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EXPLORING THE CAPACITY-BUILDING NEEDS OF SOCIAL WORKERS TO PREPARE YOUTH LEAVING CHILD AND YOUTH CARE CENTRES IN EKURHULENI, GAUTENG PROVINCE

A report on a research study presented to

The Department of Social Work

School of Human and Community Development

Faculty of Humanities

University of the Witwatersrand

Johannesburg

In partial fulfilment of the requirement

For the degree Master of Arts in Social Work

By

Zandile Gamede

APRIL 2020

DECLARATION

I, **ZANDILE GAMEDE,** declare that "Exploring the capacity-building needs of social workers to prepare youths leaving child and youth care centres in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng Province" is my work and that all the sources used and all quotes have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I hereby certify that this dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree purpose locally, regionally or internationally.

Z.GAMEDE **20 APRIL 2020**

_____ _____

SIGNATURE **DATE**

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ABSTRACT

One of the roles of social workers employed within Child and Youth Care Centres (CYCCs) is to prepare the youth for discharge by empowering them with knowledge and skills, and provide them with resources so that that they achieve independent living and can reintegrate successfully into mainstream society. However, most youth leaving CYCCs are often not prepared or trained for independent living before being discharged from CYCCs. The study attempted to explore the capacity-building needs that social workers have in preparing the youth to leave CYCCs. Within this study, challenges and successes social workers experienced in preparing the youths for independent living were also described'. The study applied a qualitative research approach and a collective case study design. Non-probability purposive sampling was used to select twelve social workers who were employed by the Gauteng Department of Social Development and working within Ekurhuleni CYCCs at the time of the study. An interview schedule was utilised to conduct an in-depth one-on-one semi-structured interviews with the participants. The data was analysed thematically. Factors such as lack of formal training in programme design and management, lack of conceptual understanding of Independent Living Programmes (ILPs) and lack of formal ILPs or integrated approaches to preparing youth leaving care centres were identified as contributing towards lack of preparation of youth leaving CYCCs. Secondly, challenges arising from issues pertaining human resources and structural challenges were identified. In addition, the findings revealed that some of the social workers are able to provide services and interventions that aimed to facilitate successful transitioning for care leavers to become independent and self-sufficient. Finally, the findings revealed that social workers need training on designing and implementing ILPs. The main conclusion drawn from the study is that social workers do not implement ILPs because they are not properly capacitated. As such, they lack knowledge and skills to design and implement ILPs.

KEYWORDS: Care leaving, Independent Living Programme, Child and Youth Care Centres, Social Worker.

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CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Children in South Africa are faced with numerous challenges that place them at risk. According to Patel (2015), the country's legacy of apartheid is characterised by inequality and social dislocation. This has exacerbated high levels of social problems including poverty, domestic violence, substance abuse and sexual abuse, thus exposing many children to vulnerability. Moreover, the country still battles with the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which has resulted in over 5.7 million people reportedly being infected (UNICEF, 2011). There are estimated to be 3.7 million orphans in South Africa, approximately half of whom have lost one or both parents due to HIV/AIDS (UNICEF, 2011). As such, it is estimated that one-third of youths between the ages of 15 and 24 live in youth-headed households (Tanur, 2012). The high level of unemployment in South Africa in conjunction with the complex socio-economic conditions that prevail implies that children and young people face extreme challenges that render them vulnerable to poverty, neglect, abandonment and abuse. Consequently, many of these children and young people find themselves admitted to Child and Youth Care Centres (CYCCs) when the option of suitable placement with extended families has failed (Agere, 2014).

Accurate statistics on the number of children and young people admitted into CYCCs are not available. However, Proudlock (2014) estimated that about 345 registered CYCCs nationwide, accommodates over 21 000 vulnerable children and youth in the child and youth care system. The rising number of children placed in the social welfare system implies an increase in the number of young people needing to leave the care system when they reach the age of maturity (Tanur, 2012). However, the Children's Act 38 of 2005 makes provision to extend the placement until the age of 21 years, provided the youth is still completing their education or training (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2005). If the youth reaches the age of 21 years, they are discharged from the system as they are presumed "adults" and capable of living independently (Mendes, 2009). This concurs with the findings of Boning and Ferreira (2013) who maintain that young people placed in the child and youth care system are much

more likely to simply age out of the system than to leave the care system because of either adoption or being reunited with their families.

Mendes, Johnson and Moslehuddin (2011) contend that youth who have reached the age of majority are the most vulnerable group in the child and youth care system because when discharged, they are presumed "adult" and capable of living independently without support from the system. However, the majority of these youngsters fail to succeed in attaining and living an independent life, as they face unique challenges, unappealing pressure and often lack of support and resources to assist with the transition process. Moreover, Tanur (2012) asserts that the communities that they return to are typically characterised by social ills such as alcohol and substance abuse, violence, crimes and gang activities.

Van Breda (2014) notes that care-leavers are often ill-prepared for independent living, and thus may find themselves dealing with post-care life challenges. Dickens (2016) confirms that care-leavers are abruptly thrust out into the world and are required to find strategies to survive on their own. Most have faced adversity and trauma because of abuse in their families of origin that resulted in social dislocations as they experience multiple placement arrangements. Jones (2014) asserts that such experiences place them at further risk and vulnerability while they attempt to adjust to life after leaving care. Van Breda (2018) argues that the most crucial life transition a human being has to undergo is when a youth transitions from adolescent to young adulthood. The author shows that the adolescent phase can be challenging for any young person, as this population group, which comprises 19% of the South African population, is among those who are most vulnerable (Van Breda, 2018).

In South Africa, Chiroro, Seedat and Woolnough (2009) conducted a study aimed at exploring the experiences of care-leavers in South Africa in three provinces (Limpopo, Mpumalanga and Kwa-Zulu Natal). The research findings confirmed that care-leavers experience similar socio-economic hardships to their international counterparts, including financial constraints, losing financial assistance from the government, and often struggling to find employment. Particularly, the care-leavers often do not have families to go to because they are orphaned. As such, they are often homeless, unemployed, and destitute (Chiroro et al., 2009).

It is not surprising that care-leavers fare worse than their peers fare and remain the most vulnerable group in society (Mendes et al., 2011). Hence, Stein (2012) says the journey of care leaving is a challenge for many care-leavers. Mendes et al. (2011) conclude that it is the lack of preparation for independent living that results in disturbing patterns of poor outcomes for many care-leavers. These include a lack of support, poor education, unemployment, difficulties in finding accommodation, and poor health conditions. Thus, this study aims to understand why programmes are not in place to prepare youths that have reached the age of maturity and are due to be discharged from the child and youth care system. This problem will be clearly outlined in the next section.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The reality within the social work practice context, as observed by the researcher, is that care-leavers who are discharged from the child and youth care system are neither prepared for life's challenges nor have they accumulated the necessary skills to live independently without support from the government.

The Children's Act 38 of 2005, section 157(1)(a)(iii), mandates social workers to prepare a detailed Individual Development Plan (IDP) and permanency plan before placing a child in alternative care (RSA, 2005). Additionally, section 191(3) (e) mandates the implementation of programmes to prepare and support youth as they go through the transition process. The researcher noticed a gap in the Act in that there is no clear description of the kinds of programmes, projects or services that need to be put in place by social work practitioners to assist youth that are transitioning from the child and youth care system. Bond (2018) confirms that the lack of clear legislation makes transition services discretional, minimal, or non-existent and renders social workers unable to intervene optimally. Moreover, the gaps hinder collaborative planning with care-leaving youth for successful reintegration.

This is despite the fact that the goal of developing IDPs and permanency plans is to ensure that an individualised plan is drawn together with the individual concerned so that by the time the youth is discharged and reintegrated into mainstream society, they have been prepared for stability and independent living. Bond (2018) found that many young people in the child and youth care system felt uninvolved in planning their exit and found little value in the

superficial preparation for care-leaving that is implemented by some social work practitioners. The researcher concurs with Bond (2018) because she has observed the lack of Individual Development Plans (IDPs), permanency plans and the implementation of transition programmes by social worker practitioners at a CYCC in Johannesburg Region, Gauteng Province. Tanur (2012) and Bond (2018) argue that, in many cases, social workers are not trained or empowered to design and implement independent living skills programmes and to draw IDPs and permanency plans.

Van Breda (2018) confirms that there are no recognised protocols or guidelines for services and programmes to cater for care-leavers in South Africa despite the fact that over 134,700 care-leavers between the ages of 18 and 21 years exited the child and youth care system in 2011 (Hall & Proudlock, 2011). A recent systematic review conducted by Van Breda (2018) on care leaving in South Africa revealed that between 2003 and 2016, there were only 40 research outputs and very few of these studies were informed by practice. This shows that the study of care leaving is still emerging and has been largely absent from the research agendas in South Africa as confirmed by Van Breda (2018) in a previous study.

The researcher is also not aware of any research study that was conducted in social work practice that specifically focused on exploring any challenges or successes experienced by social workers in preparing youth leaving the CYCCs in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng Province. Moreover, the reality within the social work practice context, as observed by the researcher, was that care-leavers who are discharged from the child and youth care system are neither prepared for life's challenges nor have they accumulated the necessary skills to live independently without support from the government. Thus, this research aimed to investigate any training needs social workers may have with regards to designing, implementing and evaluating independent living skills development programmes. The research question for this study was:

What are the capacity-building needs of social workers to prepare youth leaving Child and Youth Care Centres (CYCCs) in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng Province?

1.3 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

The goal and objectives of the study are discussed below:

1.3.1 Research goal

The goal of the study was to explore the capacity-building needs of social workers to prepare youth leaving Child and Youth Care Centres in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng Province.

1.3.2 Research objectives

The objectives of the study were:

- To conceptualise and contextualise the capacity-building of social workers, independent living skills development programme design, implementation and evaluation from a literature perspective.
- To explore the challenges experienced by social workers in preparing youth leaving CYCCs.
- To explore the successes experienced by social workers in preparing youth leaving CYCCs.
- To investigate any training needs social workers may have with regard to designing, implementing and evaluating independent living skills development programmes.

1.4 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology refers to a general approach to conducting a study on a research topic and making a choice about what and how to conduct a study (Silverman, 2010). Therefore, this section focuses on providing an overview of the research approach, research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, research instrumentation, methods of data collection, data analysis and trustworthiness of the study. Detailed discussions will be provided in chapter 3.

Firstly, the study was informed by the interpretivist paradigm, which aimed to provide an insight into the perspectives and experiences of the research participants (Delport, Strydom & Schurink, 2011). The researcher then utilised a qualitative research approach to guide the study. According to Wagner, Kawulich and Garner (2012), a qualitative research approach aims to create a coherent story as seen through the eyes of those who are part of it, to understand their experiences and actions as they encounter them. Utilising the qualitative approach enabled the researcher to explore and understand the needs of social workers. This was accomplished by obtaining descriptive data about the challenges and successes they experience in preparing care-leavers for independent living. Furthermore, it enabled the researcher to identify the needs that social workers have in preparing care-leavers.

Within the qualitative research approach, a case study design was used for this study. Creswell (2013) refers to case study design as an exploration of a bounded system, single case or multiple cases over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information. In particular, the collective case study design was identified as the most appropriate for this research study, as it included multiple cases with an aim to comparing the outcomes of all the cases. Therefore, the researcher utilised the various perspectives from a group of social workers working within the child and youth care system to gain understanding and generate new knowledge about the challenges and successes experienced in preparing care-leavers at CYCCs. The aim was also to identify and describe the capacity-building needs social workers may have regarding designing, implementing and evaluating independent living skill developmental programmes.

According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim, and Painter (2014), a research population is defined as a large group, which a researcher's sample elements are drawn from. For this study, the population was all social workers employed at the Gauteng Department of Social Development (DSD), who are working with care-leavers in the child and youth care system. As it is impossible to study the entire population of social workers, sampling was conducted. Grinnell and Unrau (2008) describe a sample as a sub-group of the population, objects or events chosen to participate in the study. To draw a sample from the larger population, the non-probability sampling technique was employed. Non-probability sampling is a technique where the researcher does not know the odds of selecting a particular individual because the population size or the members of the population are not known (Strydom, 2011). The

purposive sampling technique was used to specifically select 12 social worker participants who were working at CYCCs in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng Province and who shared specific features and characteristics that were relevant to this study.

The researcher used a one-on-one semi-structured interview schedule as an instrument to collect data from the participants. Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013) define an interview schedule as a set of questions written to guide the interview process. Brinkmann (2014) define one-on-one semi-structured interviews as interviews that are organised around areas of particular interest, still allowing the participants flexibility when answering the questions. The use of one-on-one semi-structured interviews was beneficial to the study as it ensured that relevant information was captured and empowered participants to be actively involved during the process by allowing free interaction. Additionally, it promoted an opportunity for both the researcher and the participants to seek clarification in matters of concern and interest. The one-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted in five different CYCCs in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng Province.

A pilot test of the interview schedule and the one-on-one semi-structured interviews was conducted with two social workers who met the specified selection criteria. A pilot test is defined as a process for testing and certifying the tools and methods of collecting data (Strydom, 2011). The use of pilot testing provided the researcher with an opportunity to identify errors and gaps that may have existed and allowed her to rectify these before embarking on the main study.

Data were analysed thematically. The researcher followed the Braun and Clarke (2012) six-step process. These steps are familiarising yourself with your data; generating initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing potential themes; defining and naming the themes; and producing the final report. These steps are discussed in detail in chapter 3.

The researcher used several strategies to ensure trustworthiness. Trustworthiness seeks to ensure that the voices of the research participants are of priority to the research outcomes (Babbie & Mouton, 2010). These strategies included reflexivity, peer scrutiny, and thick description. These constructs will be discussed in detail in chapter 3. To protect the participants against any harm, the researcher ensured that she conducted the study ethically.

The relevant ethical aspects that were taken into consideration will be discussed in detail in chapter 3. The feasibility of the study was ensured through obtaining ethical clearance from the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Witwatersrand and written permission from the Gauteng DSD.

1.5 DEFINITIONS OF KEY CONCEPTS

The key concepts relevant in this study were defined as follows:

1.5.1 Youth Leaving Care

Youth leaving care is the termination of legal responsibility by the state for a youth who has spent time in foster care or residential care or any other arrangement outside their family environment before the age of 18 years and has exited the care system (Dickens, 2016). Van Breda (2018) refers to youth leaving care as "care-leavers". For the purpose of this study, youth leaving care refers to people between the ages of 18 and 21 who have exited a CYCC due to reaching the age of majority in accordance with the provision of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 (RSA, 2005).

1.5.2 Child and Youth Care Centre (CYCC)

The Children Act 38 of 2005 defines a child and youth care centre as a facility that provides residential care to more than six children outside the child's family environment, according to a residential programme suitable for the children in the facility (RSA, 2005). Jamieson (2016) describes a child and youth care centre as a facility such as a children's home, place of safety, a shelter for street children and/or service care centre. In this study, a CYCC is a facility that offers residential care programmes to vulnerable children and youth admitted to the centre and which must adhere to norms and standards for CYCCs as stipulated in Section 194 (2) of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 (RSA, 2005).

1.5.3 Social Worker

The International Federation of Social Work (IFSW, 2014) defines social work as a practice-based profession that seeks to promote social change and development, problem-solving in human relationships, empower and liberate people to enhance their well-being. DuBois and Miley (2011) define a social worker as a professional who assists people in resolving their problems, acquiring resources, and providing support and facilitating change to individual, families, and communities in need. The social work profession embraces the principles of human rights, social justice, collective responsibility, and respect for diversity (IFSW, 2014). In this study, a social worker is a professional person entrusted with fulfilling and meeting the developmental and psychosocial needs of children and youth living in CYCCs.

1.5.4 Capacity-building

Capacity-building is defined as the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes of individuals and groups of people (Enemark, 2010). Morris (2014) sees capacity-building as a process that is aimed at improving the skills of individuals, groups, communities, organisations, or institutions, to be able to carry out key functions, solve problems, achieve objectives and deal with the requirements needed to manage these matters sustainably. In this study, capacity-building refers to a process of empowering care-leavers through training programmes so that they acquire appropriate knowledge, skills, and resources to sustain themselves.

1.5.5 Independent living

Adolf (2011) defines independent living as the ability to live independently and productively in the community. It also includes the ability to examine alternatives, make informed decisions, and direct one's own life. Additionally, Yelick (2017) describe independent living as having opportunities to make decisions that affect one's life, and the ability to pursue activities of one's own choice. Adolf (2011) asserts that this ability requires the availability of information, financial resources and peer group support systems. In this study, independent living refers to the ability to acquire knowledge, skills and resources to live on ones' own and be reintegrated into mainstream society.

1.5.6 Independent Living Programme (ILP)

Tanur (2012) defines an Independent Living Programme (ILP) as a range of services for youth between the age of 16 and 21, with a focus on preparing them for self-sufficiency and independent living. The author adds that such programmes are designed to provide care-leavers with knowledge and skills that will limit their disadvantages and aid in their successful transition into adulthood. ILP acknowledges that care-leaving is a process, not an event, and that it requires social support and life skills preparation (Yelick, 2017). Hence, Tanur (2012) says that this programme is are not meant to replace the family roles that they are expected to play but is aimed at providing care-leavers with necessary resources needed to live independently without the help from family. In addition, the ILPs can also provide housing, educational opportunities and job placement to support these youth as they transitioning into mainstream society.

1.6 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

- Literature on care leaving is very limited, hence the researcher struggled to review most literature based on South African context about the care-leavers transitioning from a CYCC into independent living and on the roles of social workers to prepare youth leaving care into independent living. Thus, literature reviewed depended on international studies to be able to conduct an expansive literature review and conduct the study successfully.

- The study included only residential social workers working at CYCCs. This meant that social workers working in the field such as statutory social workers, external social workers or adoption social workers did not form part of this research study. Therefore, these findings cannot be generalised to all social workers population. Nonetheless, this was not the intention of the study.

- The sample size was small, which is another reason why the findings of this study cannot be generalised to all social workers population.

- The research study was bounded by geography as it was conducted in Ekurhuleni, east of Johannesburg, Gauteng Province. The findings of the study cannot be generalised. This did not affect the study because the intention was not to generalise.

1.7 CONTENTS OF RESEARCH REPORT

Chapter 1: Introduction and orientation of the research study

This chapter provides an overview of the research study. Firstly, it provides a brief background of the study, the problem and the rational statement, the research question, and the goal and objectives. Thereafter, it provides an overview of the research method. This discussion is followed by a description of relevant key concepts. Finally, the limitations and delimitations are discussed.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

This chapter starts by outlining the theoretical framework underpinning this study, followed by a synthesis of the literature that was relevant to the topic under study. The literature review chapter is divided into seven sections. Firstly, care leaving within the South African context was discussed. This discussion is followed by an overview of care-leaving within the international and regional contexts. Thereafter, the legislative and policy frameworks that guide service provisions to care-leavers are delineated. Next, an overview of interventions and programmes designed to address the needs of care-leavers are provided. The roles and functions of social work practitioners in preparing care-leavers for a transition into independent living are also described. Furthermore, the challenges and successes that social work practitioners encounter in practice are provided. This section concludes with a focus on capacity-building strategies that can be implemented to support social work practitioners in preparing and supporting youth to transition from the child and youth care system into mainstream society.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter presents a description of the research methodology that was followed to achieve the objectives of this study. The research methodology included the research paradigm, research approach and research design. This discussion is followed by a description of the population, sample and sample procedures used in this study. Next, the researcher discusses the research instrumentation and pilot testing. The data collection and data analysis are discussed, followed by the strategies used to ensure trustworthiness of data. This chapter concludes with a description of ethical aspects employed in this study.

Chapter 4: Presentation and Discussion of Findings

This chapter presents empirical findings and the discussions thereof. The findings are presented in different sections. In section 1, the researcher uses graphs to display and discuss the biographical information of the participants, while in section 2, textual analysis is used to present and discuss the themes and sub-themes that emerged. These themes and sub-themes are accompanied by the identified relevant quotations from participants, whereby relevant literature is incorporated into the discussion to substantiate the research findings.

