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**University of Cape Town**

**Department of Social Development**



**“EXPLORING THE KEY SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES FACING  
YOUTH REFUGEES IN THE WESTERN CAPE.”**

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**Supervisor:** Dr Connie O’Brien

**A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the award of the degree of Master of Social Science in Social Development.**

**COMPULSORY DECLARATION**

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## ABSTRACT

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This study explored the key socio-economic challenges facing youth refugees in the Western Cape. The study was carried out on a purposive sample of twelve youth refugees. In addition, six key informants from various institutions working with refugees in the Western Cape were also interviewed. The study adopted a qualitative exploratory approach using a semi structured interview schedule for face to face interviews with the participants. The key findings generated from the refugees' and key informants' perceptions revealed the following:

- That seven youth refugees and four key informants indicated that being unable to speak English or a South African language affected their ability to access documentation, find jobs and exposed them to anti-foreigner sentiments.
- That all twelve refugees indicated that they would continue with their education if they had bursaries (nine were not doing further studies at the time of this research).
- That despite negative employer experiences, eleven youth refugees were employed at the time of this research.
- That all youth refugees and four key informants indicated that finding accommodation was extremely difficult since rentals were high and security was a problem.
- That most youth refugees did not feel protected by the police despite a key informant from the Police Department claiming that they do protect refugees.
- That eleven youth refugees and all six key informants were satisfied with access to health services.
- That regardless of several grants that refugees are entitled to, the twelve youth refugees were uninformed and therefore did not apply.
- That nine youth refugees felt that their personal character/work ethic/resilience enabled them to deal with the socio-economic challenges.
- That most youth refugees received support from friends, families and NGOs.
- That all youth refugees despite being poorly treated by the Department of Home Affairs saw it as a resource for obtaining their papers.
- That most refugees were ill informed about their rights, policies and laws pertaining to refugees.
- That the refugees and key informants placed responsibility for rights education on the Departments of Home Affairs.
- That eight youth refugees felt there is a need for bursaries and scholarships.

The main recommendations were:

- That refugee NGOs should work more closely with tertiary institutions such as the University of Cape Town to facilitate refugees' access to bursaries.
- That the government should include youth refugees in the education budget.
- That further research be undertaken in all provinces using a mixed methodologies approach.

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## DEDICATION

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I would like to dedicate this minor dissertation to my grandmother Flora ‘Nyambose’ Shawa and my late grandfather Austin ‘Marambika’ Shawa. Thank you for making me understand that *‘education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world’*.

University of Cape Town

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

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|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| CBRCYC..... | Coordinating Body of Refugee Communities: Youth Committee |
| CORMSA..... | Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa      |
| CTRC.....   | Cape Town Refugee Centre                                  |
| DHA.....    | Department of Home Affairs                                |
| MSF.....    | Medecins Sans Frontiers                                   |
| NGO.....    | Non-governmental Organization                             |
| OAU.....    | Organization for African Unity                            |
| SAPS.....   | South African Police Services                             |
| SAHRC.....  | South African Human Rights Commission                     |
| UCT.....    | University of Cape Town                                   |
| UCT LC..... | University of Cape Town Law Clinic                        |
| UN.....     | United Nations  |
| UNDP.....   | United Nations Development Programme                      |
| UNHCR.....  | United Nations High Commission for Refugees               |

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the introduction to the research, statement of the problem, context of the study, rationale and significance of the study, the research topic, the research questions and the research objectives will be presented. Lastly, this chapter will highlight the research assumptions, clarify the key concepts used in the study, explain the limitations of the study, reflexivity and outline the structure of the research report.

Refugees have been the focus of considerable concern in recent years and at the receiving end of a range of government and community responses. Schaeffer (2007) claims that the twentieth century could be called with relative certainty 'the century of the refugee'. Two world wars and a large number of regional and civil wars as well as wars of independence, have resulted in millions of refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons. During its fiftieth anniversary, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) chronicled the most significant refugee movements between 1950 and 2000 (UNHCR, 2011). Schaeffer (2007) asserts that in early 2003, not less than 35 per cent of the 20.6 million asylum-seekers, refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR were hosted by the 41 Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Of the 10.5 million refugees under UNHCR's mandate, 29 per cent were hosted by Sub-Saharan Africa alone (Schaeffer, 2007).

South Africa, in particular, hosted a total of 143,000 asylum seekers and refugees by the end of 2004, comprising of 115,400 asylum-seekers and 27,600 refugees (UNHCR, 2005). However, the country received more than 207,000 individual refugee applications in 2008 and a further 222,300 in 2009, representing nearly a four-fold rise in both years over the numbers seen in 2003. The UNHCR (2005:5) estimated that of the 115,400 applications in 2004, as much as 80 % originated from countries in which there are no conflicts. The Department of Home Affairs argues that some of these people who applied were economic migrants using the system as a way to legitimise their stay in the country (UNHCR, 2005).

The UNHCR (2011) argues that these dramatic increases have been caused by the immigration of Zimbabweans into South Africa and migrations from the East and the 'Horn of Africa' and 'Great Lakes regions'. Many of the immigrants include refugees and asylum-seekers, but also other individuals seeking to legalize their stay in South Africa for reasons not related to protection (CASE 2003 cited in UNHCR, 2005).

Refugees, particularly minors and the youth staying in South Africa face many socio-economic challenges with regards to integration, housing and settlement, employment, education, health and social assistance not only upon their arrival but also during their stay in the country. According to the 2003 National Refugee Baseline Survey in South Africa, commissioned by UNHCR with financial support from the Japan International Cooperation Agency, major obstacles to the socio-economic potential and self-reliance of refugees include the delayed issuance of refugee identity documents and a lack of access to other available government services such as primary education, health and social welfare services (National Refugee Baseline Survey, 2003).

The purpose of this study therefore was to explore the key socio-economic challenges facing youth refugees in the Western Cape of South Africa. By 'youth' reference is being made to those refugees that fall in the age bracket of 15 to 35 as stated in the African Youth charter (2006). The Coordinating Body of Refugee Communities: Youth Committee (CBRCYC) indicated that detailed socio-economic information on the challenges of youth refugees is increasingly needed for needs based planning, operations monitoring as well as for advocacy and external information purposes (CBRCYC, 2009).

## **1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The UNHCR (2005) states that the number of youth refugees and asylum seekers entering South Africa, particularly from other parts of Africa, has risen steadily since the advent of democracy in 1994 and the proliferation of conflict in other parts of the continent. Apart from anecdotal information, there is very little that is known about these communities, their experiences in South Africa, or their priority needs and concerns (UNHCR, 2005). This is the case, since no extensive research has been carried out especially in relation to the challenges youth refugees face in South

Africa. In the absence of such studies, there will be inadequate information to develop appropriate strategies to mitigate such challenges.

