 24 hour basis).