Chapter 5: Key Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

In this final chapter, the researcher discusses the extent to which the goal and objectives of the study have been met. Thereafter, the researcher outlines the key findings, the conclusions and the recommendations to be considered by interested professionals and institutions within the welfare system in South Africa. The recommendations focus on how to improve policy, practice and promote quality service delivery to children and youth within the child and youth care system. As well, recommendations for further research are advanced.

1.8 SUMMARY

This chapter provided an overview background of the study, the problem and the rational statement. Thereafter, the research question, the goal and objectives of the study was provided. Next, a summary of the research methodology was discussed. This discussion was

followed by a description of relevant key concepts. The limitations and delimitations were also discussed. Finally, an overview of the contents of this entire research report was provided. The following chapter will present the theoretical framework underpinning the study, followed by a synthesis of the literature that is relevant to the topic under study.

CHAPTER 2:
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The youth that are discharged from the child and youth care system are neither prepared for life's challenges nor have they accumulated the necessary skills to live independently without the support from the government (RSA, 2005). Even though the Children's Act 38 of 2005, section 191(3) (e) mandates social workers to implement programmes that seek to prepare and support children and youth as they go through the transition process, most youth leaving the care system are often not prepared adequately for independent living . This chapter will start by outlining the theoretical framework underpinning this study, followed by a synthesis of the literature that is relevant to the topic under study. This study made use of Empowerment Theory to better understand the roles of social work practitioners in empowering care-leavers with knowledge and skills to achieve independence and obtain resources to solve any problems they may encounter in society once discharged from the child and youth care system as discussed next.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Empowerment Theory was the most applicable theoretical framework to the study. Barbara Salomon coined the concept of empowerment within the social work practice in 1976 in her seminal book "*Black Empowerment*" (Torronen, Borodkina, Samoylova & Heino, 2013). Accordingly, empowerment refers to the ability of people to gain control over their lives and change their situation (Barker, 2014). Torronen et al. (2013) define empowerment as building the capacity of individuals to act effectively in order to bring about desired change and acquire the ability to learn skills that would make them independent and self-sufficient. Thus, the empowerment theory was relevant in this study because social workers should be charged with the responsibility to empower care-leavers when they come of age, so that they can acquire the needed skills to be independent, to gain control over their lives and to achieve the change they desire for themselves.

Additionally, the empowerment theory was appropriate because it has been used as an intervention method to help marginalised and vulnerable individuals and groups such as children, youth and women (Barker, 2014). The empowerment theory was also ideal in this study because it is a process that can be used to empower individuals, such as care-leavers exiting the child and youth care systems, by enabling them to develop skills and obtain resources to solve any problems they may encounter in society once they leave the care system (Moran, Gibbs & Mernin, 2017). Therefore, the empowerment theory can be applied to assist social workers in establishing programmes and projects to empower care-leavers with knowledge and skills to achieve independence once they are discharged from the child and youth care institutions to be reintegrated into mainstream society.

Hence, Moran et al. (2017) see empowerment as the way from dependence to independence, because an intervention such as independent living skills training pushes a person to gain mastery or control over their lives. According to the authors, the empowerment theory encompasses a strength-based approach, as it views individuals as competent and able to live autonomously (Moran et al., 2017). Thus, without social workers' intervention, care-leavers will not be in a position to transition successfully to mainstream society. Hence, Moran et al. (2017) add that these young people need social workers to provide them with opportunities and resources to take charge of their lives and situations.

On the contrary, Torronen et al. (2013) argue that people, not social workers, empower themselves. The authors agree with Moran et al. (2017) when they state that every individual possesses strengths, assets, and expertise within them that need to be recognised and explored. Hence, Torronen et al. (2013) assert that a social worker's role should be non-directive and should enable the full participation and self-determination of clients. Nonetheless, in terms of the principles of democratic participation and self-determination, social workers have a responsibility to engage with the care-leavers before their discharge, by involving them in all the decision-making processes when planning their exit strategies in a sense that is empowering (RSA, 2005).

In line with the Department of Social Development (2012), social workers are expected to use IDPs, paying particular emphasis to the strengths and capacities of the care-leavers, with the view to building competency and empowering the care-leavers with knowledge and skills

to sustain themselves and cope with life's challenges post-discharge from the social welfare systems. Hence, the Empowerment Theory was relevant to enable the searcher to understand how service delivery could be enhanced to ensure that care leavers are empowered and enabled to integrate into mainstream society with ease. Without being empowered with knowledge and skills to live independently, their vulnerability would be pronounced, and social workers would have failed to fulfil their mandate in terms of NASW code of ethics and SACSSP ethical principles.

To understand the roles and responsibilities of social work practitioners within the context of the child and youth care system, the phenomenon of care leaving must be understood, initially within the South African context as discussed next within the literature review section.

2.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review is an important component of a research study, as it provides a theoretical background to the study (Agere, 2014). The literature review section is divided into seven sections. Firstly, care leaving within the South African context is discussed. This discussion is followed by an overview of care-leaving within the international and regional contexts. Thereafter, the legislative and policy frameworks that guide service provisions to care-leavers are delineated. Next, an overview of interventions and programmes designed to address the needs of care-leavers are provided. The roles and functions of social work practitioners in preparing care-leavers for a transition into independent living are also described. Furthermore, the challenges and successes social work practitioners encounter in practice are provided. This chapter concludes with a focus on capacity-building strategies that can be implemented to support social work practitioners in preparing and supporting youth to successfully transition from the child and youth care system into independent living.

2.3.1 Care-leaving within the South African context

In South Africa, the total population is estimated at 53.7 million people, 18.5 million of whom are children (Statistics South Africa [Stats SA], 2013). This constitutes 34% of the population with more than 21000 children being accommodated residential care facilities

throughout the country because they are regarded as a vulnerable group (Malatji & Dube, 2015). Moreover, more than 30 000 child abuse and deliberate neglected cases are reported in South Africa each year and over 256 registered CYCC's are supporting over 14 000 young people under the age of 18 years (DSD, 2013). These children face numerous psychological and socio-economic challenges that contribute to an increasing need for all at-risk children to be placed in alternative care. Several social factors also contribute to children constantly needing care and protection. These are highlighted below.

In developing countries, the main reason for children being admitted into care is poverty (Thoburn, Robinson & Anderson, 2012). In contrast with more developed countries, entry into care is primarily because of abuse and neglect (Thoburn et al. 2012). Patel (2015) argues that South Africa's apartheid legacy of extreme inequality, social dislocation, and disintegration of family units resulted in many families living in absolute poverty and struggling to provide adequate support for their children's wellbeing. As such, many children grow up exposed to poverty-stricken environments that place them at a high risk of experiencing a myriad of other social ills. Lombard (2011, p.36) takes this argument further by saying: "The majority of these children are not only struggling with historically determined structural causes of poverty and inequality due to the socioeconomic legacy impacting on their parents' lives, but they face a repetition of this history in the extreme marginalised position they find themselves". This suggests that these children will not only be forced to overcome socio-economic challenges inherited from apartheid legacy but will need to overcome the challenges as they transition from childhood to adulthood. This can be overwhelming, especially with no visible means of support from families. Hence, many children and young people find themselves being admitted to CYCCs.

The extent of child poverty in South Africa has been described as alarming, with 63.7 % of children living in poverty (Stats SA, 2013). Moreover, poverty levels are the highest among children who do not live with their parents (Stats SA, 2013). Many caregivers who are struggling financially to provide for the needs of their children are more likely to abandon, neglect, and expose their children to further vulnerability (Agere, 2014). Thus, poverty is often the root cause of abandonment, neglect and abuse, which eventually culminates into placement in residential care.

Moreover, Driver (2012) identifies the escalation of unwanted teenage pregnancy as another factor that is contributing to the abandonment of children. This is largely due to the social and financial constraints, and psychological distress experienced by teenage mothers both before and after childbirth. Dickens (2016) highlights a compelling relationship between poverty and HIV/AIDS' effects, leading to many children being admitted to CYCCs in South Africa. The author further explains that the HIV/AIDS epidemic greatly contributes to poverty and making more children more vulnerable due to the increased child-headed family structures.

As HIV/AIDS contributes to child-headed households and the accompanying scourge of poverty in many communities, Musekiwa (2013) confirms that this phenomenon exposes many children to vulnerability. Agere (2014) asserts that children, who have no adult supervision or breadwinner to provide for their basic needs, are more likely to be abused and exploited. The author further describes that children living in child-headed households often lack sufficient resources and may engage in exploitive work to meet their basic needs. Ramjan (2015) adds that losing a parent or caregiver often means losing access to social assistance in the form of grants, while older children are forced to drop out of school to assume the adult role of taking care of younger siblings. Eventually, many of these children find themselves in need of care and protection.

Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that South Africa is faced with a complex problem with poverty that intersects with a myriad of other risk factors. Poverty not only leads to the above-mentioned social problems, but these problems exacerbate each other (Dickens, 2016). For that reason, it can be said that the extent of poverty, teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS are the main reasons children are constantly removed from their family environments and placed in CYCCs.

The abolishment of apartheid in 1994, and the introduction of democracy and social change (Ngwabi, 2011), resulted in measures that aimed to care and protect children and youth who had been made vulnerable as a result of abandonment, neglect and orphanhood. Malatji and Dube (2015) confirm that these changes culminated in the development of the Child and Youth Care Centre (CYCC) system when the option of foster care placement or suitable placement had failed. Mahery, Jamieson, and Scott (2011) attest that many children and

youth who need care and protection are admitted to various CYCCs through a formal court order.

Accurate statistics of children and young people admitted to CYCCs are not available. However, Proudlock (2014) estimated that about 345 registered CYCCs accommodate over 21000 vulnerable children and youth, where a variety of professionals are entrusted with fulfilling and meeting the developmental needs of these vulnerable children and youth. The CYCCs endeavour to provide holistic services that promote the optimal development of young people at risk by offering developmental, therapeutic, and recreational programmes (RSA, 2005). Moreover, the CYCCs assume a very critical role of providing young people in care with a stable environment that will enable them to learn skills and tools to cope with life after residential care. Within the context of developmental programmes, a focus is placed on life skills, independent living, victim empowerment, family preservation, and aftercare (RSA, 2005).

However, in some instances, the child and youth care system creates a situation where young people become dependent on the residential care system instead of creating an environment that prepares them to become independent (Mamelani Projects, 2013). Furthermore, the responsibilities of young people are often taken away from them because everything is done for them. This does not serve them well because eventually these young people will age-out from the system into independent living and will be expected to do things for themselves. Dickens (2016) adds that some of the programmes are not meeting the therapeutic and developmental needs of these young people because carers are concerned with both the daily running of the CYCC and with the key factors including lack of resources and funding shortages. However, the author adds that the child and youth care system mitigates the risk young people face if left in their families (Dickens, 2016).

The Children's Act 38 of 2005 stipulates that a person who is placed at a CYCC as a child or youth may leave care if discharged or when they transition into independent living after reaching the age of 18 years (RSA, 2005). However, the Act makes provision for the extension of the court order to allow the placement of youth up to the age of 21 years provided they are still completing their education or training (RSA, 2005). Mendes (2009) argues that the most vulnerable group in the child and youth care system is youth who have

reached the age of majority and are discharged from the system as they are presumed "adult" and capable of living independently without the support of the system. Consequently, these youth typically exit the care system with little or no aftercare support (Van Breda & Dickens, 2016). Moreover, they are ill-prepared for stability and independent living, and thus many of these youth find themselves dealing with post-care life challenges (Van Breda & Dickens, 2016).

Tanur (2012) states that while South African care-leavers experience similar challenges to care-leavers around the world, they also experience inadequate social support systems, mental and physical health problems, poor education outcomes, homelessness, juvenile crimes. The author also identified other challenges experienced by care-leavers in South Africa. Firstly, the country is faced with low economic growth, resulting in youth making up 27.7% of the general unemployment rate and a 50% unemployment rate among youth who are below the age of 25 years (Statistics South Africa [Stats SA], 2017). Therefore, many care-leavers may struggle to secure employment after being discharged from the care system and reintegrated into mainstream society.

Furthermore, with over 10.3 million (34%) of youth between the ages of 15 and 24 being Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) implies that more than one in three youth in South Africa are not only inactive in the labour force but were also disengaged in the labour market in the first quarter of 2018 (Stats SA, 2017). To confirm this, Dickens (2016) conducted a study about the contribution of resilience to the 12-month transitional outcomes of care-leavers in South Africa. The findings reflected a similar figure, that after one year out of residential care, 35% of care-leavers in South Africa are estimated to be NEET, although care-leavers had planned to either further their post-secondary education or find employment. The challenges that care leavers encounter after discharge are magnified by communities related factors. Tanur (2012) confirms that the communities that care-leavers return to are typically characterised by social ills such as alcohol and substance abuse, violence, crimes and gang activities. Hence, Chiroro et al.'s (2009) research findings revealed that over 90% of care-leavers experienced socio-economic hardships. Their main challenges related to securing stable employment and financial constraints.

The South African situation is not unique. Other countries across the globe encounter this phenomenon albeit the context may be different.

2.3.2 Care-leaving within the International and Regional contexts

Smith, Fulcher and Doran (2013) show that CYCCs have a long history and are found in many countries worldwide. According to the authors, such residential care facilities were established in response to social ills that were brought on by the process of urbanisation and industrialisation, resulting in many children and youth being vulnerable to poverty, abandonment and abuse. Although there are some similarities between SA and other countries, there are also some differences.

Within the global context, Berridge, Biehal and Henry (2012) point out that over the past 20 years, the existence of residential care systems for children and youth have not been strongly supported. Most families continue to provide emotional support, accommodation and financial assistance to young people who have turned 18 years despite the existence of CYCCs, (Mendes et al., 2011). In instances, where young people are placed at CYCCs do not enjoy the same type of support from their families when they are discharged from the CYCCs. They are expected to instantly become independent with little, if any, support from the state when they have reached the age of majority (Stein, 2012). The author asserts that the journey of care-leaving is the most challenging transition to be endured by youth leaving the child and youth care system.

Consistent research reveals that care-leavers are vulnerable to poor outcomes in their adulthood life (Mahery et al., 2011). Many care-leavers experience challenges, which hamper their successful transition to adulthood. The authors adds that these challenges include poor outcomes of education and employment, lack of a social support network, lack of adequate accommodation, and poor health outcomes (Mahery et al., 2011). Mendes et al. (2011) confirm that care-leavers are reported to experience poor education outcomes and employment deficits when they have exited the care system. Moreover, the care-leavers who wish to enter post-secondary education are forced to do so without the government's support. As a result, many may drop out, even though they have wished to further their studies (Dickens, Van Breda, & Marx, 2015). Mendes et al. (2011) assert that a lack of education

hinders their effort to find employment. The authors state that often when the discharged youths do work, it is most likely to be in unskilled low-wage employment. This type of work often results in continual job and income insecurity.

Mendes et al. (2011) argue that the lack of stable employment or income contributes to many care-leavers engaging in prostitution as a legitimate choice to survive. This is supported by research outcomes which showed that of the 65 women involved in prostitution in the inner city of Melbourne, one-third of these women had been placed in residential care as a child or youth (Mitchell, 2010). Moreover, Jones (2014) adds that a lack of income and unemployment are critical factors contributing to care-leavers finding themselves without stable housing or being homeless. Höjer and Sjöblom (2010) also showed that without an adequate support system, many care-leavers struggles to secure stable and safe accommodation after being discharged from the care system.

Jones (2014) concur that, in most cases, care-leavers lack functional social support systems that can help them transition well into independent living upon discharge from the child and youth care system. Consequently, many care-leavers are reported to be poorer in terms of health assessment than the youth in the general population and have higher mental health problems (Mendes, 2009). Jones (2014) found that emotional effects of loneliness and isolation often predispose care-leavers towards psychological disruption, depression, and suicidal attempts. In order to cope with the challenges of socio-emotional issues. Mendes (2009) suggests that care-leavers are more likely to use drugs and alcohol as a way to escape from the hardship they face during the transition process.

Within the regional context, there is a huge gap regarding care-leaving research as the concept of care-leaving is still emerging. Van Breda and Dickens (2016) confirm that little is known about how developing countries prepare young people leaving residential care systems for independent living. Frimpong-Manso (2012) found that the only countries in Africa that have made significant contributions are countries such as South Africa and Ghana on care-leaving research. In Ghana, the number of children admitted to the residential care system has increased over the past two decades as a result of an increased prevalence of HIV/AIDS and poverty. Badu-Nyarko (2011) confirms that residential care has become a formal alternative care system that accommodates children who are found vulnerable and in

need of care and protection. Hence, Csáky (2009) reported that by 2008, over 4500 vulnerable children had been admitted to various orphanages and children's home and, of these, many would be discharged from the care system when they reached the age of 18 to begin a life of independence.

Ghanaians care-leavers, similar to many of their international counterparts, are unprepared for independent living, experiencing challenges such as poverty, unemployment and low educational attainment. Frimpong-Manso (2012) identified several deficits in preparing youth leaving the care system into independent living. These include lack of finance, accommodation and cultural skills. The author also identified the main barriers that undermine preparation for youth transitioning from the care system into independent living, such as the lack of supervision and guidance from the youth leaders who are expected to assist care-leavers in attaining the necessary skills needed for adulthood. Moreover, in the power struggle over decision-making, care-leavers felt that they lack the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect their lives (Frimpomg-Manso, 2012). In light of the challenges and continued poor outcomes experienced by many care-leavers, most developed countries have put in place legislation and policy frameworks that provide funding and mandate the provision of services that aim to prepare and support young people leaving care to transition successfully into independent living. This aspect is highlighted in the next section.

2.3.3 Care-leaving Legislative and Policy Frameworks

In light of the challenges and continued poor outcomes experienced by care-leavers, the concept of "corporate parenting" emerged which significantly contributed to the development of legislation and policies in various countries (Hart & Williams, 2013). Van Breda (2018) describes corporate parenting as a state taking the parental role and responsibility to prepare children in its care. Various international, regional and national legislation and policy frameworks that guide service provisions to care-leavers are delineated below.

International countries such as the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (USA) and Australia seem to be at the forefront in implementing new legislation and policies to support and assist young people leaving care to transition successfully into independent

living (Bond, 2018). The UK has several legislative and policy frameworks in place to safeguard and prepare care-leavers exiting the care system. For example, the Children's Act of 1989 (UK, 1989) stipulates that local authorities must provide services to prepare care-leavers for aftercare. This includes providing advisory services, financial support, accommodation assistance and representatives to attend to their concerns (Wade & Munro, 2008).

Moreover, the Children and Young People Act of 2014 of Scotland stipulates the duties of local authorities and other corporate parents to ensure the best possible outcomes for care-leavers when they transition into adulthood (Scottish Government, 2013). All corporate parents are mandated to prepare and publish detailed pathway plans on how they will fulfil their duties under Section 58 of the Act, to ensure successful reintegration of the care-leavers (Scottish Government, 2013).

The Children Leaving Care Act of 2000 (UK, 2000), which applies to England and Wales, aims to delay youth transitioning from the care system until they have been empowered and prepared for independent living (Stein, 2012). The Act mandates corporate parents to strengthen assessment, preparation and planning for care-leaving, and to provide financial management support for care-leavers after they have been discharged from the care system (Stein, 2012).

Notably, the UK government has prioritised support for care-leavers. Thus, they provided a range of innovative services to ensure that the transition process is successful. Despite this evident support to care-leavers and comparatively high resource allocation, OFSTED (2009) reported that 50% of care-leavers do not feel confident with the services offered to them. Perhaps this highlights a need for care-leavers to be involved in defining the types of support services they need by participating in platforms that would encourage them to be actively involved in all decision-making processes so that they can more clearly express their needs.

On the contrary, the USA developed the Independent Living Initiative (US Congress, 1986) legislation, to provide funding for independent living programmes for care-leavers. The primary goal is to ensure that care-leavers receive transitional services that equip them for independent living (Stein, 2019). Moreover, the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999

(USA, 1999) was developed to ensure that care-leavers have access to financial support if they are not reunited with their families of origin or legally adopted. Additionally, care-leavers pursuing post-secondary education or training are eligible for $5000 per year allowance to be used towards their tuition fees, books, accommodation, transportation and medical aid cover until the age of 23. The Act mandates the implementation of individual care plans that include aftercare services for six months (Stott, 2012).