This lack of reliable data on youth refugees and asylum seekers has been acknowledged as a fundamental problem by many organisations such as the UNHCR and Africa Unite Organisation (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2010). In particular, these organisations have identified this problem as the reason for their inability to quantify the priority needs and concerns of their constituency, and the deleterious effect this has on their ability to strategize on socio-economic development in the context of limited resources and capacity (National Refugee Baseline Survey, 2003).

Drawing on various reports and insights gained from the Refugee Centers, the researcher saw the need to investigate challenges facing youth refugees from their own perspective.

## **1.2 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY**

This section provides the background information on the Western Cape which forms the context for this study.

The Western Cape is one of the nine provinces that make up the Republic of South Africa. The Western Cape is located in the south-western part of the country and is the southernmost part of the continent of Africa. Before 1994, under the apartheid regime, it formed part of the Cape Province. In 1986, the South African government scrapped influx control and 'blacks' including refugees, poured into the Western Cape seeking job opportunities. They consequently started erecting shanty towns. The influx was so great that Western Cape soon became one of the fastest growing areas in South Africa (Marindo, Groenewald, and Gaisie, 2008).

Marindo, et al. (2008) argue that ever since then, the province has been experiencing high population growth which may be ascribed largely to positive net migration. Between 2001 and 2006, it is estimated that the province lost just 120,000 people due to out-migration, but gained three times more through immigration producing a net migration gain of more than 240,000 people. Today, the province has a land surface of 129,307 square kilometers and an estimated population of about 5.3 million of which the colored population is predominant. To a certain extent it is due to this population growth that the province has a crime rate far above the national

average. (Marindo et al, 2008). It is partly due to this high migration gain that the researcher chose this location of study as well as the fact that the researcher is based in the Western Cape.

### **1.3 RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Millions of youth refugees throughout the world continue to experience deprivations of various kinds. Many of these children and young people sometimes unaccompanied grow up in refugee camps with little hope for a better life (CBRCYC, 2009).

Even though the actual statistics on the number of youth refugees in the world is problematic to estimate, Harris (2001) states that usually more than half of any refugee population are children and young people. The Women's refugee commission (2012) states that young people ages 10 to 24 make up over 30 percent of the world's 42 million displaced by armed conflict. In the same way, in South Africa the numbers of youth refugees is unknown and undocumented, the researcher thinks this may be due to the fact that youth refugees may have entered South Africa illegally, or may have stayed beyond their visa expiration date, or engaged in illegal activities. Nevertheless, the National Refugee Baseline Survey (2003) indicates that in general the asylum seeker and refugee population in South Africa tends to be relatively young. UNHCR (2005) continues to note with concern the challenges and risks that these young people face in South Africa.

In many countries, as is the case in South Africa, unaccompanied minors and youth refugees face restrictive asylum regulations that hinder the development of their human potential and capacities. They are not included in national development plans and they are usually excluded from activities undertaken by development role players. Non-governmental organisations and concerned governments do not systematically incorporate youth refugees' needs into transitional and recovery plans (National Refugee Baseline Survey, 2003). With the increasing number of youth refugees and the unemployment crisis for young people in South Africa in general, this situation could fuel conflicts. Hence it is necessary to address the needs of youth refugees.

Some of the reasons why youth refugees are excluded in social and economic development plans is largely due to lack of information, lack of political will and or resentment from the host country nationals. Research has been done with regards to challenges that refugees in South

Africa face but there is lack of extensive research concerning youth refugees in particular. This study therefore was carried out for three reasons:

- To provide insights into the socio-economic challenges facing youth refugees from the perceptions of the refugees themselves.
- To lobby for an improvement in policy concerning youth refugees by providing the Refugee Organisations with a summary of the key findings so that they could advocate for change.
- To fulfill the obligations of the researcher's academic degree.

#### **1.4 THE RESEARCH TOPIC**

The research topic is: **'Exploring the key socio-economic challenges facing youth refugees in the Western Cape'**.

#### **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The main research questions are:

1. What are the key socio-economic challenges faced by youth refugees in the Western Cape?
2. Which support systems and resources do the youth refugees use to address their socio-economic challenges?
3. What are the youth refugees' knowledge of legislative frameworks and policies that are already in place to deal with their socio-economic challenges?
4. What are the refugees perceptions on what should be put in place to deal with various socio-economic challenges they face?

#### **1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the study are:

1. To investigate the key socio-economic challenges faced by youth refugees in the Western Cape.

2. To find out which support systems and resources youth refugees use to address their socio-economic challenges.
3. To examine whether youth refugees are aware of legislative frameworks and policies that are in place to deal with their socio-economic challenges.
4. To identify youth refugee's perception on strategies to address various socio-economic challenges they face.

## **1.7 RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS**

- That youth refugees were facing socio-economic challenges with regards to their education, housing and settlement, health, employment and access to social assistance in Western Cape.
- That the support systems and resources may or may not be adequate for youth refugees.
- That youth refugees may have limited knowledge of legislation, policies and rights pertaining to their well-being.
- That youth refugees and NGOs may have their perceptions of what should be put in place to address the socio-economic needs.

## **1.8 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

The following key concepts will be clarified:

- **A Qualitative Exploratory Study**

A qualitative exploratory study was to be used. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) a qualitative exploratory study is a method whereby the researcher is able to collect data and explain phenomena more deeply and exhaustively.

- **Perceptions**

Mchane and Glinow (2003), describes perception as the process of receiving information, interpreting and making sense of the world around us. The world view, that is, perceptions of the refugees were taken into account.

- **Youth**

At a global level, the United Nations defines youth as any person ranging in age from 15 to 24 years (The World Programme of Action for Youth, 1997). However, the African Union in the African Youth Charter defines youth or a young person as; a person ranging from the ages of 15 to 35 years (The African Youth Charter, 2006). For the purpose of this study, the African Youth Charter's definition was used since the research was done in a country that is a signatory to the African Youth Charter and a member state of the African Union. Furthermore, given the fact that African youth have been exposed to socio-economic developmental challenges, it was ideal to extend the youth age range to 35. More specifically youth refugees 18 to 35 were interviewed.

- **Socio-Economic Challenges**

According to the United Nations (2011:1) '*socio-economic challenges are all those obstacles that affect one's social and economic well being*'. These challenges are related to: education, health, housing and settlement, population, social service, employment, water supply and sanitation, literacy, mortality and mobility among others. The study however, focused on the following key socio-economic challenges: education, health, employment, housing and settlement and social assistance.