As compared to the two countries discussed above, Australia's system is fragmented because each state has its own care-leaving legislations or policies. For example, in Victoria, the Children Youth Families Act of 2005 was developed to provide aftercare services for youth leaving care up to the age of 21. The Act mandates the government to assist care-leavers with finance, housing, education, employment, legal advice, access to health care and community service (State Government Victoria, 2005).

Regionally, African countries have also dealt with issues affecting care-leavers by developing policies and legislation to protect and minimise the negative outcomes. For example, the Zimbabwean Children's Act of 2001, Section 37 states that a discharge plan shall be prepared by the Department of Social Services for each young person leaving the care system (Government of Zimbabwe [GovZ], 2001). The discharge plan shall detail the process through which a young person will become independent when reintegrated into mainstream society. The discharge plan shall focus on ensuring education and training, securing an occupation, the provision of support necessary for youth living with disabilities, and the provision of support to enable the youth to set up and maintain independent living standards (GovZ, 2001).

Furthermore, Section 7 of the National Residential Child Care Standards provides guidelines aimed at supporting and preparing youth leaving the residential care system (GovZ, 2001). The standards aim to ensure that young people in care are supported throughout the process of preparing them to be independent and active members of society. However, Wyatt, Mupedziswa and Rayment (2010) note that there is a lack of human and financial capacity to fulfil this mandatory role by the Department of Child Welfare and Probation Services. Therefore, the lack of adequate funding and lack of human resources to implement interventions and services that aim to prepare and support young people leaving care suggests

that these young people may be ill-prepared for stability and independent living because there is inadequate support given to them. Consequently, young people may find themselves dealing with post-care life challenges as mentioned in the previous section (see section 2.3.2).

In Togo, there are no specific legal frameworks that govern young people leaving care. However, the Decree No. 100/PR of 2010 (Government of Togo, 2010), about norms and standards applicable to care centres, specifies that each young person must have a "life project" upon leaving the care centre (Government of Togo, 2010). This life project plan shall be developed early to provide a detailed exit plan and assist in reintegrating young people into their families and communities. In addition, for those young people who have families or external networks, an emphasis is placed on maintaining those relationships. However, for those young people without these networks, the transition experiences are more challenging (Cameron, Hauari, & Arisi, 2018), particularly with the lack of needed skills and resources. According to the authors, a lack of social network support puts them at risk once discharged and reintegrated into their communities.

Nationally, South Africa does not have legislation and a policy framework tailored specifically for youth leaving the care system into independent living. However, the Children's Act no 38 of 2005 calls on CYCCs to offer transitional support to youth leaving care. Section 191 (3) (e) states that "[a] child and youth care centre may in addition to its residential care program offer a program to assist a person with the transition when leaving child and youth care centres after reaching the age of 18 years" (RSA, 2005).

Although the Children's Act 38 of 2005 notes that transition programmes may be provided to youth leaving care (RSA, 2005), the use of "may" is significant as it serves to make the above section a suggestion, rather than an instruction, that transition services should be a requirement to ensure care-leavers are prepared for independent living (Bond, 2018). Thus, transition services become discretionary, with no specific programmes put in place to ensure independent living is achieved. For this reason, Bond (2018) believes transition services will continue to fall by the wayside. Hence, the need to ensure that social workers are capacitated with necessary knowledge and skills to prepare youth leaving the child and youth care system.

Despite the limitation identified by Bond (2018), the Children's Act no 38 of 2005, Section 176(2)(a)(b) (RSA, 2005), makes provisions for a person who is defined as a child placed in alternative care such as CYCCs to remain in care after having reached the age of 21 years. This is on the condition that the current alternative caregiver is willing and able to care for that person, and that continual stay in that care is necessary to enable that person to complete their education or training (RSA, 2005). However, these requirements for an extension of placement in care seem unjust to care-leavers as it creates unnecessary pressure and rushed transition out of the care system, rather than assisting care-leavers to gradually transition out of the care system into adulthood.

Furthermore, the Act makes provisions to extend the placement until the age of 21. This requirement is unjust to care-leavers because it automatically assumes that by the age of 21, they are ready to transition into adulthood and are able to take care of themselves without the government's assistance as they are "presumed adults" (Mendes, 2009). This means that care-leavers will no longer be eligible to receive government resources and support once discharged from the care system. Stein (2019) ascertained that care-leavers often have no option to return to care in times of need, whereas general youth are afforded the option to return home when things are not going well during the process of transitioning into adulthood. The current legislation expects care-leavers to instantly assume the role of adulthood (Stein, 2019). Thus, it is not surprising that care-leavers fare worse than their counterpart general youth, which is unfair because their general youth counterparts are allowed to gradually transition into adulthood with emotional, physical and financial support from their families.

In addition, the Act makes provisions to extend alternative placement, provided that the care-leaver is completing grade 12, higher education, or training. This is an unreasonable requirement because it is assumed that by the age of 21, the care-leaver should have completed postsecondary education, which is not often the case. Lesea (2017) argues that this requirement is unjust because youth in the general population are not expected to have completed their post-secondary education or training. Most continue to benefit from their parents' support both economically and psychologically until they are independent and able to sustain themselves without their parents' assistance.

The Information Guide on the Management of Statutory Services (DSD, 2012) states that youth have the right to aftercare services after being discharged from alternative care. Moreover, the services should be rendered before the youth is discharged, according to the provisions of the Children's Act of 28/ 2005. These services are aimed to prepare youth to be self-reliant and independent, and to successfully reintegrate into the community (DSD, 2012). Despite of all these, Bond (2018) is critical of the Act because there is no mention made of planning the exit strategy or specific information about the nature of the resources a youth might be linked to or on-going support after discharge from the care system. Hence, Tanur (2012) is emphatic that aftercare support services are critical to the success of young people's transitioning out of the care system.

The reality is that care-leavers in South Africa rarely benefit from aftercare support services once they have exited the care system. The South African government does not provide aftercare financial support for care-leavers, unlike the US government. The US makes provisions for aftercare financial support for care-leavers of $2000 for setting up a home and $5000 per year for care-leavers who are pursuing their post-secondary education or training (Stott, 2012). Currently, in South Africa, the only available option is to remain in the care system to benefit from social security assistance, which consists of a subsidy paid to the CYCC. This assistance cannot therefore be considered transitional support (Bond, 2018). Additionally, the lack of support services available for care-leavers once they exit the care system remains one of the greatest challenges in implementing alternative care in South Africa. Hence, Pinkerton (2011) suggests that there should at least be a baseline manual or framework for care-leavers transitioning into independent living. Despite these limitations, some interventions and independent living programmes are put in place to facilitate a successful transition for care-leavers, as discussed next.

2.3.4 Interventions and programmes designed to address the needs of care-leavers

Woodgate, Morakinyo and Martin (2017) conducted a global scoping review of available interventions designed to support care-leavers during their transition into independent living. The review intended to reflect on the strengths of interventions supporting care-leavers with the view to guiding other practitioners, researchers, and policymakers working with care-

leavers in other parts of the world. These interventions included housing, employment, education, and mentorship intervention.

The intervention for housing included services that attempt to support care-leavers in securing stable accommodation and provide an opportunity for care-leavers to strengthen their independent living skills, self-control and sense of responsibility (Sinkkonen & Kyttälä, 2015). For example, Barcelona has four different types of housing services. The first housing option is to assist care-leavers between 16 and 18 years with apartments to prepare them for independent living. The apartments are occupied by four to six care-leavers and supervised by the social educator 24 hours, seven days a week. The second housing option is apartments occupied by care-leavers between 18 and 21 years who do not live with a social educator; however, the social educator is expected to supervise these care-leavers for 120 hours per week. The third housing option is residential centres, which are available to care-leavers from 16 to 21years who are in pre-labour training or in a programme for entering the labour market (Sala-Roca, Arnau, Courtney & Dworsky, 2016).

Other intervention focuses on employment. This focus on employment programmes and employment-oriented training to assist care-leavers in finding employment and solidify their financial stability (Woodgate et al., 2017). A study conducted by Marks (2012) focused on the time banking exchange system, which is a transaction-based system used to create economic opportunities to prepare youth for employment. The study results showed that youth who participated in this intervention had a positive outcome, as 60% of youth who participated were successfully employed within three months of being exposed to employment training.

Education is the other intervention that is put in place to assist care-leavers. The majority of educational interventions were in the USA. Most of these initiatives were campus support programmes that offered personal, social, and informational support to promote resilience and to prepare youth for the transition from high school to tertiary institutions (Woodgate et al., 2017). The outcomes of such educational interventions were generally positive. For example, students who participated in the Education and Training Voucher Program were able to achieve their educational goals as the programme helped them cope with challenges they were facing (Dworsky & Pérez, 2010).

Mentorship is another alternative in preparing and supporting care-leavers to transition successfully to mainstream society. Woodgate et al. (2017) assert that mentorship programmes were used as an intervention to assist care-leavers to create long-lasting relationships that can provide socio-emotional support after being discharged from the care system. The findings revealed that longer supportive relationships between the youth and mentors produced effects that are more positive and had the potential to better meet the needs of youth transitioning into independent living (Woodgate et al., 2017). Greeson, Usher and Grinstein-Weiss (2010) confirmed that having a mentor who served, as a role model was associated with overall success for these young people. Specifically, positive educational outcomes (such as high academic self-efficacy and higher rates of high school completion) were reported among youth enrolled in educational mentoring programmes.

In the USA, the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program provides which funds for young people leaving care to assist them in acquiring necessary skills needed for independent living, and therefore increasing the likelihood of successful transition from foster care to independence (Quinn, Davidson, Milligan, Elsley & Cantwell, 2017). In addition, the USA has an Educational and Training Voucher Program that provides care-leavers with education, supportive relationships, employment, access to transportation for work or school, safe, stable housing, and access to medical and mental aid (Quinn et al., 2017).

In Cali, a city in Colombia, a small NGO called Forming Future Foundation runs an intervention called a Life Project, a pioneering preparation programme for care-leavers by providing access to vocational training, college, or university education. The organisation also provides housing for care-leavers still completing their secondary school and assists with school fees and career pathway (Quinn et al., 2017). Whereas, in Mexico, a local NGO called Instituto Poblano de Readaptacion AC, operating in the city of Puebla, established an initiative to assist care-leavers to build a life project, and secure accommodation, education and employment (Cameron et al., 2018).

Regionally, the SOS Children's Village in Ghana provides specialised programmes for care-leavers. The programmes involve the provision of youth homes, where care-leavers live together with the support of group leaders referred to as "mothers" and are allowed to develop independent living skills in preparation for adulthood (Frimpong-Manso, 2012). The

SOS Children's Village in Uganda also provides vocational skills training programmes to equip care-leavers with skills in carpentry, welding, motor mechanics, beauty and cosmology. These skills enable care-leavers to create their own jobs (Cameron et al., 2018).

In South Africa, independent living support is not mandatory but optional in CYCCs (RSA, 2005). The legislations guiding care-leaving and aftercare support are lacking. In most cases, CYCCs will decide for themselves what they deem appropriate and whether they can support care-leavers into independent living (Dickens, 2016). The following are organisations that focus specifically on care-leavers, either providing post-care residential care or transitional support services to care-leavers in CYCCs.

The Fountain of Hope is a residential facility based in Khayelitsha (Cape Town). The facility provides post-care accommodation to care-leavers who have been discharged from CYCCs. The organisation aims to provide a safe environment that will enable care-leavers to strive for a better life. It encourages care-leavers by providing them with educational support, career guidance, or vocational training (Fountain of Hope Youth Project, 2014).

Beth Uriel (House of Hope) is an independent living facility that accommodates 24 men from the age of 18 to 24, not all of whom are necessarily care-leavers. The young men are assisted with a proper space to live and provided with educational support and employment readiness programmes including assistance in finding employment. Beth Uriel has shown positive outcomes as, since 2012, 14 men had completed their grade 12, and 13 had enrolled in a tertiary institution (Dickens, 2016).

The South African Youth Education for Sustainability (SAYes) provides a transition to independent living programmes that focus on one-on-one youth mentoring. The SAYes programme has nine stages: recruitment, training, mentoring, two different types of internships, being matched with a mentor, support, closure, graduation, and an alumni group (SAYes, 2015).

St Georges in Kempton Park, Gauteng runs an employment programme, which provides support for care-leavers to generate income through an employment programme. The programme also assists them in finding employment in the formal sector or through self-

employment. The organisation also provides life skills and entrepreneurial skills training for care-leavers (St Georges Children's Home Coach Charity Organisation, 2018).

This section has shown some of the critical interventions and programmes that facilitate the successful transition of care-leavers into independent living. Social workers are critical for implementing these interventions. Hence, the next section focuses on the roles and functions of social work practitioners in facilitating successful transitions of care-leavers into independent living.

2.3.5 Roles and functions of social work practitioners

For care-leavers to cope with the insurmountable challenges that they encounter upon discharge, social workers have to intervene and assist them in transitioning into independent living and/or reintegrating into mainstream society. Within the South African context, the role of social work practitioners working with youth leaving care is stipulated in the norms and standards of CYCCs, in terms of Section 194 (2) of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 (RSA, 2005).

In addition to the roles stipulated in the Act, social workers as practitioners have other roles that can assist care-leavers to successfully transition into independent living. Firstly, the social worker can play the role of a counsellor. Kirst-Ashman and Hull (2018) describe a counsellor as a person who provides support and guidance to clients by assisting them through the helping process to give guidance on how they can solve their problems. Social workers can support, guide, and prepare youth leaving the care system to transition smoothly into independent living. This can include developing IDPs with the consent of the youth. Pecora (2012) points out that the individual development plans should incorporate a permanency plan that will help the youth leaving care to create permanent relationships that can provide on-going emotional, physical, and social support after being discharged from the care system.

In addition, social workers can play the role of an educator. The educator role involves information-sharing, skills transfer as part of long-life learning, and building individual capabilities to strengthen their livelihood and improve their social functioning (Kirst-Ashman

& Hull, 2018). Social workers can assume the role by providing mentoring programmes that will create positive long-term relationships with their mentors, members of the mainstream community, teachers and other supportive relatives, to guide the care-leavers on positive paths when they leave the care system (Morris, 2014).

Another role social workers can play is that of broker, which involves linking a client's systems with physical, financial, educational, social and environmental resources and services to meet their needs (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2018). Social workers can ensure that youth leaving care access appropriate services including housing, health care, employment, education and financial literacy services through other service providers. For example, social workers can link young people with local businesses for learnerships, internships, and temporary employment to gain new knowledge, skills and work experience to increase their opportunities of finding employment when discharged from the care system. Social workers can also reach out to local human services organisations and community-based organisations (CBOs) to develop funding streams to serve the youth leaving the care system.

Furthermore, social workers can play the role of a networker. The role involves formal and informal linking between people and organisations to share contacts, knowledge and resources, (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2018). Networking could involve partnerships between organisations to expand service provision (Morris, 2014). According to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), social workers can use a cross-system approach to service planning and delivery. In that manner, social workers can collaborate across inter-governmental organisations to meet the broader range of needs for care-leavers. Partners can include the housing, health, education departments, and community-based organisations to coordinate the planning of the transitioning process and ensure that the needs of young people are adequately met (Torrico, 2010a).

Another role is that of an advocate. Social workers can speak on behalf of clients to promote fair and equitable treatment or gain needed resources (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2018). Social workers can advocate on behalf of care-leavers for the development of policies and independent living programmes that can ensure that care-leavers are offered a range of services focusing on preparation for self-sufficiency and independent living (Torrico, 2010a).

Moreover, the role of a social worker should be that of an enabler. Kirst-Ashman and Hull (2018) describe an enabler as a person who is assisting or promoting clients, and provides them with means, opportunities and resources. This role is closely related to empowering individuals and groups who face social exclusion in society to take personal or collective action to address a situation (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2018). Therefore, the role of a social worker should also involve preparing care-leavers to achieve independent living through empowerment programmes that equip them with the necessary skills set to function independently (Morris, 2014). Stott (2012) adds that these programmes should include training, education, securing employment, financial management, assistance in transportation needs and health care. However, performing these roles and functions is not always easy. While some social workers may be successful in helping youth transition easily and successfully, others encounter several challenges and obstacles, as the next section will show.

2.3.6 Challenges and successes experienced by social workers

Hall and Proudlock (2011) argue that social workers encounter many human resource challenges. For example, in South Africa, the shortage of social workers is acute (Agere, 2014). As a result, social workers become overwhelmed and have inadequate time for developmental programmes and projects due to high caseloads and administrative work caused by the shortage of social workers (Ngwabi, 2014). Social workers tend to focus on statutory administrative work, ensuring that placement court orders do not lapse, while neglecting developmental programmes that are of importance to care-leavers, who need preparation and support for transitioning into independent living (Agere, 2014). Social workers are pressured to meet the legislative requirement of foster care placement reviews of court orders, resulting in social workers focusing on completing and issuing orders. This pressure may result in social workers neglecting developmental and transitional needs that care-leavers may need to make a successful transition into independent living.

In 2003, the social work profession was declared as a “scares skill” (Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Work in South Africa, 2006). To address the shortage of social workers in the country, the DSD developed a Recruitment and Retention Strategy through which social work students were granted bursaries to pursue their studies, so that after completion, the beneficiaries could be employed by the national or provincial government.

However, by the end of January 2019, a total of 3969 social work graduates, who benefited from the programme were still reportedly unemployed (SAnews, 2019). Despite the efforts made by government, there is still a shortage of social workers, thus placing a strain on human resources and service delivery in South Africa.

Lombard (2008, p.164) notes that the shortage of social workers in South Africa is a major barrier that "undermines social worker's capacity to respond to its social change and development function and to deliver socio-economic goals". Hall and Proudlock (2011) further add that the shortage of social workers contributes towards social workers accumulating high caseloads, which hinders them from providing developmental programmes and rendering proper aftercare supervision to care-leavers. Hall and Proudlock (2011) confirm that such programmes cannot be offered by someone who is not qualified to facilitate them. The authors further note that even employing social auxiliary workers as an alternative strategy to support social workers with overburdened caseloads will not be successful because social auxiliary workers are not trained and equipped to continuously monitor and evaluate the developmental growth of these young people who are about to leave the child and youth care system.

Even though the DSD allocates 80% of its funding to service delivery in CYCCs, Ngwabi (2014) notes that child and youth care systems are insufficiently funded by the DSD. Hence, Agere (2010) argues that these funds are inadequate to meet most of the welfare needs of children and youth. The author asserts that adequate funding is needed because it would be impossible to develop transitional programmes. Moreover, Ngwabi (2014) notes that the foster care legislative framework does not provide funding for transitional services for youth leaving the care system. This means that without funding, there will be no intervention strategies aimed at facilitating the successful transition out of the child and youth care system.

On contrary, Lesea (2017) found that social workers did have successful experiences when preparing youth leaving care in a child and youth care system into independent living. The majority of the social workers reported that they implement programs that encourage and motivate care-leavers to complete their secondary education or register to Further Education and Training (FET) College. The author further adds that social workers also organise career

exhibitions to which they invite stakeholders to address the youth on different careers they could follow (Lesea, 2017). Additionally, social workers implement awareness campaigns where they share information with care-leavers about different financial options that are available to further their studies. This includes assistance in applying for scholarships, particularly social work scholarships offered by the DSD (Lesea, 2017).

The Mamelani organisation is at the forefront in providing transitional support programmes to care-leavers through their Lungisela programme (meaning 'prepare in isiXhosa) (Tanur, 2012). The programme focuses on three areas, namely psychosocial and emotional support, work preparation, and support with accommodations. The Lungisela programme emphasises creating supportive networks and relationships for care-leavers to facilitate a smoother transition from care into independent living. The outcomes of the programme have been positive in improving the lives of the care-leavers; for example, less than 10% of care-leavers return to the street and 50% of the care-leavers have obtained employment (Tanur, 2012). In this manner, social workers have been successful in designing and implementing programmes to enhance successful reintegration.

2.3.7 Practitioner coping strategies

As previously discussed, social workers are faced with challenges when working with youth leaving care in CYCCs (see section 2.3.6). Gharabaghi (2010) suggests that supervision and a multidisciplinary team approach are some of the best coping strategies social work practitioners can use. Supervision can be used as a reliable space for utilising support, consultation, and encouraging good reflective practice. Pfiefer (2011) concurs that through supervision, social workers receive support and help to gain a clearer understanding of young people's needs and how they can best assist them in achieving independent living.

Hence, Gharabaghi (2010) identifies that a multi-professional team approach as beneficial in bringing about multiple perspectives to help professionals to share ideas and knowledge at how best they can assist the youth to gain independence and able to reintegrate smoothly into mainstream society. This seems to be in line with the developmental social work principles of partnership and collaboration (RSA, 1997). As such, a multidisciplinary team, including social workers, child and care workers, teachers, psychologists and nurses, allows for

collaborative practices that bring every individual effort and cooperation together to create a holistic treatment plan for the client (Gharabaghi, 2010). Social workers can collaborate across systems to meet the broad range of care-leavers' needs as they transition out of the care system into independent living.

Social workers preparing care-leavers can use a multidisciplinary team to produce different strategies, opportunities, and resources to help them to achieve independent living. Torrico (2010b) states that social workers can use an integrated service system approach for service planning and delivery. Additionally, social workers can collaborate with stakeholders, such as housing authorities, school districts, public health agencies, or adult services to assist care-leavers with resources that are needed to live an independent life once reintegrated into mainstream society Torrico (2010b).

2.4 SUMMARY

As illustrated in this chapter, the journey of care-leaving is a phenomenon, which is experienced globally, regionally and nationally. Different international, regional and national legislation and policies were identified as measures to safeguard service provision for care-leavers. Furthermore, interventions and programmes were also identified at global, regional and national levels. The roles and functions of social workers that are critical in supporting care-leavers to achieve independent living have been emphasised. The challenges and successes encountered by social workers in preparing care-leavers for independent living and integrating into mainstream society have been identified and discussed based on research previously conducted by other scholars. Finally, coping strategies that social workers can use to support themselves in providing independent living support for care-leavers have been suggested.

CHAPTER 3:
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This study aimed to explore the capacity-building needs of social workers to prepare youth leaving CYCCs in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng Province. The research process was operationalised by selecting an appropriate research approach and design. This process then led to the description of the sample and sampling procedure followed in the study to select participants. Thereafter, the research instrument and pre-testing are described. This description is followed by a discussion of the methods of data collection and analysis. Next, the strategies to ensure trustworthiness were outlined. This discussion is followed by an exploration of relevant ethical aspects that were taken into consideration. This chapter begins with a recap of the research question, aim and objectives of the study with the view to outline the research methodology in detail, as part of this chapter.

The research question that guided the study was:

What are the capacity-building needs of social workers to prepare youth leaving Child and Youth Care Centres (CYCCs) in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng Province?

The following were the objectives of the study:

- To conceptualise and contextualise capacity-building of social workers, and independent living skills development programme design, implementation and evaluation from a literature perspective.
- To explore the challenges experienced by social workers in preparing youth leaving CYCCs.
- To explore the successes experienced by social workers in preparing youth leaving CYCCs.

- To investigate any training needs social workers may have with regards to designing, implementing, and evaluating independent living skills development programmes.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Bist (2014) explains that a research methodology is useful in terms of achieving the systematic interaction of facts. Thus, this chapter is devoted to presents a description of the research methodology followed to achieve the goal and objectives of this study. The research methodology will include the research paradigm, research approach and research design. This discussion will be followed by a description of the population, sample and sample procedures used in this study. Next, the researcher will discuss the research instrumentation and pilot testing that was conducted. Thereafter, the researcher will discuss data collection and data analysis methods used in this study. The strategies to ensure trustworthiness of data will be outlined. This chapter will conclude with a description of the ethical aspects that were taken into consideration in this study.

3.2.1 Research paradigm

As a researcher, it is very important that you first begin with outlining the paradigm that underpins the study to enable the researcher's point of view or frame of reference for understanding reality (Delport et al., 2011). Babbie (2013) states that a paradigm seeks to shape both what we see and how we understand it, how we organise our observations and reasoning, and how researchers approach their studies with certain basic beliefs and assumptions that guide them. This study was embedded within the interpretivist paradigm because the goal was to provide an insight into the perspectives and experiences of the research participants (Delport et al., 2011). Bless et al. (2013) assert that the goal of an interpretivist paradigm is to understand the world as it is from the subjective experiences of participants such as social workers' experiences in preparing youth leaving CYCCs. Hence, Mayers (2009) confirms that the interpretive researcher can only access reality through the meaning that research participants give to their life world. The author says that such meaning can only be discovered through social constructions such as language. Thus, the interpretivist paradigm was the most appropriate research paradigm for this study because it provided an

interactive process whereby social worker were able to verbally shares their challenges and successes in preparing youth leaving the child and youth care system.

3.2.2 Research approach

The current study adopted a qualitative research approach. Austin and Sutton (2014) defines a qualitative approach as a systematic, first-hand observation of a real-world phenomenon such as preparing care-leavers at a CYCC and empowering them to live within mainstream society. The purpose of a qualitative research approach was to understand, observe, explore, and obtain realistic descriptive perspectives from social workers who had direct experience working with youth who are in the process of being discharged from the child and youth care system (Fouche & Schurink, 2011). Within the context of this study, a qualitative approach was utilised to explore the needs of social workers and to obtain descriptive data about the challenges and successes they experience in preparing care-leavers to reintegrate into mainstream society. Utilising the qualitative approach enabled the researcher to understand the challenges or successes the social workers have been experiencing in working with youth in care and to identify the capacity-building needs of social workers in preparing care-leavers. On the contrary, Rahman (2017) identified the limitation of using qualitative research approach it does not consider the contextual sensitivities because the focus is on meanings and experiences rather than the factors in the communities that influence these meanings and experiences.

This research study was exploratory and descriptive in nature. Exploratory research is applied when there is no or little information about the phenomenon being researched (Terre Blanche et al., 2014). In this study context, there was little information about the challenges, successes, and the needs of social workers in preparing care-leavers and helping them to reintegrate into mainstream society. Therefore, using the exploratory research approach was advantageous as it permitted the researcher to explore more on the topic, obtain a deeper understanding about the challenges and successes social workers encounter in preparing care-leavers for independent living, and then explore the capacity-building needs of social workers in preparing care-leavers for independent living. As already indicated, the study was descriptive as well. Bless et al. (2013) confirm that descriptive research aims to develop a comprehensive description of what the researcher has been exploring. Hence, this research

study aimed to describe in depth the challenges and successes experienced by social workers as well as any capacity-building needs they may have in preparing care-leavers for independent living.

3.2.3 Research design

Within the qualitative research approach, a case study design was used for this study. Bless et al. (2013) define a case study design as an approach of studying a social phenomenon through a detailed analysis of an individual case. With the use of a case study design, a case may be a person, group, programme, or event that is studied (Bless et al., 2013), whereby the case is explored or described through in-depth data collection consisting of multiple sources of information (Creswell, 2013). In this study context, the case under study was a group of social workers who are working with and preparing care-leavers at five CYCCs for independent living. Thus, the collective case study was appropriate for this study because the researcher was interested in a group of social workers and not an individual social worker (Fouche & Schurink, 2011).

The use of a collective case study design offered multiple sources of information that are rich in context and aimed at generating new knowledge (Creswell, 2013) about the challenges and successes experienced by social workers who are preparing care-leavers for independent living once discharged from the care system. The collective study case was effective in identifying capacity-building needs of social workers to ensure that they are well trained in developing programmes to prepare youth adequately for integration into mainstream society.

The collective case study was advantageous as it enabled the researcher to obtain answers to the research question from the social workers' subjective experiences and personal perspectives (Neuman, 2012). It also provided in-depth information to make certain claims about the perspectives and experiences of social workers in preparing care-leavers for independent living and their needs in terms of designing, implementing and evaluating independent living skills development programmes. However, collective case study has been critiqued and a limitation attached to it is its inability to establish a case-effect relationship between elements that are studied (Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017).

3.2.4 Study population, sample and sampling procedures

Babbie and Mouton (2010) define a population as a large number of people from whom a conclusion is drawn. In this study, the population was social workers employed at the Gauteng DSD, who are working with care-leavers at five CYCCs. As it was not possible to study the entire population of social workers, sampling was conducted. Silverman (2010) defines a sample as a sub-section of the population used to make inferences about the whole population.

To draw a sample from the larger population, the non-probability sampling technique was employed. Babbie and Mouton (2010) refer to non-probability sampling as a technique used when selecting a particular individual based on the researcher's judgment about which one will be most representative of the whole population. Grinnell and Unrau (2018) add that non-probability sampling is a technique where the samples are gathered in a process that does not give all the individuals in the population equal chances of being selected.

In this study context, the participants were purposively sampled. Strydom and Delport (2011) describe purposive sampling as a technique whereby the researcher intentionally selects .participants who shares specific features and characteristics that are relevant to the research study. Hence, the use of purposive sampling enabled the researcher to specifically select 12 participants that share specific features and characteristics that were relevant to this study.

On the contrary, Sharma (2017) argues that the judgemental subjective component of purposive sampling may lead to researcher bias when such judgements are ill conceived or poorly prepared, that is, where judgments have not been based on clear criteria. To avoid bias, the researcher outlined clear criteria that included the selection criteria and exclusion criteria for participating in this study.

To be included in this study, interested social workers needed to meet the following selection criteria:

- Social workers who are registered with the South African Council of Social Services Professions (SACSSP).

- Social workers who are working at various CYCCs in Ekurhuleni Region, Gauteng Province, within the DSD.
- Social workers who have a minimum of three years' work experience at a CYCC.
- Social workers who are or have been involved in preparing care-leavers for reintegration into mainstream society.

The exclusion criteria were as follows:

- Social workers involved in statutory, probation and adoption services.
- Social workers not based within Ekurhuleni Region in Gauteng Province
- Social workers who had less than three years' experience working at a CYCC.

In terms of the recruitment process, the researcher sent an email with the departmental human research ethics committee clearance certificate (Appendix A), written permission letter from the Gauteng DSD (Appendix B), the participant information sheet (Appendix C), and consent forms (See Appendix D & E) to all the managers working in Ekurhuleni CYCCs. To present these appendixes to those social workers who meet the selection criteria and consent to participate. Those social workers who were interested in participating in this study were asked to contact the researcher directly.

The first 12 social workers who made contact were invited to an interview held at a time and place suitable to the research participant. There were no ethical issues relating to interviewing colleagues and getting socially desirable answers, because the researcher works in the Johannesburg Region while all the participants are employed in the Ekurhuleni Region. Additionally, there were no ethical issues because she does not know those professionals personally.

3.2.5 Research Instrumentation

The researcher used a one-on-one semi-structured interview schedule to collect data (Appendix F). An interview schedule is a set of questions written to guide the interview process (Bless et al., 2013). The purpose of an interview schedule is to help the researcher to be prepared, by providing a set of pre-determined questions that can be used to engage with

the participants and to give direction throughout the interview process (Monnette, Sullivan & DeJong, 2008). The interview schedule development was guided by the literature review and research study objectives.

The interview schedule was continuously reviewed with the supervisor and was included for submission with the research proposal to the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Witwatersrand. The experts assessed the feasibility and practicality of using the interview schedule. The inputs received from the committee experts were incorporated into the revised interview schedule. Strydom (2011) emphasises the importance of obtaining inputs from experts as it adds value to the research study. Thus, obtaining the input from the experts improved the quality of the research instrument.

The use of the interview schedule was beneficial as it ensured that relevant information was captured, allowed free interaction, empowered the participants to be actively involved during the process, and offered the participants an opportunity to seek clarification in matters of concern and interest (Strydom, 2011). On the contrary, Kashyap (2018) notes some limitations in using an interview schedule. The author states that it is time consuming and the collected data cannot be standardised from one person to another and may pose the risk of bias from the interviewer. However, the author reiterates that if the interviewer possesses professionalism and ethical values and objectivity, it should be easy to use this tool to collect relevant information (Kashyap, 2018). Despite the mentioned limitations, the interview schedule was useful in giving guidance during the data collection process, as will be discussed below (see section 3.2.7**)**.

3.2.6 Pilot Testing

A pilot test was conducted before the actual data collection process began. Pilot testing is defined as a process for testing and certifying the instrument by administering it to a small group of participants from the proposed test population (Strydom, 2011). Mitchell and Jolley (2013) add that a pilot test can be used as a rehearsal process to test and modify the instruments before the main study processes begin. The pilot testing of the interview schedule was administrated with two social workers who met the specified selection. The use of pilot testing provided an opportunity for the researcher to identify errors and gaps that might have

existed with the view to rectify them before they were administered during the actual data collection process. The outcomes of the pilot testing indicated that the research instrument, method of collecting data, recording devise, time, and the venue were feasible. The two-piloted participants were not included in the main research study.

3.2.7 Method of Data Collection

Within the context of this study, semi-structured one-one-one interviews were conducted. These interviews are organised around areas of particular interest, allowing the participant flexibility when answering the questions (Greeff, 2011)). In general, these types of interview are used to gather detailed information about the participants' beliefs and perceptions (Wagner et al., 2012), and, such as, the challenges, successes and needs of social workers in preparing care-leavers transitioning out of the child and youth care system into independent living. Thus, one-on-one semi-structured interviews were appropriate for this type of a study because they enabled the researcher to fully comprehend the world of the social workers and learn a great deal through their perspectives and experiences.

The use of semi-structured one-on-one interviews provided a friendly environment for both the researcher and the participants to allow free interaction (Wagner et al., 2012). Moreover, the researcher used open-ended and follow-up questions to encourage the participants to answer questions more freely, enabling the researcher to probe more in areas of interest and concern (Greeff, 2011). The interviews took place at the participants' work places and the interviews lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Before the interviews, the researcher ensured that the venues where the interviews took place were suitable. Both the researcher and the participants confirmed that the venues were quiet and had minimal distractions

After obtaining written consent forms (See Appendix D) from the participants, all the interviews were audiotaped (See Appendix E) using two recording devices, in case one of them became dysfunctional during the interview. This allowed the researcher to extract the participants' statements verbatim during the data analysis process. Wagner et al. (2012) confirm that tape recording the interview enables the researcher to capture accurately the views of the participant. Schurintel (2011) outline the importance of planning for recording data through ensuring that the device to be used to collect data is in good working condition.

3.2.8 Method of Data Analysis

The collected data was analysed qualitatively. Qualitative data analysis is a process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data and is a process of transforming data into findings (Schurink et al., 2011). Within the context of this study, thematic analysis was conducted to provide an easily interpretable and concise description of emerging themes and patterns within the dataset (Creswell, 2013). Thematic content analysis uses data from all the transcriptions to the research process. The six-step process of data analysis as provided by Braun and Clarke (2012) was followed during the data analysis process. These steps are explained below.

Step 1: Familiarising yourself with your data

According to Braun and Clarke (2012), the first step of thematic analysis is to familiarize oneself with the data collected through transcribing the interviews, repeatedly reading and re-reading the transcripts before further actions are taken. In order to carry out this step, the researcher repeatedly read the transcriptions, making notes, listening to the audio-recordings, and checking back against the original recordings for accuracy. This step enabled the researcher to fully understand the content of the transcriptions and familiarise herself with all aspects of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

Step 2: Generating initial codes

This step involves the systematic coding of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Maguire and Delahunt (2017) argue that coding reduces data into smaller chunks of meaning in an organised and systematic manner. The researcher generated initial codes through the identification of preliminary codes which appeared to be of interest and meaningful. The researcher engaged in this step by making notes on the transcriptions, using highlighters to indicate potential patterns to identify the challenges and successes experienced by social workers when preparing youth for independent living, then creating links between these challenges and successes with assumed outcomes**.** Additionally, the researcher engaged in

this step by identifying the capacity-building needs of social workers, and then combining these needs in terms of similarities.

Step 3: Searching for themes

This stage required the researcher to shift from codes to searching for themes. Braun and Clarke (2012) refer to this stage as a process of capturing the most important information relating to the research question and representing patterns responding to the dataset. Themes are created through the process of comparing codes using similarities and differences that exist between them (Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen & Snelgrove, 2016). The researcher used colour-coding system to assist in sorting different codes that were formed to create themes and sub-themes.

Step 4: Reviewing potential themes

This stage consists of two levels for reviewing potential themes. The first level is to review themes by conducting a deeper review of identified themes where the researcher needs to question whether to combine, refine, separate, or discard initial themes. A thematic 'map' can be generated from this level (Braun & Clarke, 2012). In this level, the researcher used a thematic map as a tool to review the potential themes by checking the themes against the collated data and considering whether they appeared to form a coherent pattern. Thereafter, the researcher moved to the second level by reviewing the identified themes in step 3 and assesses these in relation to the research goal and objections.

Step 5: Defining and naming the themes

This stage involved refining and defining the themes and potential sub-themes within the data. This phase involved the deep analytic work of shaping the analysis into more detail (Braun & Clarke, 2012). In this stage, the researcher identified the essence of what each theme was about and concluded what aspects needed to be captured that confined the overall story about the data.

Step 6: Producing the final report

This stage was the last step that the researcher needed to conduct in the thematic analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2012), the order in which themes are presented is important because themes should connect logically and meaningfully and, if relevant, build on previous themes to tell a coherent story about the data. Moreover, Vaismoradi et al. (2016) researchers are expected to narrate the finding whereby the aim is to describe and connect various themes in order to respond to the research question. In this final stage, the researcher utilised the themes to answer the research question and achieved the aim and objectives of the study by creating links between the themes.

3.3 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

According to Babbie and Mouton (2010), trustworthiness is defined as a procedure that a researcher can embark on to convince the audience that the findings of the study merit their attention. The authors further note that trustworthiness seeks to ensure that the voices of the research participants are of priority to the research outcomes. The researcher employed several strategies to ensure trustworthiness. These strategies are discussed below.

3.3.1 Credibility

Credibility relates to the truthfulness, believability and value of the researcher's findings as perceived by the participants (Furman, Langer & Taylor, 2010). Moreover, credibility seeks to convince readers that the findings depict the truth and reality of the study (Furman et al., 2010). In the study, the researcher increased credibility through persistent observation and prolonged engagement with the participants during the data collection processes to ensure that the lived experiences of the research participants were captured. In addition, the researcher increased the credibility of the study by continuously consulting with the supervisor to check the accuracy of the analysis.

3.3.2 Dependability

Dependability addresses the issues of reliability in qualitative research (Schurink et al., 2011). Dependability refers to a logical, traceable and carefully documented research process (Furman et al., 2010). Hadi and José (2016) adds that to address dependability issues more directly, the research process of the study should be reported in detail, to enable a future researcher to repeat the work, if necessary, to see if the results are the same. To enhance dependability, the researcher followed a clear process of conducting the research. Dependability was also increased by documenting the perspectives and experiences of preparing care-leavers for independent living as narrated by social workers during the interviews, using a digital recorder and taking field notes.

3.3.3 Transferability

According to Bless et al. (2013), transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other similar situations. Hadi and José (2016) suggest that it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that sufficient contextual information about the phenomenon being studied is provided to enable other researchers to make such a transfer. In this study context, the researcher enhanced transferability by providing sufficient description of the phenomenon being studied, and outlined the research process and methods applied so as to allow other researchers to have a proper understanding of the research study. This will enable other researchers to compare and assess the similarities between various situations or other settings or contexts. However, it should be noted that there are limitations to this study, and hence any attempt to generalise the findings should be done with caution.

3.3.4 Confirmability

According to Furman et al. (2010), confirmability refers to the ability of other researchers to confirm the research findings. Hadi and José (2016) define confirmability as being concerned with showing that the researcher's findings are clearly from the collected data, and not from the preference or the characteristics of the researcher. To enhance confirmability of the study, the researcher kept the original transcribed interviews of the participants to allow for the findings of the study to be scrutinised by others at a given point. The transcripts of all the

interviews of the participants are available upon request. Reference to literature findings by other authors in order to confirm and strengthen the researcher's interpretations of the findings were also applied to ensure confirmability. As well, verbatim quotes that were identified and noted, were used to confirm the research findings

3.3.5 Reflexivity

Royse, Thyer and Padgett (2019) define reflexivity as active acknowledgement by the researcher that her actions and decisions will inevitably affect the meaning and context of the experience under investigation. The researcher engaged in reflexivity throughout the entire research process to ensure that her background and knowledge, including her awareness of the challenges care-leavers face once discharged from a CYCC, did not influence the research process. She was aware of the bias she was bringing to the research study and ensured that it did not influence the research findings by remaining objective throughout the research process. In an attempt to protect herself against her bias interfering with the process, she kept a daily reflection journal about her feelings, assumptions and reactions as she engaged with the research process.