- **Refugee**

South Africa is one of the many countries worldwide that has legally committed itself to the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers. The South African Refugee Act 130 of 1998 in Chapter 3 states that a person shall be recognized as a refugee for the purpose of the Act if : '*owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing or disrupting public order in either part of the whole of his or her country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his or her place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his or her country of origin or nationality*' (The Refugee Act 130, 1998).

However, the UN defines a refugee in the simplest way as '*any person genuinely at risk of serious human rights violations in his or her country of origin, who both needs and deserve protection*' (The Draft Refugee White Paper, 1998). Both these definitions are taken into account in this study.

- **Asylum Seeker**

The terms refugee and asylum-seeker are often used interchangeably in the literature. The UNHCR however, defines an asylum-seeker as someone who says he or she is a refugee, but whose claim has not yet been definitively evaluated (UNHCR, 2005). In the context refugee/asylum seeker has been interchangeably used by participants in this study. The South African Department of Home Affairs argues that the terms are similar as they all refer to *'people who have been forced to leave their country of origin for various reasons such as war, violent political unrest or genocide'* (South African Department of Home Affairs, 2011:1).

However, the researcher made absolutely sure that only youth refugees with legal refugee status were interviewed.

- **Support Systems and Resources**

In this study, support systems and resources pertained particularly to organisations and government departments that address the socio-economic challenges of refugees living in the Western Cape. The organisations and government departments that formed part of the study were the Cape Town Refugee Centre (CTRC), Scalabrini Centre, the Haven Night Shelter, the University of Cape Town (UCT) Law Clinic, the South African Department of Home Affairs and the South African Police Service.

- **Legislative Frameworks and policies**

By legislative frameworks and policies the researcher refers to the Charter of the United Nations, the UNHCR formation and 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees, the Organization for African Unity (OAU), Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, the South African 1998 Refugee Act, the South African 1998 Draft Refugee White Paper, the South African Constitution and the Immigration Act of 2002. These legislative frameworks and policies will be discussed in the literature review.

## **1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

This section will discuss the ethical considerations that were adopted during the study as outlined in De Vos (2002) to address the question of ethical decision making.

- **Voluntary Participation**

A researcher has an obligation to make sure that participation should at all times be voluntary and no one should be forced to participate in a project (Rubin and Babbie 2005:71) cited in De Vos (2009). The researcher made sure that all participants were asked to voluntarily participate in the study. If participants felt uncomfortable or not interested they were not coerced to participate. All the participants were told the purpose and the objectives as well as the potential benefits of such a study without raising any unrealistic expectations.

- **Informed Consent**

According to De Vos (2009) participants in a study should be fully aware of all aspects of the study in order to make informed decisions to participate or not. The researcher made sure that all participants were told prior to the study what was required of them during the research. Obtaining informed consent was necessary because it implied that all possible or adequate information on the goal of the investigation, the expected duration of the participants involvement, the procedures which was to be followed during the investigation; and the possible advantages, disadvantages and dangers to which participants may be exposed, as well as the credibility of the researcher was rendered beforehand to potential subjects and their legal representatives (Royse 2004: 52-54 cited in De Vos, 2009).

- **Deception of Subjects**

Struwig and Stead (2001:69) cited in De Vos (2009) refer to deception as misleading of participants, deliberately misinterpreting facts or withholding information from participants. All information relating to the study was clearly communicated to the participants without any deception. Verbal/written instructions were given to the participants in a clear and unambiguous manner.

- **Violation of Privacy**

De Vos (2009) defines privacy as keeping to oneself that which the participant does not wish to be passed on. The researcher made sure that if participants were not willing to respond to some questions they were not forced to do so. Participants were also given the opportunity to switch off the tape recorder if they wished. In addition, unnecessarily probing of details not central to this study was not done. Interviews were also conducted in a private space.

- **Confidentiality and Anonymity**

The researcher also made sure that confidentiality of information and the anonymity of the participants were emphasised at all times, as was ethically required (De Vos, 2002). It is also important to note that aliases have been used in this research report in order to protect the identity of the participants.

- **No Harm to Subjects**

The researcher made sure that no physical harm occurred and tried at all times to avoid any emotional harm which could be inadvertently aroused due to probing around questions.

- **Debriefing of Participants**

The researcher made sure that if any of the participants was visibly upset, time was taken to debrief the participant after the interview. If there was a need for referral for professional counseling the researcher contacted the NGO director and asked for referral source.

- **Competence and Actions of the Researcher**

The researcher has completed an Honours level research course and project. Guidance from the supervisor was always available.

## 1.10 REFLEXIVITY

De Vos (2007) refers reflexivity to:

*‘The ability to formulate an integrated understanding of one’s own cognitive world, especially understanding one’s influence or role in a set of human relations. It is a quality of meta-cognition, thinking about one’s perceptions and ideas’ (De Vos, 2007:363).*

The researcher believes that youth refugees are faced by tremendous socio-economic challenges. However, due to xenophobic attacks, refugees may be scared to reveal all their experiences and challenges. The researcher would assure the participants at all times that all the information collected was confidential and that their identities would be protected. Being a foreign student, the researcher was aware of her own biases and used supervision to deal with her subjective ‘insides’ perspective. The researcher is a Malawian migrant and very aware of the needs of the refugees coming from various countries to South Africa.

Being a novice researcher, some anxiety about fieldwork was present but the researcher saw this as a challenge to further develop research skills. Gaining respondents participation, travelling to these NGOs and the time constraints may prove to be a challenge.

## 1.11 STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

The research report will consist of five chapters:

- Chapter One: Introduction to the research.
- Chapter Two: Literature Review.
- Chapter Three: Research Methodology.
- Chapter Four: Presentation and Analysis of Findings.
- Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations.

## **1.12 CONCLUSION**

The chapter introduced the research by presenting statement of the problem; context of the study; rationale and significance of the study; the research topic; the research questions and the research objectives; research assumptions; clarification the key concepts; limitations of the study; reflexivity and outlined the structure of the research report. The following chapter discusses the literature review.

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## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

---

### **2. INTRODUCTION**

In discussing the conceptual framework for the study it was necessary to review other similar studies and various theoretical models pertinent to this study. The review will be structured as follows: theoretical models and approaches; demographic profile of refugees in South Africa; socio-economic challenges facing youth refugees in South Africa; legislative frameworks and policies and support systems and resources used by youth refugees in the Western Cape.

#### **2.1 THEORETICAL MODELS AND APPROACHES**

This study on youth refugees was underpinned by various theories and approaches that together offer a holistic appraisal. There are many theories and approaches that can potentially guide this area of concern. This study focused on the African Refugee Theory, the Social Exclusion Theory, the Capability Approach and the Human Rights Approach. All these theoretical paradigms will be adopted in order to deepen understanding about the refugee situation.