3.3.6 Audit trail

Jeanty and Hibel (2011) define an audit trail as a journal that is used to chronically record the research events, assumptions, perceptions and experiences to manage threats of trustworthiness. Moreover, the use of an audit trail is useful to provide other readers insight into how the findings were discovered and how interpretations of the findings were reached (Jeanty & Hibel, 2011). The daily reflection journal also helped in leaving an audit trail that recorded detailed notes on how the study was conducted. The notes included the process followed, assumptions, perceptions, and experiences of the researcher during the process of collecting data, as well as relevant dates and venues.

3.3.7 Peer debriefing

Peer debriefing is the process of involving other peers, colleagues, or academics in scrutinising the findings to minimise the effect of bias (Furman, Langer & Taylor, 2010). In

attempt to increase the credibility of the study, the researcher continuously consulted with her direct research supervisor, who worked closely with her and provided continuous feedback. Furthermore, the researcher engaged with a lecturing professor who has been working extensively on the research topic of care leaving. The feedback received provided guidance and support throughout the research study.

3.3.8 Thick description

Hadi and José (2016) states that providing a thick description is important as it promotes credibility and helps to convey the actual situation that is being investigated and, to an extent, the context that surrounds it. Creswell (2013) adds that thick description provides other readers with insight into the events described in the study. In this study, the researcher described in detail the concept of care leaving in the literature chapter, and a clear description of the research paradigm, approach and design was provided. The sample and sample procedures were also clearly described. The integrated findings and interpretation are presented in chapter 4 below.

3.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Any acceptable research investigation must be conducted with due consideration being given to the relevant ethical aspects (Strydom, 2011). Research ethics are standards of behaviour and practical procedures that researchers are expected to follow (Strydom, 2011). To maintain the required standards of research ethics, the researcher protected the participants by adhering to the ethical aspects discussed below.

3.4.1 Informed consent

Informed consent implies that all human participants should be fully informed about a research project before they agree to take part (Strydom, 2011). The author further adds that obtaining informed consent is a norm in which the subjects voluntarily participate in the research project with a full understanding of the possible risks involved. Thus, the researcher ensured that participants were forwarded a written informed consent letter before participating in this study. The letter included the necessary information about the research

purpose, process, benefits and procedures (Strydom, 2011). Before the interviews began, the researcher took time to explain in detail the purpose, goal, and nature of the study.

Additionally, participants were informed about the duration of the study and that they had the option to withdraw from the study at any given point. If participants agreed to join the study, they were given a consent form to sign, confirming that their participation was voluntary. Permission to use tape recordings was also requested.

3.4.2 Confidentiality, Privacy and Anonymity

Confidentiality refers to handling the information obtained from participants confidentially (Strydom, 2011). This involves strict non-disclosure of the identities of participants, the research location, or any other information that may embarrass or harm the research participants (Strydom, 2011). The researcher ensured that she adhered to confidentiality by keeping sensitive information concerning the research participants in her password-protected laptop. The researcher also only shared findings with her direct supervisor who is a qualified social worker and bound by such ethics when dealing with the information obtained from participants.

Privacy ensures that all identifying personal information of the participants is kept private, and their right to control their disclosure of what is not intended for others to observe is reserved (Punch, 2014). Every individual has a right to privacy, and it is within their right to decide whether or not their identity, attitude, beliefs and behaviour can be revealed. Thus, the researcher ensured that the identities of participants are not disclosed by using number coding and replacing all names with codes to protect their privacy. The researcher also ensured participants that the research information will only be accessed by her and her supervisor.

Anonymity is defined as safeguarding the identities of the research participants (Babbie, 2013). The researcher saved the data each interview separately using pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants and maintain anonymity (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, no names or any identifying information were used in the research report (Creswell, 2013).

3.4.3 Debriefing of participants

Debriefing refers to discussing the feelings of participants about the project immediately after the interview session to avoid any harm that could have been unintentionally caused (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The research participants received sufficient time to talk about their feelings and experiences. The participants expressed that they were grateful for partaking in this study because they had gained greater awareness and knowledge about care-leavers and independent living programmes. Although some of the information shared was personal, there were no issues that disturbed participants. Hence, formal debriefing beyond the individual interview was not required.

3.4.4 Publication of findings

Strydom (2011) states that a research study is not completed until findings are shared in the public domain in a clear, understandable, written form. Kumar (2014) adds that the findings of the study should be reported in an unbiased manner. The researcher will ensure that the research findings reported are correct and unbiased, and written in the form of a mini-dissertation report, submitted to the Department of Social Work in the School of Human and Community Development at the University of the Witwatersrand.

3.5 SUMMARY

This chapter described the research methodology that was applied in this study. The chapter contained discussions on the research paradigm with specific reference to the interpretivist paradigm. In addition, the research approach and design were explained, and the research population, sample and sample procedures were clearly described. Thereafter, data collection and analysis methods were outlined. Lastly, the trustworthiness of the study was outlined as well as ethical aspects employed while conducting the study. The following chapter will present the findings and discussion of the data.

CHAPTER 4:
PRESENTATION OF DATA AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to present and discuss the empirical findings derived from the study. In this chapter, the findings are presented in two different sections. In section 1, the researcher will use graphs to display and discuss the biographical information of the participants while in section 2, she will use textual analysis to discuss the themes and sub-themes that emerged. These themes and sub-themes will be accompanied by relevant quotations from the participants. Finally, relevant literature will be incorporated into the discussion to substantiate the research findings. This chapter begins with a recap of the research aim and objectives of the study, as part of this chapter.

The study aimed to explore the capacity-building needs of social workers to prepare youth leaving CYCCs in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng Province. The following were the objectives of the study:

- To conceptualise and contextualise capacity-building of social workers, and independent living skills development programme design, implementation and evaluation from a literature perspective.
- To explore the challenges experienced by social workers in preparing youth leaving CYCCs.
- To explore the successes experienced by social workers in preparing youth leaving CYCCs.

- To investigate any training needs social workers may have with regards to designing, implementing, and evaluating independent living skills development programmes.

4.2 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

This section will present the biographical profile of the participants focusing on gender, age, race, highest qualification and number of years of experience working in CYCCs.

4.2.1 Gender composition of participants

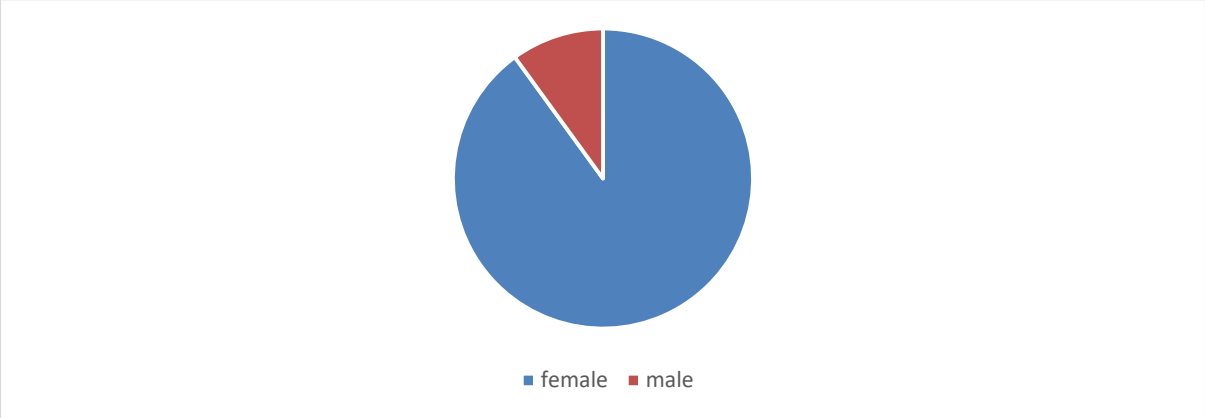


Figure 1: Gender composition of participants

Figure 1 above shows that the majority of the participants (90%) were women and only one (10%) was a man, indicating that women dominated in this study. Hicks (2015) affirm that historically women have dominated the social welfare profession.

4.2.2 Age distribution of participants

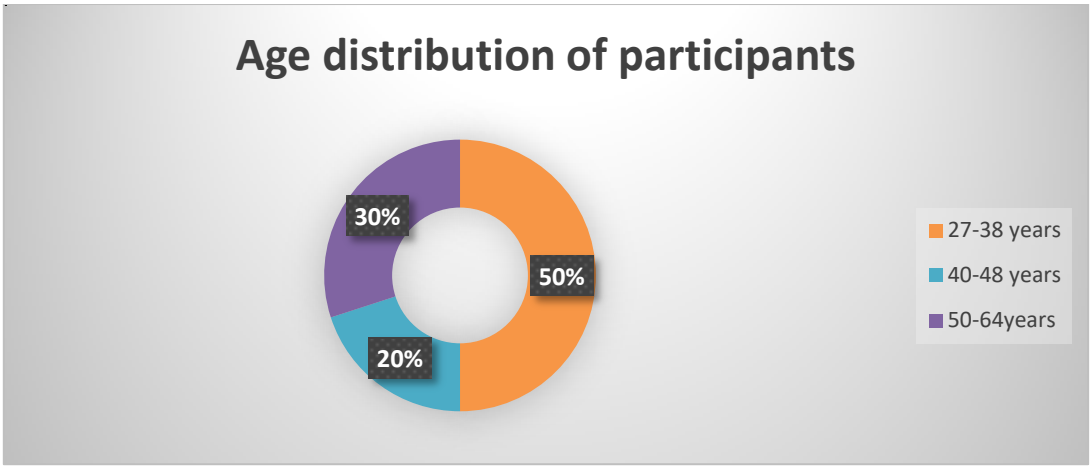


Figure 2: Age distribution of participants

Figure 2 above illustrates that the participants' ages ranged from 27 to 64 years. Five of the participants (50%) were between the ages of 27 and 38, three of the participants (20%) were between the ages of 40 and 48, and only two participants (30%) were between the ages of 50

and 64. This finding indicates that the majority of social workers are in their early middle age and few social workers are in their middle age. Lesea (2014) states that social worker practitioners mostly employed at the government sector lack upward mobility. Thus, they do not spend much time of their career practising in the sector.

4.2.3 Race of the participants

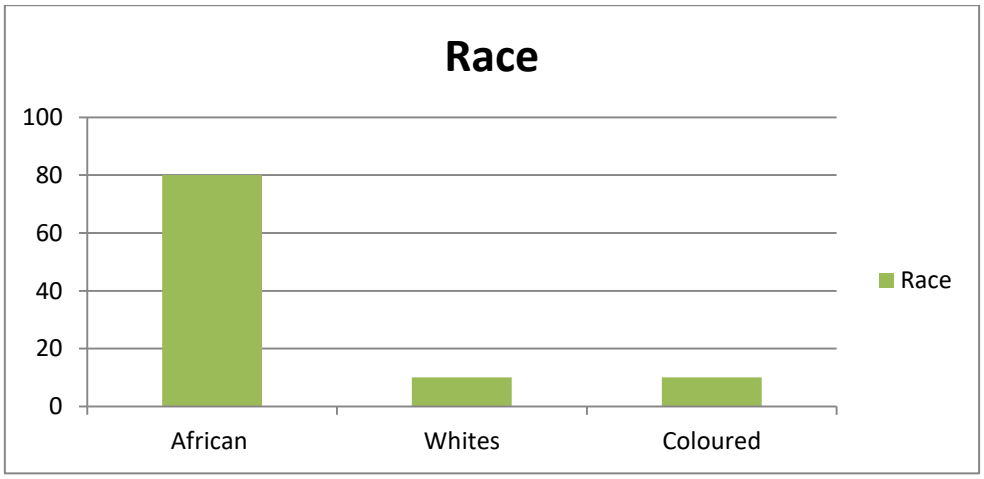


Figure 3: Race of the participants

Figure 3 above illustrates that the participants' race, 80% were African, 10% were white and 10% were coloured. It should be noted that there were no Indian participants represented in the study. These results may serve as an indication that the majority of African social workers are employed in the government sector, as opposed to most white social workers who work in non-profit organisations or the private sector (Patel & Hochfeld, 2012).

4.2.4 Highest level of education

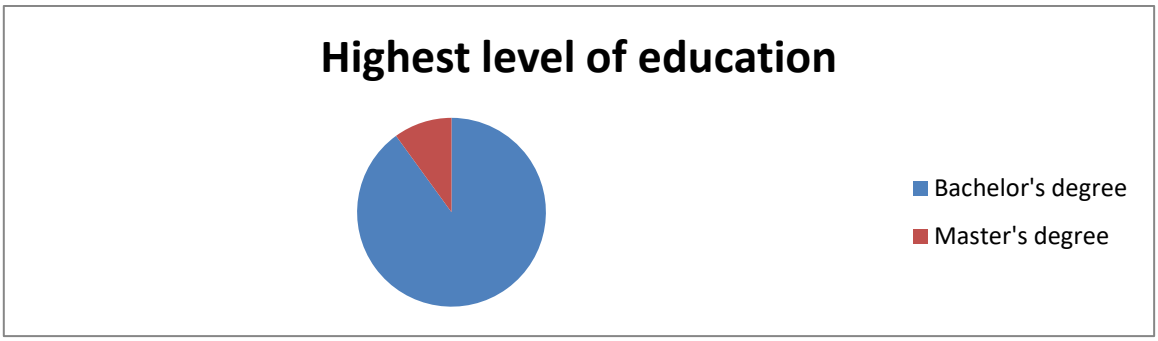


Figure 4: Highest level of education

In terms of the highest level of education, nine of the participants held a bachelors' degree in social work and the remaining participant had a master's degree in social development. This implies that the majority of participants were not furthering their studies in the field of social work. This finding of the study is supported by the Public Sector Education and Training Authority (2012), confirming that social worker practitioners do not improve their qualification by obtaining a master's or doctoral degree. In addition, the Council of Higher Education (CHE) (2016) asserts that social work is among the professions with the lowest number of master's and doctoral outputs in South Africa.

4.2.5 Years of experience at a CYCC

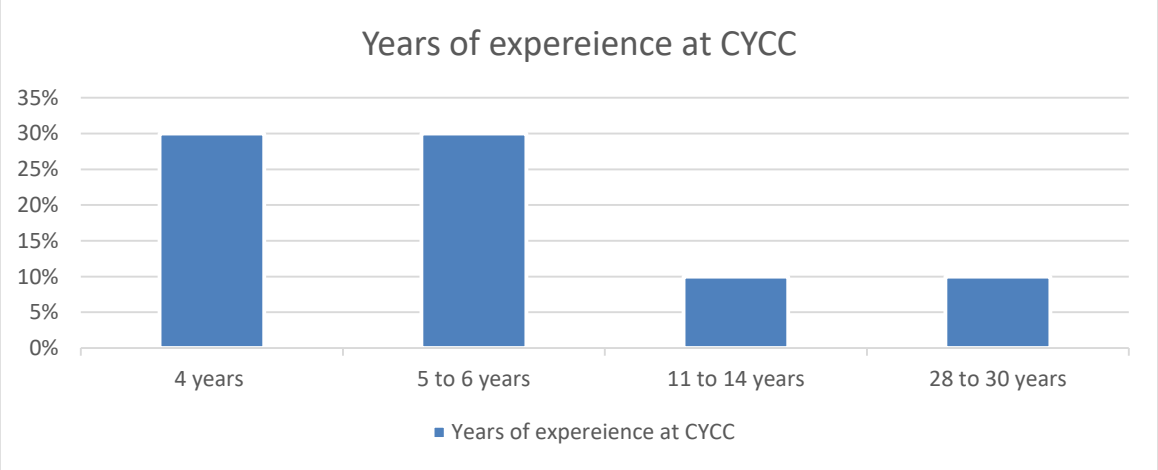


Figure 5: Years of experience at a CYCC

Figure 5 above illustrates the participants' years of experience working at a CYCC. Three of the participants had four years' experience, another three had between five to six years' experience. Two participants had between eleven to fourteen years' experience. The last two had between twenty-eight and thirty years' experience. This means that the majority of social workers had a minimum of six years experiences. Sithole's (2010) observation is that the DSD recognises experience over the level of qualification and performance. The author states that social workers are compensated according to years of experience, and incentive schemes regarding performance are limited. Hence, there is large staff turnover of social workers.

4.3 THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

This section focuses on presenting and discussing the empirical findings obtained from the interviews of the ten social workers employed at different CYCCs within the Ekurhuleni Region, Gauteng Province. The findings are presented thematically in table format.

Table 1: Themes and sub-themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
1. Social worker's understanding of Independent Living Programme (ILP)	**1.1 Lack of formal training on programme design and management** **1.2 Lack of theoretical understanding of Independent Living Programme (ILP)** **1.3 Lack of formal Independent Living Programme (ILP)**
2. Workplace challenges	**2.1 Inadequate Planning** **2.2 Inadequate Individual Development Plan (IDP)** **2.3 Lack of integrated approach** **2.4 Lack of supervision of social workers** **2.5 High turnover of NGO social workers** **2.6 Cross-border family reunification of immigrant children**
3. Structural challenges	**3.1 Lack of funding of Independent Living Programme (ILP)** **3.2 Inappropriate facilities for fostering**

	independence
4 Successes experienced by social workers	**4.1 Establishment of relationships with supportive adults** **4.2 Post-secondary education support** **4.3 Career guidance, experiential learning and job search**
5 Training needs social workers	**5.1 Training in terms of programme design and management** **5.2 Training in terms of ILP and Services** **5.3 Continuous in-service training**

4.3.1 Theme 1: Social worker's understanding of Independent living Programmes (ILPs)

The empirical findings of the study revealed that most of the participants lack formal training on programme design and management. This was evident when the participants were asked about their understanding of independent living programmes (ILPs). The lack of theoretical understanding about ILPs is indicative that most social workers are never oriented or trained on how to design, implement and evaluate programmes or projects. As a result of the lack of on-the-job training, the majority of the participants did not design nor implement ILPs. The reasons why they are neither designing nor implementing programmes are articulated in the following sub-themes.

Sub-theme 1.1 Lack of training in programme design and management

The study findings revealed that most participants lack formal training in programme design and management. The participants further indicated that they were not educated on

programme design and management as part of their undergraduate degree studies nor were they provided with workshops or in-service training by the employer DSD. These findings are illustrated in the following responses:

Participant 3: *"No, not that I can remember, I believe that I was never taught programme design and management on my graduate studies and even now at the centre, they have not been any workshop on how to design and manage programmes".*

Participant 4: *"I do not remember or recall having a module of programme design and management... but what I know is that we have learnt lot of theory. But I cannot say I am equipped to develop a programme as yet".*

Participant 7: *"Under my graduate studies, there was no module that precisely focused on programme design and management. Also, I haven't attended any training that teaches me about programme design and management since employed by the DSD".*

Participants 6: *"I never did programme design and management in my undergraduate studies, and to think of... I've never attended any training that teaches me about programme design and management".*

These findings of the study confirm that social work practitioner's lack formal training on programme design and management. These findings support Bertram (2014) who state that social work practitioners lack analytical skills required to design and manage evidence-based programmes. The author further states that social welfare practitioners who attempt to design programmes without any formal training, risk generating inefficient and unsustainable programmes. This finding shows that social workers who fail to continue developing their knowledge and skills are in contravention of continuous professional development stipulation as contained in the South African Council of Social Service Professions policy. The policy stipulates that social work practitioners should continue to learn, attend on-going in-service training in order to improve their skills and become innovative in creating evidence-based programmes (Bishop, 2018). As a result of lack of under-graduate and in-service training, the results further showed that the participants also lack theoretical understanding of ILPs, as discussed next.