##### **2.1.1 The African Refugee Theory (Rogge: 1994)**

According to the African Refugee Theory expounded by Rogge (1994) cited in Collins (1996) the complex interplay of socio-economic factors which can lead to refugee migrations does not always affect each migrant in the same manner. The varieties of different refugee migrations are as complex as the situations which can create them. People will always have different perceptions of exactly what they consider a threat to them. Collins (1996) argues that in some cases the mere rumour of instability can be enough to drive people to move. In other situations, people do not flee until they have been faced with violent conflicts. The African Refugee Theory stipulates that, in the African context, the line between political and economic repression is often blurred, many refugees could (and are) classified as economic migrants. In other cases, ecological disasters can be the cause of mass migrations. However, this latter causation for migration is usually ignored by contemporary definitions (Collins, 1996:17) such as that used in this study.

Rogge (1994) cited in Collins (1996) developed a refugee typology and identified two classes of involuntary migration: forced and impelled. Though, it should be noted that the terms forced and impelled were originally introduced into the migration literature by Petersen (1958: 261) cited in Shain (2005). According to Petersen, the difference between these two classes of migration lie in the amount of free choice or will an individual has when they are involved in forced migration. Forced migrants and refugees are expelled from an area by an external force, such as a government. Thus, the people involved have absolutely no choice in the matter of their removal. Petersen gave an example of Africa Ugandan Asians expelled by the Amin regime in the 1970s, or South Africans forcibly removed to homelands under Apartheid (Petersen, 1958, cited in Shain, 2005).

Petersen (1958) cited in Collins (1996) argued that impelled migrants and refugees, on the other hand, do retain some degree of choice regarding their possible flight. Before making the decision to migrate, impelled migrants have the opportunity to weigh the factors involved and then make a choice between moving or remaining in the face of an external threat. African examples of impelled migration include Somalis or Rwandese fleeing to neighbouring states. However, most recent theorists such as Rogge (1994) cited in Collins (1996) argue that most, but not all, African refugees fall into the impelled category. The motivation for a refugee's migration becomes important when their legal status is determined. According to Rogge's typology, some types of refugees are more likely to obtain official recognition than others. Ecological refugees, for example, almost never receive official international recognition, though they do sometimes receive international assistance, such as Malians in Niger and Tigrayans in Sudan (Rogge, 1994 cited in Collins, 1996).

### **2.1.2 The Social Exclusion Theory (Silver: 2007)**

The next theory that is to be discussed is the theory of 'Social Exclusion'. According to Silver (2007) social exclusion refers to the dynamic process of being shut out, fully or partially from any social, economic, political or cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in a society (Silver, 2007). While poverty is a key aspect of social exclusion, there are a range of other dimensions that are relevant when considering the situation of refugees. Thus despite poverty alleviation strategies to address basic needs, many people may still be vulnerable

due to a host of reasons. Despite social security nets there is a group that may still be excluded from the mainstream benefits of the society. These groups remain marginalized either because they do not have the capacity to access resources, or they are prevented from accessing resources due to systemic/structural inequalities or due to political game playing. The theory therefore highlights the sources of inequality in a society which often increases poverty (Davids, Theron and Maphunye, 2009).

Refugees face social exclusion tactics when accessing documents is made difficult, when they are not proficient in English, and when they experience xenophobia. Without English proficiency for example, refugees are excluded from accessing employment, education, services and social support. The National Refugee Baseline Survey (2003) reported that a further dimension of refugee exclusion is the exclusion from entitlements associated with particular visa categories for refugees and asylum seekers. These prohibit or limit access not only to employment, health services, housing, education and income support, but also to settlement services and even to family reunion. The temporary nature of some of the visas means people spend their lives waiting, in fear of being sent back against their will (National Refugee Baseline Survey, 2003).

Those who are not sent back home may continue to be marginalized by their host communities. It is important to note that xenophobia and other forms of discrimination can cut off valuable life-lines that refugees need. Peberdy (2002) identifies that negative attitudes to non-nationals could prompt service providers to exclude all categories of migrants including refugees from services they are entitled to and desperately need.

According to Silver (2007) the theory of Social Exclusion advocates the need for inclusion of refugees, which refers to effective participation, both socially and economically by refugees in all aspects of society. Silver (2007) argues that inclusion relates to the capacity of an individual to consume (purchase goods and services), produce (participate in socially or economically valued activities), politically engage and socially interact. At its optimum, social inclusion is about having access to opportunities such as education and employment, options and choices in life and having the personal capacity, self confidence, individual resilience to make the most of one's life and mostly accepting that refugees ought to be treated in all ways as people with rights (Silver, 2007).

### **2.1.3. The Capability Approach (Sen: 1999)**

The third approach to be discussed in this section is the Capability Approach. Sen (1999) advocates that development should be seen as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy. He further states that, people have the freedoms or valuable opportunities known as capabilities to lead the kind of lives they want to lead, to do what they want to do and be the persons they want to be, if they are given opportunities. What a person can do or be makes up the functions and this potential of functions is what is called capabilities.

According to Sen (1999) cited in Robeyns (2005) there are five distinct freedoms which help to advance the general capability of a person which are: political freedom, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective security. These freedoms depend also on other determinants such as social and economic arrangements for example facilities for education and healthcare as well as political and civil rights. The capabilities help one to do some basic things that are necessary for survival and which helps one to escape poverty (Sen 1999 cited in Robeyns, 2005).

Development therefore according to Sen (1999) should be a process of expanding the freedoms that are enjoyed by the members of society. Lack of substantive freedoms relates directly to economic poverty, which robs people of the freedom to satisfy hunger, to achieve sufficient nutrition, to obtain remedies for treatable illnesses, or opportunity to be adequately clothed or sheltered, or enjoy clean water and sanitary facilities (Sen, 1999). In South Africa the greater majority of South African nationals still lack substantive freedoms despite a new dispensation.

Furthermore, Nussbaum (1999) cited in Robeyns (2005) argues that development requires the removal of all forms of exclusions that prevent people from living the kind of life they wish to live. If youth refugees are failing to access education, health, housing and other social services then they are robbed of their capabilities to lead the kind of lives they want to lead or to do what they want to do and become the persons they want to become. However this dilemma needs to be seen in the larger South African context where we are dealing with two layers of social exclusion. One layer pertains to black South African nationals and the other to refugees. Thus the refugee problem in South Africa is compounded by the fact that the consequence of the Apartheid legacy has not been adequately addressed.

Sen (1999) listed education for instance as an essential human capability that is integral to the overall well-being of a person. The South African education system has not addressed its responsibility to its own people and thus it is more problematic when it comes to refugees. This is true when it comes to children and youths living in refugee settlement areas. Education serves a variety of practical purposes in addition to gaining knowledge and skills for future endeavors. It is said that children and youths in schools are at a decreased risk for military recruitment, sexual violence, HIV/AIDS transmission, and crime and drug use. The structure provided by education also provides a sense of normalcy for children and youths living in refugee camps or shelters. The unstructured life of a refugee can be hard on children, and school provides children and young people with a break from the tediousness of daily struggles (Machel, 2000).

#### **2.1.4 The Human Rights Approach**

A Rights Based Approach is normatively based on international human rights and standards directed towards promoting and protecting human rights of people. Ife (2008:10) cited in Riak (2011) states that human rights are those rights that all human beings claim belong to them, regardless of their country of origin, race, culture or gender. Human rights apply to all humans whatever their cultural background, belief system, age, sex, ability or circumstances (Ife, 2008 cited in Riak, 2011).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has specific articles relevant to social and economic rights. Article 22 states that: Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to its' realization, through national effort and international cooperation and in accordance with the organisation and resources of each State (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 22, 1948 cited in UNHCR, 2005).

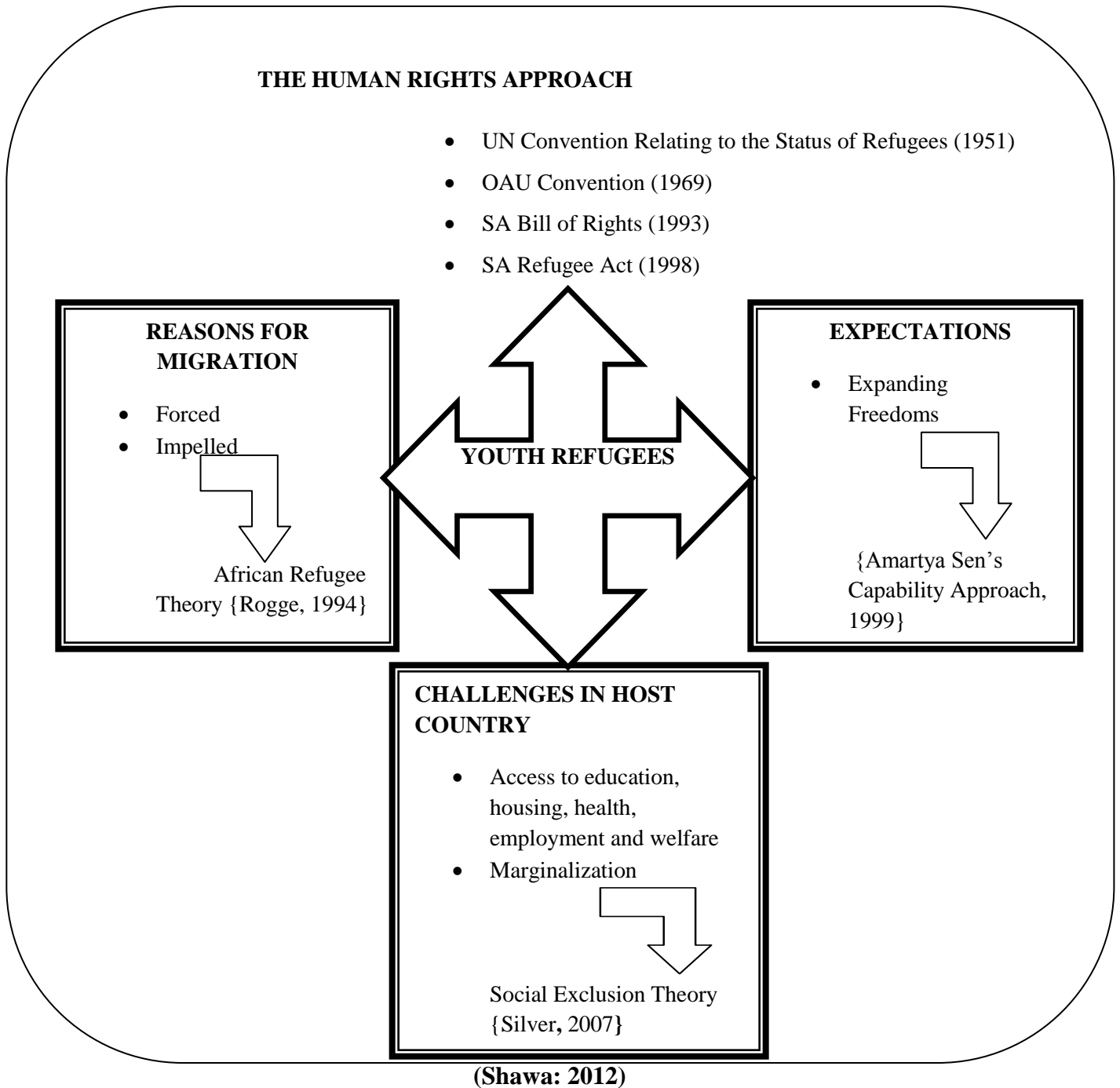
The South African Bill of Human Rights is the most comprehensive framework for rights, yet millions of South Africans are in abject poverty and have limited access to good education. Once again there is a disparity between the ideal and reality.

Although refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa do have legal rights, accessing such rights are far from guaranteed, in other words there is a considerable gap between the legal rights on paper and actual life experiences of refugees and asylum seekers (CBRCYC, 2009).

### 2.1.5 Integration of Theoretical Frameworks

The following diagram depicts the integration of the theoretical frameworks adopted by the researcher in explaining the challenges of youth refugees.

**Diagram A: An Integration of Theoretical Frameworks.**



## **2.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF REFUGEES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

- **Introduction**

Every day there are people in the world who have to leave their countries and go into another country. They leave their own countries because of various reasons some of which maybe war, their religion, or their skin color. They may be forced to leave their country or they may be impelled to leave due to fear. These people are called refugees (Maggie, 2011).

Refugees in general have been described as all persons who flee their home country as they have a substantial fear of their lives and their safety due to their political situation in their country. That is to say that they seek safety and refuge in a country that is not their own (Singh, 2005 cited in Chikamhi, 2011). South Africa is one of those countries where refugees seek refuge.

According to Handmaker (2001) although South Africa has only recently developed a policy on refugees and asylum seekers, it has certainly been no stranger to displacement, generating and receiving substantial numbers of forcibly displaced persons. The country began to abide formally to international refugee law after signing the Basic Agreement with UNHCR in 1993. A policy designed to recognize former Mozambican refugees for the purposes of a repatriation program became the basis of the asylum procedure up until April 2000 (Handmaker, 2001).