Sub-theme 1.2 Lack of theoretical understanding of Independent Living Programme (ILP)

According to the study findings, the majority of the participants had little theoretical knowledge about ILP. Some of the participants were struggling to understand the question itself. Most participants kept on asking that the question be repeated because they assumed that the question referred to developmental programme instead of independent living programmes. Below are some of their narratives:

Participant 3: *"Hmm, I don't understand your question or rather you mean developmental programme because that is one of the programmes the centre focuses on. Independent living programme… Hmm, I do not know. I am not exposed to such a programme".*

Participant 4: **"***What you mean independent living programme? Because I know of the developmental or social skills programmes".*

Participant 9: *"I am not sure what is the independent living programme or rather aware of such programme. Because at this centre we have what we call, social skills programme. Probably social auxiliary workers run this independent living programme".*

The empirical findings revealed that social workers lack not only theoretical understanding of an independent living programme, but also that they had never heard of the term in the first place. Similar findings were reported by Lesea (2017) who state that social workers do not fully understand the concept of ILP. Hence, there is a lack of understanding of how to design and implement these programmes in practice. In addition, Tanur (2012) confirms the absence of theoretical understanding about ILP within the child and youth care system. The author sees this calamity as a major shortcoming that contributes to care-leavers not being prepared for independent living once discharged from the State care system.

On the contrary, three participants who operated from different children's home had some understanding of the concept ILP. The following remarks illustrate their understanding of ILP:

Participant 2: *"My understanding of the independent living programme is when you prepare youth to be able to leave on their own, to be independent… On which I understand that the preparation should start at a younger age. That is a programme from my understanding".*

Participant 6: "*Independent living programme are services that prepare the youth so that by the time when they go out or exit the centre can live independently and they are prepared for the outside world."*

Participant 7: "*Any programme or project that you do in the institution that seeks to prepare young people for independent living".*

This finding revealed that social workers in the employ of the government institutions are not trained about ILPs, as result they lack theoretical understanding of ILPs. In comparison to their counterparts in the NGO sector, the findings showed that social workers who work in children's homes were better equipped with information and knowledge about independent living programmes. The findings reveal a discrepancy between service delivery in the NGO sector as compared to the State. The criticism to be levelled against such a discrepancy is that with a lack of information and knowledge, service delivery is likely to be compromised. Hence, Tanur (2012) adds that to support youth leaving the care system, formal independent living programmes should be put in place to support and prepare youth for independent living, as discussed below. In line with the Empowerment Theory Huq (2015), argue that practitioners must access information that empowers them to make informed choices and decision regarding the future of youth leaving care.

Sub-theme 1.3 Lack of formal Independent Living Programme (ILP)

The participants were asked if they provide independent living programme to prepare youth leaving the care system and their responses showed that most participants have not designed or implemented any ILP since working at a CYCC. Out of the ten participants, seven participants expressed that they were never oriented or trained on how to design and to implement ILP by the DSD. Hence, the participants did not prepare youth transitioning from the care system into independent living. The following narratives highlight the participants' views:

Participant 9: *"No I don't think we do have an independent living programme because we once had a child… she turned 18 while she was here in the centre and we didn't know what to do at that moment. We ended up referring her to Saint George's CYCC because they have a live-in campus that focuses more on independent living programme".*

Participant 3: "*I am not much familiar with the independent living programme and I've never been trained or maybe other colleagues have been trained about independent living programme. If there is training in the centre, normally they nominate few social workers to attend the training not all of us will go. I've never attended such training dealing with youth leaving care".*

Participant 4: "*We do not have a structural* [structured] *programme that caters for the youth in our centre. We do not have an independent living programme for them. Honestly, I do not know any programme that deals with preparing our youth for independent living".*

Participant 10: *"We don't prepare our youth for independent living because we do not have such a programme and I have never been to any formal training on independent living programme".*

As alluded to previously (see Sub-Theme 1.1), this finding revealed that DSD social workers lack formal training on programme design and management. In support of these findings, Tanur (2012) confirms that nationwide child and youth care practitioners are not formally trained to facilitate programmes that meet the needs of care leavers. In addition, the author revealed that although the Children's Act 38 of 2005 Section 191(3) (e) (RSA, 2005) mandates the implementation of programmes to prepare youth as they go through the transition process, the Act does not provide a clear description of the programmes to be implemented, or the kinds of activities needed to be put in place to assist care-leavers.

On the contrary, there were three participants who reported that they have designed and are implementing informal ILPs to support and prepare youth for independent living. However, the findings revealed that these informal programmes lack uniformity and are not guided by any policy document. This finding is supported by Van Breda (2018), who confirms that there are no recognised protocols or guidelines for services and programmes to cater for care-

leavers in South Africa. Such lack compromises service delivery to youth leaving care as Lesea (2017) adds that even if social workers were willing to implement ILPs, it would prove very challenging, if not impossible for them to do so without clear guidelines and training manuals. Thus, the participants revealed that they face numerous work-related challenges that hinder their efforts in preparing care-leavers for independent living. These major workplace challenges experienced by the participants are discussed in detail next.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Workplace challenges

Based on the study findings, most participants encounter numerous barriers whilst attempting to provide interventions and services aimed at preparing youth leaving CYCCs to live independently. These workplace challenges are presented as sub-themes below.

Sub-theme 2.1 Inadequate Planning

In regards to planning for the eventual discharge of youth, the study finding revealed that all participants reported that the external case-manager who are social workers employed by DSD are fully responsible for developing permanency plans for each youth placed in care. As case managers, they are required to provide the permanency plan when placing a child at a CYCC. However, nine out of ten of the participants indicated that some external social workers who are classified as case managers hardly compile the permanency plan upon admission of the child, as stipulated by law. Further, the participants reported that if the permanency plans are submitted, often times these plans lack adequate information regarding the exit plan. The participants elaborated that such permanency plans merely concentrate on the immediate needs rather than assessing the long-term needs of the care leaver, which should be about a plan that will ensure that by the time the young person is discharged from the care centre, they are prepared to live independently and be reintegrated successfully into mainstream society . Two participants remarked as follows:

Participant 2: "The *external social worker has to bring the permanency plan when placing the child at the institution, in which they don't in most cases… (Laughing). Even though, it is one of the requirements when placing the child at a CYCC. They usually ignore this requirement"*.

Participant 1: "When *we admit the child, the child is supposed to come with what we call the care plan and permanency plan with the case manager social worker but very seldom we receive these plans. Why is that? They sometimes get very annoyed at us when we ask questions. But what is your plan when placing the child here? Because some of this plan does not have a clear exit plan and you just wonder…"*

Based on the above, the findings revealed that most CYCCs in Ekurhuleni are accepting children into their care without adequate permanency plans. This is despite the regulation as stipulated in the Children's Act 38 of 2005 Section 157(1)(a)(iii) that mandates social workers to prepare a detailed permanency plan before placing a child in alternative care (RSA, 2005). Similarly, the findings of this study resonate with those of Moodley (2016), who mentions that social work practitioners do not prioritise the permanency plans according to the Act, even though social workers have a good understanding of what is required of them. Such omissions place the young care leavers at risk of maladjustment in mainstream society. In support, Van Breda (2014, p.3) showed that lack of proper plans leaves many of these youth having to deal with "post-care" life challenges.

Sub-theme 2.2 Inadequate Individual Development Plan (IDP)

Not only were case managers not preparing permanency plans for youth in care, the findings also revealed that social workers were not prioritising the development of Individual Development Plans (IDPs) as mandated by the Act to ensure that the unique needs of each and every young person are taken care of. The study revealed that key role-players are very seldom or present during the panel meetings where the IDPs are supposed to be discussed or are not working together to develop the IDP for a child or youth admitted to their care centre. Two participants were are aware of the negative implications of such practice by pointing out that perhaps the lack of collaboration between role-players is due to lack of time. For instance, one participant indicated the following:

Participant 7: *"In most cases, children and youth are admitted in our centre as a crisis, there is no time to develop an IDP immediately. Then once the child is admitted, you will struggle to get hold of the external social worker who placed the child or other professionals".*

In support of this, another participant responded as follows:

Participant 1: *"In fact it is supposed to be a conscious, purposeful and collaborative process, where it involves me as a residential social worker, the case manager and the child, if there is a family, all the role-players should be involved. In a sense that the process should not be rushed but with time constraints we residential social workers end up developing the IDP alone. Of cause with the child present".*

The findings are in line with previous research by Khoza (2011) who showed that social workers experience challenges in facilitating a multi-disciplinary approach when developing IDP due to lack of time and inaccessibility of other role-players. Such lack of multi-stakeholder collaboration places young people at risk. Hence, Adams, Dominelli and Payne (2009) argue that multi-disciplinary assessment allows role-players to capture and address the complex needs of individuals and enables them to address the needs from a range of perspectives. The full participation and involvement of all role players is in line with the theoretical framework that underpinned this study, as Kirst-Ashman (2018) adds that collaborative effort between relevant stakeholders is an important part of empowerment. The belief is that when social workers are involved and collaborating with other role-players, they are able to identify strengths, skills and resources necessary to empower their clients to be self-sufficient and able to cope with challenges they may encounter in life.

The findings further revealed that the role confusion between the residential social workers and external social workers contributes towards inadequate development of IDPs. The participants added that this role confusion not only affects the working relationship between themselves and the external social workers, but also contributes towards neglect of responsibilities. The participants elaborated by saying that external social workers do not follow up on meetings to review IDPs. In this regard, the following narratives were shared:

Participant 7: *"Hmmm…, the challenge I experience as a residential social worker has to be with our external case manager* [social workers] *who are not working with you to implement the IDP for the child. There is a lack of cooperation between each other and role confusion as to who is expected to do what"…*

Participant 1: *"Then… there are also those social workers who do not take any responsibility towards implementation of the IDP. Yes… I am the residential social worker that needs to care for the child because the child stays under my care but with certain matters. We do need help from the outside social worker to assist us with reunification services, to liaise with us to allow the child visit the family or parents visit the child in the centre. But we end up facilitating that process alone and that is not within our roles as residential social workers.*

The narratives reveal that in most cases, residential social workers solely take the responsibility to develop and implement IDPs for children in residential facilities, without the contributions from other role-players, in particular external social workers who placed the children in the CYCCs. Khoza (2011) confirms that the lack of coordination within the multi-professional setting is due to unclear role clarification and responsibilities, and a lack of cooperation between agencies. The author further affirms that the inaccessibility of a multi-disciplinary team can have a negative impact on the interventions that social workers should develop. Consequently, the author argues that the developmental needs of each child would not be fully assessed because of inadequate planning (Khoza, 2011).

Furthermore, the findings also revealed that most participants lack the knowledge about how to develop adequate IDPs and are not trained on how to use the IDP as a tool for assessment and planning. This is illustrated in the responses below:

Participant 4: *"I was not trained to do the IDP, was given a template to follow without explaining how to use this template to develop an IDP*.

Participant 9: *"No we were not trained on how to use IDP as a tool for planning the developmental needs of a child. Nevertheless, we are given a format with four columns to use when planning IDP's. These columns are named as generosity, mastery, independence and belonging"*.

The lack of training seems to be a recurring issue that plague service delivery to children and youth in care. Similarly, Tanur (2012) and Bond (2018) argue that social workers are probably not trained or empowered to develop IDPs. Hence, inadequate IDPs are developed

with a lack of knowledge, capacity and expertise. Khoza (2011) also made similar observations when they revealed that a lack of knowledge and lack of understanding of using IDPs was central to social workers' disinclination to use the tool.

Sub-theme 2.3 Lack of integrated approach

Within the context of this study, another observation made by the participants was a lack of integration of service between the various networks. Most of the participants articulated a similar view in regard to lack of a common vision and uniformity in terms of future long-term plans for the care leaver. One participant spoke to this challenge in the following account:

Participant 1: "*Another challenge is that you know in countries like the USA, they have a programme that follows an integrated approach for youth… independent living plan and the model is holistic in the sense that it promotes a shared vision and it covers a child education, accommodation and employment. Then in the countries like Australia, they use community development model for care-leavers when they leave a child and youth care centre and then it uses community structures to address social needs and empower individuals for independent living. Therefore, there is clarity. Let us come to African countries or South Africa in particular… There is no uniformity; there is no particular plan that one can follow. Therefore, you may find out that there is Noma here, and in other CYCC there is Thembi doing different things. When it comes to independent living programmes or services, and unfortunately there is no uniformity. CYCC's differ in the way they provide transitional programmes and we have different categories for youth why so…*"

The above finding concurs with a study conducted by Mamelani Projects (2013), whereby they show that services for care-leavers should be undertaken by a range of providers to deliver an integrated system of services. The project argues that an integrated system will allow for collaboration, interplay and relationship between these providers, and ensure optimum services for care-leavers. In addition, Torrico (2010b) asserts that social workers can use an integrated-system approach to service planning and delivery, to collaborate across these systems and meet the needs of care-leavers holistically as they transition out of care into independent living. In line with the empowerment theoretical framework that underpinned this study, DuBois and Miley (2010) assert that empowerment oriented social

workers need to collaborate with different service providers who can provide comprehensive services needed by the service users. Hence, social workers must work jointly with other related service providers to enable care leavers to get the best possible outcomes that can empower them to be self-sufficient and able to achieve their needs.

The participants not only revealed that they are affected by the lack of coordination and uniformity in delivering services, the participants revealed a lack of supervision that undermines their capabilities to provide support and prepare youth for independent living.

Sub-theme: 2.4 Lack of supervision

Most participants revealed that they receive inadequate supervision, that their caseloads and personnel developmental progress are hardly monitored. In addition, participants indicated that unqualified supervisors supervise them. The participants also expressed that without proper support and guidance from their supervisors, it becomes difficult for them to provide independent living programmes. In this regard, one participant said:

Participant 1: *"Supervisors are supposed to provide ideas on transitional living programmes… It is little and sometimes you wonder… She says I am supervising you, but she is blank. Do these supervisors employed based on experience or someone was just put in there in that position? We should have people when they come and say Noma. I am here to help you this is a developmental model this is what needs to be done. Clear guidance it's not there"….*

Moreover, in support of this view that supervisors or managers who are not social workers also offer insufficient supervision. One participant remarked as follows:

Participant 6: *"Like for me since I started here… I do not really receive supervision if I could say it like that because the supervisor that I have is not a social worker by profession. Therefore, why she is supervising me…Having a supervisor that is not a social worker* poses *a challenge because they do not know the guidelines and the standards that we work as social workers. Also, to provide you with proper supervision, what to do, so your kinda* [kind of] *like you're in a lonely space, working alone".*

Similar findings were alluded to by Ngwenya (2011), who found that supervisors do not provide proper supervision and guidance for social workers in social welfare services. Such practice is in contravention of the SACSSP's ethical guidelines (RSA, 1978), that mandates supervisors to provide continuous supervision, consultation with their supervisees with the view to evaluate their performance, and provide necessary support and guidance where needed.

In addition to the workplace challenges faced by the participants, the high turnover of external social workers from the NGO sector is another challenge that will be discussed next.

Sub-theme 2.5 High turnover of NGO social workers

The study revealed that the high turnover of external NGO social workers as a challenge that hampers service delivery to care leavers. According to the participants, this leads to a breakdown of continuity of planned programmes and interventions. Moreover, the participants reported that the high turnover contributes towards increased administrative duties and responsibilities for social workers in CYCCs. One participant explained the extent to which the high turnover of external social workers (case managers) affects their effort in meeting the needs of young people who are on the verge of being discharged from the care system as follows:

Participant 1: *"There is high staff turnover in organisations. So, like I said the independent living plan it is supposed to be a conscious purposeful process, it has to be a collaborative process between us and the case managers. So, what happens if a case manager leaves the organisation, it breaks that continuity. Because sometimes these organisations due to lack of funds they stay 3 to 4 months without replacing the social worker that has left. The importance of building and maintaining relationships it comes into place again instead of you helping the child, you are now busy as a social worker trying to build the relationship with the new case manager. The new case manager also has now to start again to build a relationship with the child. So the high turnover it is an issue because you now have to check does this child has an ID, to find other organisations that are willing to help but this child must go to SARS to obtain the tax-number because they need it. These duties are supposed to be the outside social worker if I call and am told that Lindi has resigned, should I just hold*

hands and wait for another social worker to come or take the child and go to apply for the tax number. Then I have to do it now, this simply means that I am forced instead of being a shared responsibility, I end up doing what the case manager is supposed to do".

Similarly, the findings of this study resonate with those of Ngwenya (2011), who mentions that the high turnover of social workers contributes towards backlogs and high administrative workload accumulated by residential social workers. As a result, social workers are overwhelmed and under pressure to focus on decreasing their caseload, therefore neglecting the developmental and transitional needs of care-leavers. In support, Hall and Proudlock (2011) confirm that the impact of a high caseload backlog and high administrative workload is a challenge for social workers and hinders them from rendering proper aftercare supervision to care-leavers.

In addition, the study further revealed that the non-filling of vacant posts for social workers is another major problem that contributes to the high caseload and extreme statutory administrative workload. The participants reported that they felt under pressure to meet the legislative requirements of alternative care placement and to review court orders, resulting in social workers focusing on completing and issuing court orders, rather than preparing the youth for discharge. The participants articulated their frustrations in the following statements:

Participant 8: *"Then the non-filling vacant post it's a big challenge, you do not understand what the story about the department is doing in regards to the shortage of staff, it is a big issue. I don't have a social work manager here the post is vacant, two senior admin vacant, few employees here and am expected to do that work, you work overtime, you work Saturdays and Sundays".*

Participant 6: *"The non-filling of post affects me a lot because I have to do some of the manager work, monitoring the staff members, doing the girl duties. So, it is too much and overwhelming. To be honest to you this year has been very bad on me, if I can say that".*

In support of these findings, Lombard (2008) confirms that the consequences of high caseload and high administrative responsibilities hinder social workers' efforts to render aftercare supervision to youth who have exited the care system. The author adds that these

challenges "undermine social workers' capacity to respond to social changes and deliver socioeconomic goals" (Lombard, 2008, p.64).

Over and above the high turnover experienced by social workers employed by the state, most practitioners have to deal with the complexity of reunifying immigrant children and youth with their families, as explored next.

Sub-theme 2.6 Cross-border family reunification of immigrant children

According to the participants in this study, some of the children and youth admitted in CYCCs are immigrants from across the borders of South Africa. The empirical findings revealed that social workers struggle with tracing families and reunifying children and youth, partly because they do not know the processes or the families cannot be easily traced due to socio-economic and political reasons why they left their countries of origin. The participants reported that they rely upon the International Social Services (ISS) section for assistance and the process takes longer, resulting in many immigrant children and youth staying in care for a longer periods in care without any permanency plan in sight because their family of origin cannot be traced. In this regard, one participant explained as follows:

Participant 2: "*The other challenges that we are facing are children from other countries. It is very difficult to discharge them from the centre, they might stay for 2 to 3 years, and it is difficult. This is because we are not equipped on how to trace and reunify them with their original families, if those families are not in South Africa".*

In support of this, another participant added:

Participant 4: *"The thing is we rely on ISS because we have to compile a report to them to explain that we have this child from another country then please help us. Then the ISS will have to send the report to that country to find a social worker to trace family members, do a background report and this can be done if the child still remembers where she's coming from. On the nutshell, the process is long and time consuming, resulting in children staying longer in the care without any reunification services rendered for them".*

As indicated above, many children and youth stay in care are prolonged due to the inability of residential social workers to early trace families of origin and be able to reunify them with the child or youth. This finding is supported by Sloth-Nielsen and September (2015), who confirm that residential social workers struggle with cross-border family tracing and reunification because they do not know about the processes and procedures to be undertaken. The authors further assert that due to the complexity of the process, the lack of capacity and resources prevent social workers from pursuing family tracing. This implies that these children will stay in CYCCs for longer periods.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Structural challenges

The most prominent structural challenges revealed in the study included lack of funding of independent living programmes and inappropriate facilities for fostering independence. These structural challenges will be discussed as sub-themes below.