Nevertheless, in 2009, the Consortium for Refugee and Migrants in South Africa (CORMSA) emphasizes that human mobility, in all its forms, is transforming South Africa's population and economy as never before (CORMSA, 2009). UNHCR (2005) adds that this is because the demographic profile of the refugee population in South Africa is not similar to the typical African pattern, but rather resembles refugee situations in some European and other industrial countries such as the United Kingdom (UK).

- **Countries of Origin**

South Africa has no refugee camps, but has an entirely urban-based refugee population concentrated in the cities of Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. In most African countries, refugees are mainly located in refugee camps and tend to arrive in massive influx movements from neighbouring countries. That refugee population is of a

predominantly rural background with 75% women and children (CORMSA, 2009). South Africa, on the other hand, does not border on conflict-stricken countries with mass refugee outflows, except Mozambique and Angola in the pre-1994 period. According to the UNHCR (2011) asylum seekers and refugees in South Africa come from crisis regions further north and have transited several states where they had or could have found protection. This has changed recently with the political turmoil in Zimbabwe where we now see refugees coming from southern region countries.

According to the International Marketing Council (IMC), most of the South African refugees come from countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, Rwanda, Angola and Somalia (IMC 2004:1 cited in Livesy, 2006).

- **Education**

Groot (2004:38-40) cited in UNHCR (2005) noted that youth refugees in particular, choose South Africa because they prefer the urban situation and its opportunities for individual development, employment and independence from refugee camps. The perception exists that youths are the most adaptable and resourceful among Africa's refugees. As a matter of fact, a case study done by the UNHCR (2005) revealed that a large proportion of the asylum and refugee applicants who came to South Africa were fairly well educated. Two thirds of the interviewees in the study were males who had completed secondary schooling or a higher level of education, and of these almost one third had completed at least some tertiary education (UNHCR, 2005).

- **Gender**

Looking at gender disparities, the UNHCR (2005) study also estimated that more than 86% of the overall refugee population in South Africa are males of which the majority are young people, under 40 years of age. In another gender study on refugees done by Witwatersrand University (cited in Chikamhi, 2011) at least 70.6 % of non-nationals were males compared to South Africans who comprised of 46.9% males. Thus we are seeing mostly young refugee males coming to South Africa.

- **Employment**

One of the reasons for negative attitudes towards refugees is the fear that foreigners '*take jobs away*' from South Africans (Livesy, 2006). However, Steinberg (2005) cited in Livesy (2006) argues that contrary to popular belief, studies show that this is not the case. Despite the high unemployment rate amongst the youth in South Africa many foreigners enter into informal sector and take up jobs that South Africans find degrading such as guards, cleaners and plumbers. Many of them also run small businesses.

Some recent employment studies of South Africa indicate that, even though youth refugees staying in the country may be better educated and seem able to access some jobs, many are still faced with serious socio-economic challenges during their stay in the country. The section that follows will look at some of the socio-economic challenges facing youth refugees in South Africa.

### **2.3 THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES FACING YOUTH REFUGEES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

It is important to understand that, thousands of youth refugees from other war-torn and destitute African countries such as Rwanda, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Uganda, DRC and Zimbabwe have recently flocked to South Africa in hope of a better life. However, life is not easy for them when they reach South Africa, a country that itself has high levels of unemployment, inequality and poverty (SAHRC, 2008).

Youth refugees in particular, are faced with the challenge of dealing with Home Affairs to get their asylum papers which is a lengthy and difficult process. They are often faced with xenophobia from South Africans in the communities they are trying to stay in, who see them as a threat to their employment opportunities. Having escaped the horrors of their home countries they now face limited access to basic necessities like food, clothing, shelter, and water, let alone education, employment and a positive future for themselves (SAHRC, 2008).

Some of the challenges that will be discussed in detail in this section are: first days of arrival; barriers in obtaining documentation; access to shelter and housing; access to employment; access to education; access to health services; access to social assistance; xenophobia; gender based violence; the plight of unaccompanied children; human smuggling; and access to police services.

- **First days of arrival**

The National Refugee Baseline Survey (2003) revealed that refugees lack information on where to stay prior to their arrival in South Africa. Unfortunately when they actually come into the country they find themselves with no shelter during their first days. Medecins Sans Frontieres (2009) an international organisation that deals with refugees, reported that, for example, newly arrived young Zimbabweans who do not have an established network seek refuge in places along the railroad and in the surrounding bushes and churches.

Jeffley (2010) reported that the Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg alone was a home to almost 3,000 refugees. At the end of every church service, refugees scramble to every corner of the church to sleep, with the overflow crowd spreading blankets and cardboard on nearby sidewalks. Central Methodist has had to fight to protect the refugees. In 2008, police raided the church and detained 350 people. The judge who ordered their release said that they were treated worse than South Africans were treated during apartheid. According to Jeffley (2010) however rough the conditions, for many it's better than the crises in their home countries.

- **Social Integration**

When it comes to social adjustments, youth refugees who took part in the National Refugee Survey (2003) indicated that they sometimes interact with other foreigners, while a majority of the respondents also pointed out that, South Africans see them in an extremely negative light and as a result they are excluded from a lot of community programmes. Not only did asylum seekers and refugees think that South Africans see them as stealing South African wives and jobs but also that they treat them as lesser beings and see them as people with no rights, who should return to their own countries (National Refugee Baseline Survey, 2003). This negative attitude makes it difficult for youth refugees to adapt to South African communities.

A report by the South African Human Rights Commission (2008) showed that members of other nationalities complained of their exclusion from community structures such as the Community Policing Forums (CPF). Foreigners pointed out that they felt unwelcome at such meetings even if they decided to participate. They also claimed that they often could not understand community announcements, as these were made in languages they were not adept in (SAHRC, 2008).

- **Barriers in Obtaining Documentation**

According to Gotz and Landau (2005) cited in UNHCR (2005) it is estimated that the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) made less than 1,600 decisions about asylum seekers during 2004. This is despite the fact that the UNHCR (2005) estimated that in the same year the country may have hosted a total of 143,000 asylum seekers and refugees (both illegal and legal). Genuine asylum seekers and refugees thus have to wait for long periods before their applications are processed.

Gotz and Landau, (2005) cited in UNHCR (2005) argue that the delays in processing the new refugee and asylum applications have caused great uncertainty about many people's legal status, their rights to services and a place to call home. Youth refugees without a place called "home" are simply denied the right to contribute to the development of any community, any nation or any continent, as they cannot build their own life; consequently they have little hope for the future (CBRCYC, 2009).

- **Access to Shelter and Housing**

The National Refugee Baseline Survey (2003) reported that refugees on average stayed in places that have 3 rooms, excluding the kitchen and the bathroom. They share their houses with at least 7 people and each room is often shared by at least 2 to 3 people. Young refugees do not know where to go for accommodation especially those living in the Durban and Johannesburg cities (Handmaker, 2001).

Sadie & Borger (2004: 85) cited in UNHCR (2005) indicate that one of the primary housing issues facing youth refugees and asylum seekers was the higher rent that they pay when compared to South Africans. The common practice of partitioning rooms, flats and houses is a common strategy to accommodate more occupants at reduced rental charges. This reportedly has

negative health implications, creates security problems and severely restricts home - based economic activities (UNHCR, 2005).

- **Access to Employment**

Both Steinberg (2005) cited in Livesy (2006) study and a case study conducted by the UNHCR (2005) observed that a large proportion of the surveyed refugees and asylum seekers were engaged in occupations that require low skill levels, such as vendors, car-guards, or are employed as security guards. The results also showed that 24% of respondents were unemployed at the time of the survey. It should be understood that this rate of unemployment is relatively high considering that the refugees' level of education is generally high. This rate of unemployment corresponds with the South African youth unemployment rate at 24% (UNHCR, 2005:8).

The National Refugee Baseline Survey (2003) also revealed that there were some difficulties that refugees face when looking for a job. In particular, lack of proper documentation, whether in the form of Identity Documents (ID) or work permit. The problem is that even if the youth refugees apply for proper documentation, they have to wait for a long period before documents are actually processed (CBRCYC, 2009).

Moreover, employed youth refugees are often exploited and agree to low wages largely due to their desperate circumstances. The Coordinating Body of Refugee Communities: Youth Committee (CBRCYC) argued for the need to formulate policies that will allow the employment and assimilation of young refugees and asylum seekers (CBRCYC, 2009).

- **Access to Education**

One regulation accompanying the Refugee Act of 1998 which had a direct impact on the ability of refugees who arrived on or after the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2000 to sustain themselves financially was their inability to work or study during the first six months after submitting their application for refugee status. This led to refugees having no access to education (National Refugee Baseline Survey, 2003).

In terms of children's education, section 27(g) of the Refugees Act 130 of 1998, states that refugees are '*entitled to the same rights to basic primary education which the inhabitants of the Republic receive from time to time*'. Even though CORMSA (2009) argues that relatively few refugee families have children of school going age, severe obstacles remain for unaccompanied children to access education. The May 2008 xenophobic attacks further created obstacles to children's access to education due to among other things fear of attacks on their way to and from school.

According to the Coordinating Body of Refugee Communities: Youth Committee (2009) there is a need to include children and young refugees in the South African educational budget. There is also a call for the government to help young refugees to develop their skills and talents acquired from their home countries for the benefit of all South Africans. Youth refugees need support to develop their emotional, social, economic and educational abilities. Other strategies needed include organizing awareness-raising events to educate others on refugee issues and to raise funds for partner refugee schools (CBRCYC, 2009).

- **Access to Health Services**

Section 27(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa states that, everyone has the right to health care services, including reproductive health care. This right, similar to that of primary education, is also reflected in section 27(g) of the Refugees Act 130 of 1998 which states that refugees are '*entitled to the same basic health services which the inhabitants of the Republic receive*'. Whereas this Act entrenches the rights of recognized refugees, Pursell (2004) cited in UNHCR (2005:13) argues that it does not cater for the needs of asylum seekers who are awaiting the outcome of their application for refugee status, and they continue to face challenges in accessing health services.

There is also a gender dimension to health when it comes to youth refugees. Girl refugees face gender based violence such as sexual assault. As a result they are infected with STDs and HIV/AIDS. In addition to that they also have to deal with the infections of other communal diseases including cholera, diarrhoeal and gastro-intestinal diseases that they contract during their travel to South Africa. Even with these diseases and illnesses, children and young refugees continue to have negative interactions with, experiences of, and treatment by public health care

providers (CORMSA, 2009). It is further argued that when it comes to HIV/AIDS, there is lack of awareness amongst the refugee youth about services because of the language barrier. Therefore, there is a need to provide free drugs and treatment such as Anti Retro-Viral Therapy (ART) to young refugees in the country (CBRCYC, 2009).

- **Access to Social Assistance**

The Consortium for Refugee and Migrants in South Africa (CORMSA, 2009) claims that permanent residents are eligible for all social grants, while refugees may access foster-care grants and disability grants. The Social Relief of Distress grant also applies to anyone in dire need of food support, since it does not initially require identity documentation for eligibility. However, CORMSA remains concerned that these provisions are often not accessible to the refugees in practice because access depends on documents (CORMSA, 2009).

Refugees in particular, do not benefit from the social grants that the law allows. Very few refugees apply for government grants, and those who do seldom obtain them. In a Witwatersrand University research, it was reported that among, 3,140 migrants at NGOs and refugee reception offices across the country, only 3% of the respondents (96 individuals) had ever applied for a government grant. Just over half (52%) applied on their own, while 30% obtained assistance from an NGO. Of those who applied for grants of any kind, 43% were rejected and 21% accepted (CORMSA, 2009). Even though the Coordinating Body of Refugee Communities: Youth Committee (2009) reported that there is lack of social assistance in general, youth refugees have however, developed economic survival mechanisms, mostly in the informal business sector.

Access to credit and banking services also remains a challenge for many non-South Africans. Consequently, this impacts on their physical and financial security. This is partly due to the fact that many poor citizens and non-citizens face a challenge in providing proof of address. In some cases, it is argued that banks have refused to allow those with expired permits to access their own money (CORMSA, 2009). Renewing and processing permits requires money which refugees and asylum seekers find difficulty in accessing.

- **Xenophobia**

Harris (2001) defines xenophobia as the fear of, and hostility towards foreigners. The Declaration of the UN World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance was held in Durban, South Africa in 2001. The declaration commits South Africa to developing both policies and an overarching National Action Plan to combat intolerance based on race and national origin. It furthermore urges States to strengthen National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in regard to racism and xenophobia in particular, and to foster greater cooperation between NHRIs and other national institutions in general (SAHRC, 2008).

Even with the declaration, the South African Human Rights Commission (2008) admits that human rights principles were violated in May 2008, when non-nationals including youth refugees as well as national and regional minority South Africans were attacked by other South Africans in their communities of residence across the country. In addition to these violations, Constitutional protection, which applies to displaced persons in the care of the state during the 2008 attacks, were not realised in all cases including the right to lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair administrative action (Chapter 3, section 3.2 : Administrative Justice cited in SAHRC, 2008).