Sub-theme 3.1 Lack of funding of Independent Living Programme (ILP)

The study findings revealed that lack of funding is a major challenge faced by CYCCs. Most participants indicated that CYCCs receive insufficient funding from the DSD, which affects the provision of adequate service and makes it difficult or even impossible to render ILPs. To illustrate this, two participants responded as such:

Participant 7: *"Really our funding is quite minimal because DSD do not fund the independent living programmes; it will be really difficult to even provide such programmes. So, it goes down to money, lack of funding. You cannot develop an independent living programme without sufficient fund, such programmes need allocated funding".*

Participant 10: *"The Children's Act provides certain guidelines but when it comes to transitional it's like we are expected to prepare youth for independent living. We are expected to develop our independent living programmes without funding given. This programme won't be possible without proper funding allocated specifically for it".*

The study revealed that lack of funding affect social workers' ability to provide discharge planning and reintegration programmes. Agere (2014) concurs that the lack of funding in CYCCs is a challenge that affects the provision of care and protection of children and youths in care systems. The author adds that the subsidies paid by the DSD are insufficient for meeting the daily costs of running a CYCC. In addition, Patel and Hochfeld (2012) assert that a lack of adequate funding is a major barrier that impedes the progression of developmental social welfare services in CYCCs.

In addition to the lack of funding of ILPs, this study also revealed infrastructural challenges associated with service delivery to children and youth placed CYCCs, as deliberated below.

Sub-theme 3.2 Inappropriate facilities for fostering independence

Within the context of this study, participants revealed a lack of appropriate facilities for training and preparing youths prior to being discharged into independent living. The participants indicated that some of the facilities are structured in a dormitory system, where all children are placed in one unit regardless of their age. This structure made it impossible to run independent living skills development programmes tailored for youths who are ready for discharge. In this regard, two participants shared the following views:

Participants 7: *"What happens now... Because honestly…, a curfew for a 5-year-old and a curfew for an 18-year-old is different. So, you cannot implement the independent living* [programme] *if they are in the same house because what they see is inequality, why this one is being treated differently and they forget that the is age gap*".

Participant 6: "W*e have tried the job shadowing during school holidays, where we took the older children to work for 2 weeks. Then we had an issue with the younger ones coming to ask why they are not included also. They also want to work and then they started jumping off the wall to go and see one of the older children who were working in the community".*

Furthermore, the findings revealed that outsourced services have played a crucial role in preventing young people from being practically prepared for independent living. In this case, the participants reported that most housekeeping services were outsourced, instead of

involving the youth in the life skills training. The participants explained that contractors were employed to provide services such as food preparation, cleaning and gardening. The participant felt that such practices deny the youth opportunities to learn skills that can place them in good stead to face the world. Below are the narratives from the participants:

Participant 3: *"But us in the institutions, here children are not allowed to do any chores because we have kitchen staff; we have laundry staff washing their clothes. Therefore, it becomes a very difficult exercise; if you also want to practical teach them. We do not do that like I said it remains a theoretical thing in their heads".*

Participant 5: *"No that is how outsourcing becomes a problem, cleaning is outsourced, the garden is outsourced, catering is outsourced. If they like to work in the kitchen they can still but we have to organise it properly and they have strict control over that because also the outsource company is here to make a profit and also you have to allow children freedom when they work in the kitchen and do things".*

Participant 9: *"Maybe sometimes you may find out that it doesn't mean that children are not coping outside, maybe in the comfort caused by the centre. They are not allowed to cook, to do wash their clothes, even mibede [bed] they do not do their beds, even to wash the dishes. They just wake up, take a bath then go to school and came back dinner is served".*

The findings revealed that youth in care lack opportunities to learn independent living skills whilst in care because most housekeeping is outsourced. Therefore, the participant concluded that not allowing youth to do house chores such as cooking, cleaning and gardening creates dependency and denies the youth opportunities to learn responsibility. These findings are supported by the Mamelani Project's (2013) observations that CYCCs partially create an environment where young people become dependent on the system. Consequently, young people tend to become dependent that creating an environment that fails to prepare and teach them to take responsibility for their own lives.

4.3.4 Theme 4: Successes experienced by social workers

Despite the lack of training, guidelines, supervision, funding, and an integrated approach, some of the participants seemed to have a different experience in working within the CYCCs. Some social workers reported some successes in working within the child and youth care system as already alluded to in previous section (See Sub-theme 1.3). The participants were asked to share the successful stories or positive outcomes encountered whilst working with care leavers. Most participants described how they were successfully in establishing permanent relationships with supportive adults, providing of post-secondary education such as career guidance, experiential learning and job searching training. These factors are discussed as sub-themes below:

Sub-theme 4.1 Establishment of relationships with supportive adults

The empirical findings revealed that establishing relationships with supportive adults through their host parents' program helps care-leavers to transition into independent living. The participants shared that the host parent's program had given many care-leavers permanent placements, as many host parents eventually became foster parents and/or adoptive parents. In this regard, the participants shared the following narratives about the positive outcomes associated with the host parenting program:

Participant 7: *"Through our hosting parent's programme, we have managed to find one of the girls an international adoption. She is really happy…, you can hardly recognise her. She is doing well, and the parents now and again donate. Yeah, that's much of our success stories".*

Participant 6: "*Oh we do have success stories. We have host program, whereby we have managed to find host parents for them and through this programme, our children have been placed into foster care placement. I have three of those who are now youth* [young adult] *but still, they're staying with those host parents as their foster parents and they've been doing very well".*

The findings revealed that some social workers were able to design host parenting programmes as a strategy to assist youth to develop long-term relationships that can continue to provide support beyond leaving the CYCC system. Mhongera and Lombard (2018) concur when they assert that a successful preparation of care-leavers entails establishing and maintaining positive, caring relationships that can afford care-leavers with the opportunities to secure permanent placement, continuing education, and assist with employment.

The results further revealed that maintaining social supportive networks is critical in connecting care-leavers with significant individuals, organisations and institutions that can assist in meeting their needs post discharge. To corroborate these findings, one participant reported as follow:

Participant 1: *"Right with significant of others, like I said when it comes to independent living plan whether a school teacher is. Remember teachers also play a great role, some may hear that Thandi is leaving a children's home and she is looking for a job. The first thing that they will consider is to employ her. We employ one of our girls when one of our staff went for maternity leave. Therefore, it is very important when it comes to building or maintaining relationships. Whether it needs to be teachers, case social worker managers, your residential social worker, your uncle, your aunt, be it is your boss, whoever comes into contact with it's very crucial that you maintain a positive relationship".*

These empirical findings are in line with Tanur (2012), who affirms that maintaining social support networks is of paramount importance because it creates opportunities for care-leavers to connect with a committed adult, who can provide support and guidance throughout the transition process. The author further indicates that care-leavers who had successfully transitioned out of the care system were typically those with a social support network that assisted them in meeting their financial needs and securing accommodation and employment (Tanur, 2012).

Sub-theme 4.2 Post-secondary education support

The study also revealed that care-leavers who were assisted in creating post-secondary education plans that ensured they could access higher education opportunities were better

prepared so move into independent living successfully. In this regard, one participant shared the following:

Participant 1: *So, the goal of all exit plan strategies as well as independent living plans is to try to help these kids to break the cycle of being vulnerable. To equip them on how best they can cope without the centre's help. How we do that…? Is through continued education…, for instance…, if the child has the capabilities to go to university, then we apply for NSFAS* [*National Student Financial Aid Scheme*]. *If the child is challenged academically then we look at courses like hairdressing, cleaning, early development child, assistance teachers, electrical engineering or home-based care that they can do and those that have intellectual disabilities there are other courses also on that can also help them and employ them afterwards*.

Furthermore, the empirical findings revealed that some participants assisted care-leavers to enrol in different tertiary institutions, to access bursaries, scholarships, learnerships and training opportunities. The information below depicts some of the successful experiences encountered by the participants in supporting youth leaving care with their post-secondary education:

Participant 10: *"Right we have girls that are doing training at this moment; two of them are at Free State University. One is doing psychology and the other one is doing accounting. We also have one of own girl that did project management at UJ. She is currently working, I don't know you saw channel 444 last year, whereby she was testifying if it wasn't for our organisation she doesn't think that she'll be having this kind of accommodation that she has and she didn't even think in the second that she would own her gate remote control".*

Participant 7: *"We have trained girls in Kempton Park, so we also have at the moment two girls at the college, a 20-year-old and 19-year-old. One is doing beauty manicure and pedicure and that is a success because you look at how best I can help this child, she loves makeup, can she earn a living. Then we approach Saint Mary's who were the ones who placed the child within our centre to help us to sponsor her for the beauty course and Saint Mary's agreed that they would also look for accommodation for her and since she was living*

near her sister in Kempton Park. We have paid R13 000.00 that was needed through the help of IDC Company for her training."

Participant 6: *"We also have another one that is finishing [in] November a home-based care course; it is through a collaborative effort between us and MASS organisation. They paid for the uniform and tuition fees and currently she is doing her training at Helen Joseph hospital. This is a success because she has repeated grade 10 more than four times".*

The empirical findings of the study revealed that social workers not only encourage care-leavers to further their studies but also assisted care-leavers to access educational opportunities, bursaries, scholarships and training. Similarly, Lesea's (2017) findings revealed that social workers put a lot of emphasis on encouraging care-leavers to complete their secondary and tertiary education. In addition, Diehl, Hones and Trivett (2011) affirm that care-leavers who receive educational support, whose social workers advocate on their behalf, are likely to accomplish their life's goals and sustain themselves after being discharged from the care system.

Sub-theme 4.3 Career guidance, experiential learning and job search

Based on the study's findings, only two participants viewed early preparation for career advancement seen as critical in that it enables youth to obtain employment and achieve successful life outcomes. The finding indicates that the participants assist youth through career exhibitions and job shadowing. In addition, they are provided with training on completion of CVs, job-searching skills and how to handle job interviews. The following remarks are accounts by the participants:

Participant 7: "*Then we also do job shadowing within the community, whereby our youth goes to work alone. So, before I start my process the youth is referred to our therapy centre for career assessment, where they are assessed by a psychologist so they have an idea of what strengths this youth has, and then we look at what they would like to do career-wise. Then there are given three options on what they can work better with. Then after that, they come to me as a social worker, I look at what is age is the child or youth and I develop recommendation according to the age. I asked them to do a CV, I show them the template, but*

I do not assistant to do it. I only tell them like you said it's supposed to be like this, so go and put it together in pen and paper. We have got a computer that they can use, so I give them a template that they can type it out. Then together with the psychologist we interview the youth so that she can have that feeling how it is going to be like when called for an interview. Then the child would want to do a job shadow, I am not going to look for a job for but needs to try finding a job because that is what happens outside. So, through the panel interviews, I will try to do the role-playing with the child to see what you would be doing when you are in an interview".

Participant 6: *"Through job training programme that we have in the centre. Last year, one of our girls was able to write her own CV, search for a job, then submitted her CV at Ned bank and fortunately she was employed and she is doing very well".*

These findings of the study are consistent with Höjer and Sjöblom (2010) who found that social workers who prepare young people for early career development play a vital role in those youth' self-perception as being competent and skilled young adults and not failures.

4.3.5 Theme 5: Training needs of social workers

The participants were asked what capacity building they need to empower themselves to successfully prepare youth leaving care to achieve independent living and their response showed that most participants were significantly in need of skills development training. The training needs of the participants are described below as sub-themes

Sub-theme 5.1 Training in terms of programme design and management

Within the context of this study, the findings showed that participants need to be trained on how to design, implement and evaluate programmes that prepare youth to make a successful transition into independent living. The following statements highlight this training need:

Participant 7: *"Now to think of it, I think programme design is very important because looking at us those who are working at the centres. We are obliged to design programmes that will cater for our children and youth. So if you have that skill or you have learnt how to*

design and manage the programme. I think it will be easier to design programmes that can also cater specifically to our youth leaving the care system".

Participant 3: "*We are somehow prevented to do such programmes. I would also appreciate if I get an opportunity to learn how to design a programme and manage it successfully. That would be a starting point. I guess!"*

This finding reveals that social workers lack the vital skills for developing programmes needed to prepare care-leavers for independent living. As such, most social workers need theoretical and practical training on programme design and management. This finding is supported by Patel (2015), who confirms that social work practitioners are expected to implement social investment programmes that address material needs, invest in human capabilities, and promote participation and social inclusion of individuals in the economy and society. The author further recommends the need for programme design skills training for practitioners to enhance their effectiveness and to build practitioners' confidence in applying new knowledge on intervention techniques.

Sub-theme 5.2 Training in terms of Independent Living Programme

Furthermore, the study revealed that social workers needed to be empowered in terms of independent living programme for care-leavers transitioning into independent living. The participants reflected this in the following accounts:

Participant 6: "*Like right now we know what to do to children from 0 to 18, so we need help and assistance on training on what is it that we can do with 18 years. Maybe there is a model or a manual that we can use, so if they can teach us or inform us where we need to go if the child is 18 and if we don't have the money we can explore 1 2 3 4. I am sure there are other children's homes that have been in existence that have an independent living programme. They have words they can bring into the workshop to give us ideas to what we can do to make our independent living programmes successful".*

Participant 7: "*All practitioners in the CYCCs need help from our government to assist us in terms of training since we are the institutional social workers that deal with youth because at*

the end of the day they are supposed to be reintegrated to the community. So if we do not have the training and how to prepare them put these youth are further risk. Therefore, we should have a conference whereby we talk, we share ideas on how to help our youth.

Participant 4: *"Firstly, I would love to get training more on what is independent living means. We need to understand what independent living is. What kind of programme, what kind of projects, what kind of activities we can put or we can use that may assist us in helping the youth leaving care to become responsible adult".*

The above findings revealed a need to train and empower DSD social workers on how to design, implement and evaluate ILPs. These findings are supported by Collie (2014), who states that for child and youth care practitioners to be effective and deliver professional work, education and training need to be embraced by all stakeholders as a cornerstone of the field. The author further adds that training and development of staff will promote effective practice, whereby practitioners will be empowered to make the necessary links between what they have learned and how they make use of that learning into practice. In addition, Collins, Arnodes and Clay (2007) note that training is often used in the social welfare services as an intervention to promote effective performance. Thus, in-service training and continued professional development should always be encouraged by management, as discussed in detail below.

Sub-theme 5.3 In-service training

The evidence from the study revealed that most participants needed continuous in-service training to be provided by the DSD as part of continuous professional development. The following narratives explain:

Participant 4: *"Hmm…, life coaching skills can be other training for other social workers working with youth leaving care".*

Participant 8: *"Also, we need to be taught more on networking because I'm a social worker here and a child needs to be able to be linked to services outside, such as health education or home Affairs. We should be able to link our youth with other companies because not all of*

our youth would end up at universities or colleges but we also need to help those with practical skills that can help them to earn a living once they are discharged from the system".

Participant 3: "*Like if we attend training in terms of independent living skills as to be able to assist the youth with necessary skills needed to cope outside the care centre".*

Participant 6: "*We can have in-service trainings to learn about relationships, how to maintain a relationship between a child and the parent, have forums that we discuss ways how children can learn from our centre and not becoming dependent to the system".*

Participant 7: *"We need to in-service training at all times, to keep up with changes and development within the social welfare system. Like now, if we were receiving training on how best can we support our youth before leaving care. This could help youth to be able to cope without us the care system".*

Participant 5: "*If they can train us, give us that channel to learn the process of reunification outside our country can also assist. That training I need, I don't know if I make sense to you, maybe you also need it".*

Participant 10: "*I strongly believe that social workers need to be capacitated in terms of training but focusing on practical things, there is lots of theory that we know and it reads very nicely but practically we do not put it into practice. I still believe that there is a lack of putting theory into practice, which is why I think some social workers would like to have practical training".*

In support, the National Planning Commission (2011) asserts that in-service training is important because not only will it grow individuals but also develop the organisation as a whole. In addition, Hoffman (2013) adds that building staff capacities could benefit the organisation through having more satisfied employees, improving growth outcomes, reducing high staff turnover, and improving the overall productivity of those working with children and youth in the care system.

4.4 SUMMARY

The study explored the capacity-building needs of social workers to prepare youth leaving CYCCs. In addition, the study explored the challenges and successes experienced by Ekurhuleni CYCC social workers who are preparing care-leavers for independent living. This chapter presented and discussed the empirical findings based on the themes and sub-themes that emerged in this study. As well, the empirical findings were corroborated with verbatim quotes and existing literature. The next chapter discusses the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5:

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on describing how the aim and the objectives of the study were achieved. This discussion is followed by an outline of key findings, conclusions and recommendations based on the empirical findings of the study. This chapter will conclude with the recommendations, for future research. This chapter begins with a recap of the research aim and objectives of the study.

5.2 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To recap, the study aimed to explore the capacity-building needs of social workers to prepare youth leaving CYCCs in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng Province. The following were the objectives of the study:

- To conceptualise and contextualise capacity-building of social workers, and independent living skills development programme design, implementation and evaluation from a literature perspective.
- To explore the challenges experienced by social workers in preparing youth leaving CYCCs.
- To explore the successes experienced by social workers in preparing youth leaving CYCCs.
- To investigate any training needs social workers may have with regards to designing, implementing, and evaluating independent living skills development programmes.

Objective 1: To conceptualise and contextualise the capacity-building of social workers, and independent living skills development programme design and implementation from a literature perspective

This objective was first achieved in the introduction and orientation chapter (See Section 1.5) where key concepts were defined to generate an understanding of the research topic.

Thereafter, the objective of the study was achieved through a literature review (See Chapter 2) which outlined and analysed the care-leaving phenomenon in the international, regional and national contexts. The review of the literature followed the Empowerment Theory (See Chapter 2, Section 2.2.) as a guiding framework for the study, showing that youth leaving care need to be empowered with knowledge and skills to become independent and self-sufficient once discharged from the care system and reintegrated into mainstream society. This objective was further achieved in Chapter 4 (See Section 4.3.1), where CYCC social workers discussed their understanding or lack of, and the concept independent living programme.

In this study, the empowerment theory was appropriate and relevant because it provided a better understanding of the roles of a social work practitioner in designing and implementing independent living programmes. The programmes that seek to empower care-leavers with knowledge and skills to achieve independence and obtain resources to solve any problems they may encounter in society and empower them to be self-reliance. In addition, the empowerment theory applied to the need of social workers for continuous professional development and/or in-service training (See Section 4.4.3).

Additionally, the literature review discussed care leaving to create understanding about the norms and standards performed in an international, regional and national context to compare practice models. In addition, the poor outcomes associated with care leaving were identified in terms of education, employment, accommodation, mental health and substance abuse (see Chapter 2, Section 2.3 and Section 2.4.) to demonstrate how lack of training of social workers about programme design and management, insufficient and ineffective programmes that aims to prepare youth leaving CYCC to successful transition into independent living . As result, youth are discharged ill prepared, which places them at further risk.

The literature review chapter (See Chapter 2, Section 2.5 and Section 2.6.) presented different legislative and policy frameworks that have been implemented internationally, regionally and locally to guide service provision for care-leavers. In addition, the interventions and ILPs designed to address the needs of care-leavers as they transition out of the care system into independent living were also identified and discussed.

Lastly, the literature review chapter (See Chapter 2, Section 2.7) described the roles and functions of social work practitioners in preparing care-leavers to successfully transition into independent living. These roles include counsellor, mentor, broker, networker, advocator and educator.

Objective 2: To explore the challenges experienced by social workers in preparing youth leaving child and youth care centres

This objective was achieved in Chapter 2 (See Section 2.8) whereby the challenges experienced by social workers in preparing youth leaving CYCCs were highlighted. In this section, the challenges discussed were the shortages of social workers, high caseload, high administrative workload, and a lack of funding of programmes from DSD.

Additionally, this objective was also achieved during the empirical findings in Chapter 4 (See Section 4.3.2). The empirical findings revealed several challenges experienced by social workers in providing interventions and services aimed at preparing care-leavers for independent living once discharged from the care system. The findings showed that social workers at Ekurhuleni CYCCs experience several challenges, including a lack of planning, inadequate IDP, lack of supervision, high turnover of NGO external social workers, shortage of social workers to provide ILPs, and the complexity of reunifying immigrant children and youth with their families. In addition, the findings revealed structural challenges experienced by social workers, which included lack of funding of ILPs and inappropriate facilities for fostering independence.

Objective 3: To explore the successes experienced by social workers in preparing youth leaving child and youth care centres

The third objective was achieved in Chapter 2 (See Section 2.8) whereby the successes experienced by social workers in preparing youth leaving care were highlighted. In this section, the successes included encouraging youth to continue furthering their education through registering in a tertiary institution while in the residential care system and sharing information about different financial options available to apply for scholarships and bursaries.

This encouragement could afford some of the youth education opportunities to further their studies.

The empirical findings (See Theme 4) addressed the successful experiences encountered by social workers in preparing youth leaving CYCC. Some of these included establishing permanent relationships with a supportive adults, the providing of post-secondary education, career guidance, experiential learning and job search skills training as factors that could promote successful transition into independent living.

Objective 4: To investigate any training needs social workers may have with regards to designing, implementing, and evaluating independent living skills development programmes.

This objective was achieved in Chapter 4 (see theme 4) whereby the empirical findings revealed that social workers need to be trained on how to design and manage ILPs Additionally, the need for in-service training as part of continuous professional development was identified as a priority to enable them to provide adequate service delivery. Furthermore, this objective is achieved in this chapter, where the key findings, conclusions and recommendations are presented below.

5.3 KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, key findings, conclusions and recommendations are presented according to themes and sub-themes that emerged in this study.

5.3.1 Theme 1: Social worker's understanding of Independent Living Programme (ILP)

- **Sub-theme 1. 1 Lack of formal training in programme design and management**

Key finding: The major finding from this current study shows that most residential social workers have little to no knowledge about how to design and manage programmes due to lack of formal training that should have been obtained during under-graduate or post-graduate training at university level or on the job training through in-service training and/or workshops.

Conclusion: Lack of training whether formal or as part of continuous professional development is detrimental to effective service delivery. Particularly, lack of training on programme design and management to prepare youth leaving care places youths at risk and compromises their successful integration into mainstream society.

Recommendation: The Gauteng DSD and the NGO sector should arrange and provide in-service training workshops to train social workers on how to design, implement and evaluate programmes. In addition, all social workers should put effort to enhance their individual professional development by registering for short-term courses to enhance their knowledge and skills in line with CPD principles as contained in SACSSP policy.

- **Sub-theme 1.2 Lack of theoretical understanding of Independent Living Programme (ILP)**

Key finding: It is evident that most of the participating social workers lack theoretical understanding about independent living programmes. They seemed to be hearing about this concept for the first time. They confused this concept with developmental programmes. On the contrary, the NGO social workers who work in children's homes were better equipped with information and knowledge about independent living programmes.

Conclusion: Residential social workers have not been oriented or theoretically trained on how to develop ILPs. They have a vague understanding about ILP. This is despite the fact that the legislation mandates social workers to provide ILP to prepare and support youth leaving the care system. As results, youth are made vulnerable when they are discharged from their care centres without being properly prepared for independence.

Recommendation: The Gauteng DSD should provide in-service training workshops in collaboration with the NGO sector to empower social work practitioners about independent living programmes.

- **Sub-theme 1.3 Lack of formal Independent Living Programme (ILP)**

Key finding: The finding from this study shows that most social work participants have not designed or implemented any ILP since working at a CYCC because they lack formal training on programme design and management. On the contrary, three social work participants reported that they have designed and are implementing informal ILPs to support and prepare youth for independent living. However, these informal programmes lack uniformity and are not guided by any policy document or theory.

Conclusion: There are no formal intervention strategies and programmes designed to address the needs of care leavers. Thus, residential social workers lack the expertise to address the needs of care leavers adequately. Even though some of residential social workers render informal ILPs but the programmes do not follow a standardised practice and are not theory-based. Such lack compromises service delivery to care leavers and further places them at risk.

Recommendation: The Gauteng DSD needs to develop manuals and guidelines on ILPs that will be used to equip all social workers on their roles and functions to prepare care-leavers for independent living. The government needs to put measures that enforce the laws that ensure that social workers are accountable for the provision of ILPs. In addition, all CYCC social service professionals should be regularly trained in providing transitional programmes, interventions, services and activities. Additionally, The SACSSP should enforce the policy of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to all social service professionals.

5.3.2 Theme 2: Workplace challenges

- **Sub-theme 2.1 Inadequate Planning**

Key findings: The major finding of this study shows that all residential social workers are not responsible of developing permanency plans, rather the external case manager who are social workers employed by DSD are fully responsible for developing permanency plans for each child/youth placed in care. However, they hardly compile the permanency plan upon admission of the child/youth. If they do, these plans often times lack adequate information regarding exit plan for youth leaving care.

Conclusion: CYCCs in Ekurhuleni region are accepting children in their care without adequate permanency plans as prescribed by the legislation. Permanency plans are not developed as required by the legislation. This is a serious indictment and dereliction of professional duties. The implication is that without proper planning, the youth are discharged from the care system ill prepared to face the world. As results, they struggle and are made vulnerable.

Recommendation: In this regard, permanency planning should be prioritised as a core function and the role of residential social workers. The residential social workers can play a leading role in putting in place adequate permanency plans. In addition, DSD should provide clear guidelines, indicators or benchmarks to guide successful permanency planning.

- **Sub-theme 2.2 Inadequate Individual Development Plan (IDP)**

Key findings: The finding shows that social workers were not prioritising the development of IDPs as mandated by the Act. Moreover, there is lack of collaboration between the key role-players. It is very seldom that all key role-players are present during the panel meetings where the IDPs are supposed to be discussed or are not working together to develop the IDP for a child or youth admitted to their care centre. The finding further shows that the role confusion between the residential social workers and external social workers contributes towards inadequate development of IDPs. Additionally, residential social workers lack the knowledge on how to develop adequate IDPs and are not trained on how to use the IDP as a tool for assessment and planning.

Conclusion: Residential social workers take sole responsibility for developing and implementing IDPs for children and youth in residential facilities, without contributions from other key role-players, in particular external social workers who initially placed the children in the CYCCs. Moreover, social workers do not develop adequate IDPs because of poor guidance, lack of knowledge and skills to do so. As a result, youth struggle to make successful transitions to adulthood because of a lack of proper assessment and planning that should have prepared them for independent living. This means their inclusion planning processes has been limited and this further places them at risk.

Recommendation: The Gauteng DSD needs to put measures in place to standardize practice that is in line with the legislation requirements to develop IDPs. Proper guidance and training must be provided to the supervisors and social workers. In addition, the Gauteng DSD to develop monitoring tools that social worker supervisors will use to enforce the use of IDP as an assessment and planning tool.

- **Sub-theme 1.3 Lack of integrated approach**

Key finding: The finding shows lack of integration of service between the various networks. The residential social workers articulated a similar view in regard to lack of a common vision and uniformity in terms of future long-term plans for the care leaver.

Conclusion: Social worker practitioners work in an uncoordinated and disjointed manner. Service delivery is not guided by the principles of collaboration and partnership. In addition, social work practitioners do not embrace a shared vision of ensuring that youth' integration into mainstream society is successful. The lack of uniformity is detrimental to care leavers' long-term goals to achieve independence and become self-sufficient.

Recommendation: Partnerships must be strengthened through the development of norms and standards to guide service delivery. In addition, the Gauteng DSD to monitor the inter-sectorial collaboration between various role-players to maximise the scarce resources and ensure uniform and optimum services are available to facilitate a successful integration of youth into mainstream society.

- **Sub-theme 1.4 Lack of supervision**

Key finding: The main finding shows that residential social workers receive inadequate supervision, their caseloads and personnel developmental progress are hardly monitored and they are supervised by unqualified supervisors who are employed based on experience and are unqualified to provide adequate supervision.

Conclusion: Lack of adequate professional supervision has a negative impact on social worker's roles and duties. Social workers who do not receive proper supervision may not be in a position to provide quality, effective and sufficient services to at-risk youth leaving care.

Recommendation: The Gauteng DSD needs to employ qualified supervisors that meet the merit standards to provide adequate supervision to their supervisees. In addition, the DSD needs to provide continuous supervision training to equip social work supervisors for their roles and tasks, and to enable them to further develop their skills and competences.

- **Sub-theme 1.5 High turnover of social workers**

Key finding: The major finding shows that the turnover of social workers from the NGO sector and inadequate staffing are detrimental to service delivery. This leads to a breakdown of continuity of planned programmes and interventions. Moreover, the high turnover contributes towards increased administrative duties and responsibilities for residential social workers.

Conclusion: It is evident that residential social workers are overworked and overwhelmed as a result of staff turnover. Shortage of manpower and high caseload is detrimental to staff morale and contributes to burn-out. Staff turnover contributes to the developmental and transitional needs of youth leaving the child and youth care system being neglected. Thus, this might have a negative impact on the future of these youth.

Recommendation: The Ekurhuleni CYCCs must have proper interim measures, such as proper handover processes and contingency plans in place to deal with staff turnover and inadequate staffing. The Gauteng DSD needs to employ more social auxiliary workers and child and youth care workers to be supportive to residential social workers. In addition, the Gauteng DSD should implement incentives schemes for social workers who perform above expectations.

- **Sub-theme 1.6 Cross-border family reunification of immigrant children**

Key finding: The finding shows that residential social workers admit immigrant children and youth from across the borders of South Africa. However, they struggle with tracing families and reunifying children and youth, partly because they do not know the processes or the families cannot be easily traced due to lack of resources to do so.

Conclusion: The immigrant children and youth in care stay an extended period in CYCCs due to the inability of the residential social workers to trace the family and reunifying them earlier role players like ISS or social workers from other countries for assistance.

Recommendation: Early interventions are required to trace families or next of kin of immigrant children and youth in the care system. Bureaucracy and red tape in terms of ISS should be minimised. In addition, residential social workers to be trained on the process and procedure of tracing and reunifying immigrant children and youth with their original families.

5.3.3 Theme 3: Structural challenges

- **Sub-theme 3.1 Lack of funding for Independent Living Programme**

Key finding: The finding shows lack of funding is a major challenge faced by CYCCs and that there is no allocated budget for independent living programmes to cater for youth leaving the care system.

C**onclusion:** Ekurhuleni CYCCs are affected by insufficient funding from DSD. The lack of funding affect social workers' ability to provide discharge planning and reintegration programmes. Consequently, care leavers are made vulnerable and they are thrust into the world without being prepared to face the world.

Recommendation: DSD to make provisions to fund the Independent living programmes. In addition, residential social workers from NGO sectors may enhance their fundraising strategies within their centres to receive funding from other donors to assist with the funding of ILPs.

- **Sub-theme 3.2 Inappropriate facilities for fostering independence**

Key finding: The finding shows lack of appropriate facilities for training and preparing youth prior to being discharged into independent living. Furthermore, the finding shows that because most housekeeping services such as food preparation, cleaning and gardening are outsourced. Most young people are ill-prepared for practically for independent living.

Conclusion: Residential social workers find it impossible to run independent living skills development programmes tailored for youth who are ready for discharge because of institutional living structures and outsourced services. Such practices tend to create an environment where youth become dependent. Such institutional structural systems disempower them to learn skills that could place them in good stead to face the world.

Recommendation: The Gauteng DSD consider cottage-style setup facilities or independent living sections within the centres, that will accommodate youth who are about to leave care so that they are prepared for independent living.

5.3.4 Theme 4: Successes experienced by social workers

- **Sub-theme 4.1 Establishment of relationships with supportive adults**

Key finding: The finding shows that establishing relationships with supportive adults through their host parenting programme helps care-leavers to successful transition into independent living. The host parenting programme had given many care-leavers permanent placements, as many host parents eventually became foster parents and/or adoptive parents.

Conclusion: The residential social workers were able to design host parenting programmes as an intervention strategy that afford youth the opportunity to develop long-term relationships that can continue to provide support beyond institutional care.

Recommendation: The hosting programme needs to be properly funded so that it can be sustained. Gauteng DSD to develop a database, where screened prospective foster parents are put in the database to be used to connect with youth as they age out of the care system to provide support and guidance throughout the transition process.

- **Sub-theme 4.2 Post-secondary education support**

Key finding: The finding shows that care-leavers who were assisted in creating post-secondary education plans that ensured they could access higher education opportunities could be better prepared to move into independent living successfully.

C**onclusion:** The residential social workers assist youth in creating post-secondary plans that assist them in accessing higher education opportunities. As a result, some care-leavers find themselves able to provide and sustain themselves after discharged from the care system.

Recommendation: Residential social workers need to network and build relationships with local higher learning institutions that can afford care-leavers with opportunities to access higher education. In addition, the DSD, through their Youth Development Programme, should cater for care-leavers with opportunities for training and employment.

- **Sub-theme 4.3 Career guidance, experiential learning and job search**

Key finding: The finding shows that youth are prepared for independent living through career exhibitions, job shadowing, compilation of CVs, job-searching skills and how to conduct themselves during job interviews to help youth gain knowledge, skills and experience.

Conclusion: The career exhibition, job shadowing, compilation of CVs, job-searching skills are crucial and needed to prepare youth to be able to integrate successfully and to become self-reliant.

Recommendation: Residential social workers need to focus on designing and implementing career guidance, experiential learning and job search projects to assist and prepare youth for employment once reintegrated into mainstream society.

5.3.5 Theme 5 Training needs of social workers

Key finding: The findings shows that residential social workers need to be trained on how to design, implement and evaluate programmes that prepare youth to make a successful transition into independent living.

Conclusion: Residential social workers lack the vital skills for developing programmes needed to prepare care-leavers for independent living. As such, most social workers need

theoretical and practical training on programme design and management. This training will ensure that youth are prepared for integrations and independency.

Recommendation: Gauteng DSD should offer in-service training and continued professional development of social workers to promote effective practice, whereby practitioners will be empowered with the necessary knowledge and skills on how to prepare care-leavers for independent living. In this regard, forums can be established to help social workers to share and learn from each other.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- There is a need to expand the research topic into other DSD regions in the Gauteng Province.

- Other studies can explore the challenges faced by external NGO social workers in preparing care-leavers for independent living.

- Further studies can focus on exploring the use of an integrated approach to independent living programmes and services.

- Other studies could focus on exploring existing independent living programmes to evaluate their effectiveness.

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APPENDIX A: DEPARTMENTAL HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

SOCIAL WORK
THE SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (SHCD)

DEPARTMENTAL HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SOCIAL WORK) CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

PROTOCOL NUMBER: SW/19/05/08

PROJECT TITLE: Exploring the capacity building needs of social workers to prepare youth leaving child and youth care centres in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng Province

RESEARCHER/S: Z Gamede (1822923)

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT: SHCD Social Work

DATE CONSIDERED: 09 May 2019

DECISION OF THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE: Approved

RATIFIED BY THE WITS HREC (NON-MEDICAL): 21 June 2019

EXPIRY DATE: 31 March 2020

DATE: 25 June 2019

CHAIRPERSON: Dr E Pretorius

Cc: Supervisor: Dr P Masinga

DECLARATION OF RESEARCHER(S)

To be completed in **DUPLICATE** and **ONE COPY** returned to the Administrative Assistant, Room 8, Department of Social Work, Umthombo Building Basement.

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorised to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the committee. **For Masters and PhD an annual progress report is required.**

SIGNATURE

15/07/2019
DATE

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF PERMISSION FROM DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

GAUTENG PROVINCE
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Enquiries: Dr. Sello Mokoena
Tel: 082 331 0786
File no.: 02/07/19

Dear Z Gamede

RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Thank you for your application to conduct research within the Gauteng Department of Social Development.

Your application on the research on ***"Exploring the Capacity Building Needs of Social Workers to Prepare Youth Leaving Child and Youth Care Centres in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng Province"*** has been considered and approved for support by the Department as it was found to be beneficial to the Department's vision and mission. The approval is subject to the Department's terms and conditions as endorsed on the 17th July 2019.

You have permission to interview departmental officials, conduct observations and access relevant documents where necessary.

May I take this opportunity to wish you well on the journey you are about to embark on.

We look forward to a value adding research and a fruitful co-operation.

With thanks

Ms Amanda Hartmann
Deputy Director General: Support Services
Date: 18/7/2019

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET

EXPLORING THE CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS OF SOCIAL WORKERS TO PREPARE YOUTH LEAVING CHILD AND YOUTH CARE CENTER IN EKURHULENI, GAUTENG PROVINCE.

Good day,

My name is Zandile Gamede, and I am a post graduate student registered for the degree MA in Social Work at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of the requirements for the degree, I am conducting research that explores the capacity building needs for social workers preparing youth leaving care at child and youth care centres. It is hoped that the study will contribute to knowledge on the challenges experienced by social workers when preparing youth leaving care at child and youth care centres, as well as to enhance social worker's practices in terms of programme design and implementation. The outcome of this study could result in empowering social workers in developing independent living skill programmes to assist youth leaving care to achieve independent living once discharged from the child and youth care centre system.

I therefore wish to invite you to participate in my study. If you accept my invitation, your participation would be entirely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty. There are no consequences or personal benefits of participating in this study. If you agree to take part, I would arrange to interview you at a time and place that is suitable for you. The interview will last approximately one hour. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time and you may also refuse to answer any questions that you feel uncomfortable with answering. If you decide to participate, I will ask your permission to tape-record the interview. No-one other than my supervisor will have access to the tapes. The tapes will be kept in a locked cabinet for two years following any publications

or for six years if no publications emanate from the study. A copy of your interview transcript without any identifying information will be stored permanently in a locked cupboard and may be used for future research.

Please be assured that your name and personal details will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be included in the final research report. The results of the research may also be used for academic purposes (including books, journals and conference proceedings) and a summary of findings will be made to available to participants on request.

Please contact me on 0721482002 or email 1822923@students.wits.ac.za, or my supervisor Dr Poppy Masinga on 0117178329, if you have any questions regarding my study. We shall answer them to the best of our ability. if you have any concerns and complaints about the study, please contact **Human Research Ethics Committee(Non-Medical)Contact Details**: Chairperson: Jasper.Knight@wits.ac.za or the administrator: Ms Shaun Schoeman Tel 011 717 1408 Shaun.Schoeman@wits.ac.za**OR**if you have any concerns and complaints about the study, please contact **Human Research Ethics Committee(Medical) Contact Details:** Chairperson: peter.cleaton-jones1@wits.ac.za or the administrators: Ms Zanele Ndlovu/ Mr Rhulani Mkansi/Mr LeboMoeng Tel 011 717 2700/2656/1234/1252, HREC-Medical.ResearchOffice@wits.ac.za.

Thank you for taking time to consider participating in the study.

Yours sincerely

…….

Zandile Gamede

APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANT

EXPLORING THE CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS OF SOCIAL WORKERS TO PREPARE YOUTH LEAVING CHILD AND YOUTH CARE CENTER IN EKURHULENI, GAUTENG PROVINCE.

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY

I .....hereby confirm that I have read the participant information sheet and fully understand the nature, aim and objectives of the study. I agree to participate in the study and I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to answer any particular questions that I feel uncomfortable with or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. I understand that there will be no financial benefits or remuneration for participating in the study. I also understand that although the information from this report may be published, my identity will remain confidential and all raw data will be destroyed two years after publication of the final report or six years after the completion of the study.

Participant signature: ……Date:……..

Researcher's signature: .Date……

APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO-TAPING

EXPLORING THE CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS OF SOCIAL WORKERS TO PREPARE YOUTH LEAVING CHILD AND YOUTH CARE CENTER IN EKURHULENI, GAUTENG PROVINCE.

CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO-TAPING OF THE INTERVIEW

I..... hereby give my consent to be tape-recorded during the interview process. I understand that my confidentiality will be maintained at all times and that the tapes will be destroyed two years after any publication arising from the study or six years after completion of the study if there are no publications.

Participant signature: ……Date:……..

Researcher's signature: …….…….Date……..

APPENDIX F: SEMI-SRTUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

EXPLORING THE CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS OF SOCIAL WORKERS TO PREPARE YOUTH LEAVING CHILD AND YOUTH CARE CENTER IN EKURHULENI, GAUTENG PROVINCE.

Biographical information

Age	
Gender	
Qualification	
Years of experience in working with youth leaving CYCC	
Years of experience	

Interview questions

1.	How long have you been working with youth leaving care?	
2.	Please tell me about transition programmes that prepare youth leaving care for	

	independent living?	
3.	Please elaborate on the role you play to prepare youth leaving care to achieve independent-living?	
4.	What challenges do you encounter in performing your functions when preparing youth leaving care for independent living, if any?	
5.	What success do you encounter in performing your functions when preparing youth leaving care for independent living, if any?	
6.	What capacity-building do you need to empower yourself to successfully prepare youth leaving care to attain independent-living?	