It is estimated that the May 2008 xenophobic attacks left at least 62 dead of which a majority were refugees, hundreds wounded, and contributed to the displacement of 100,000 people or more. The brutality and wanton disregard of the perpetrators for both the law and the basic humanity of their victims shocked South Africans and the world at large, both because of their massive scale, and also because they appeared to be largely hate-driven (SAHRC, 2008).

However, the South African Human Rights Commission (2008) argues that the targeting of non-nationals is not new to post-apartheid South Africa. The Department of Home Affairs (DHA) agrees with this and claims that the massive displacement of foreigners in 2008 merely represented the ‘climax’ of social problems that have existed for the past fourteen years. The Department of Social Development (DSD) also concurs with this and noted as early as 1998, a high degree of xenophobia in the country (DHA: 2011).

Takirambuggle (n.d.) cited in Jeffrey (2010) admits that those claims that South Africans were becoming increasingly antagonistic towards foreign citizens began to surface in the mid-1990s. Studies conducted during 1997-2000 by the Southern African Migration Project of South African attitudes to non-nationals have indeed found that South Africans are not tolerant towards foreigners more especially refugees. These feelings cut across indicators of age, education, gender, economic status and race.

UNHCR (2005) claims that an important problem is that many South Africans fail to make any distinction between the different categories of migrants in the country. Many people classify all foreigners the same, be they refugees, illegal migrants, economic migrants or unauthorised migrants. It should be noted that the various categories of migrants, have their own set of rights and entitlements. The obligations of the government vary according to each category. Nonetheless, it is noted with concern that even officials dealing with migrants are not always able to differentiate between the various categories of migrants. As a result, asylum seekers or refugees at times cannot access the services to which they are entitled to (UNHCR, 2005).

- **Gender Based Violence**

Article 1 of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVW), proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in its resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993 calls for a need to eliminate all types of violence against women. Even with such global initiatives, a UNICEF (2008) cited in CORMSA (2009) assessment conducted after the 2008 xenophobic attacks found that sexual violence was used as a weapon to displace migrant women and girls from their homes. Such acts included attempted, threatened and real incidences of rape and gang rape. However, many cases went unreported due to a combination of stigma associated with rape and the fear of arrest and deportation among some women and girls without valid documentation (CORMSA, 2009).

CORMSA (2009) also reported on a significant number of cross border migrant young women and girls from Zimbabwe who continue to be exposed to rape by informal cross-border transporters while trying to enter South Africa through clandestine channels due to the lack of legal entry options. Medecins Sans Frontieres (2009) concurs with this by emphasising that Zimbabweans living in Musina show grounds (a refugee settlement area) in Johannesburg

reported that significant numbers of cross-border migrant women and girls trying to enter South Africa are exposed to rape not only by informal cross boarder transporters but also by smugglers and criminals.

In conjunction with Medecins Sans Frontieres (2009), Jeffley (2010:4) reported that young women face abuse at all levels, even from their own community at times. It is not easy for them to get work, as many women come with few skills. Many will hand out pamphlets at traffic lights, earning twenty Rands a day, and are sometimes not even paid. Such young women are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation and may trade sex for food or money.

- **The Plight of Unaccompanied Children**

Medecins Sans Frontieres (2009) estimated that there was an increase in the number of unaccompanied children coming to Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg particularly in the first half of 2009. As of May 2009, there were 150 children between the ages of seven and eighteen at the church. These children are extremely vulnerable and exposed to many forms of abuse. Some of them have lost both parents either due to HIV/AIDS or other causes (Medecins Sans Frontieres, 2009).

CORMSA (2009) further argues that although there is a well developed legal and policy framework for securing the rights of children in South Africa regardless of their documentation, the framework is poorly implemented and significant abuses of migrant children rights continue. An escalating issue is that a significant proportion of children are illegally deported by police who are not authorised to deport anyone. Elsewhere, the police are often poorly equipped to deal with unaccompanied minors, and unaccompanied children report ongoing difficulties with the police (CORMSA, 2009).

- **Human Smuggling**

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, article 29, calls upon member states to take appropriate measures to prevent the abduction, the sale of, or trafficking children for any purpose or in a form, by any person including parents or legal guardians of the child (Kaime, 2009).

In spite of the charter, CORMSA (2009) suggests that human trafficking is relatively rare whilst human smuggling is a common practice along South African borders. Smuggled young refugees often experience horrific forms of exploitation and physical violence. In some cases, it is argued that, boarder smuggling operations involve individuals and the police and Immigration Departments. Young people smuggled across the border are vulnerable to abduction, rape and murder by criminal elements (CORMSA, 2009).

- **Access to Police Services**

According to CORMSA (2009) international migrants including refugees across South Africa face risks of violence at the hands of the police, their neighbours, and their relatives. Young women and girls facing gender based violence report that they are not comfortable reporting to the police as they fear deportation. With this, CORMSA (2009) notes with concern that, young women specifically seeking assistance with cases of domestic violence face the double obstacle of a society that is both xenophobic and patriarchal (CORMSA, 2009).

Furthermore, during the xenophobic attack, youth refugees and other migrants claimed that some police were reluctant to stop violence within their jurisdiction and that some of their members were involved in looting or assisted perpetrators (CORMSA, 2009). The report, 'Prohibited Persons: Abuse of Undocumented Migrants, Asylum-Seekers and Refugees in South Africa' (1998) document the abuse that young refugees face in South Africa. Many of these young people are afraid to walk alone because of the hostility they face in the streets, and the possibility of attack by South Africans. It is said that police often seek out undocumented migrants in order to extract bribes. However, it should also be noted that nearly one-fifth of those arrested and mistakenly detained for migration violations are 'Black' South Africans or legal residents. Some have had their legal documents destroyed because the police felt they were 'too Black' to be South African, or because they had a foreign-sounding surname. This suggests that much education and training needs to be done with South African Police Services concerning their dealings with refugees.

Takirambuggle (cited in Jeffrey, 2010) argued with concern that during the apartheid era, many African countries opened their doors to South African migrants, exiles and refugees and paid a heavy economic price for their opposition to apartheid. Now that the tables are turned it is

shameful to see how hostile South Africans have acted towards migrants and refugees who have come to South Africa in need.

Nevertheless, there are a number of efforts by the South African government in trying to deal with challenges facing refugees. A number of legislative frameworks and policies have been put in place. All the same, the Human Rights Watch (2010) has called upon the South African government to put into place the institutional structures necessary to ensure that the human rights of all those living in South Africa are respected. The section that follows will look at international, regional and local legislative frameworks related to issues of refugees.

## **2.4 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS AND POLICIES**

Even though refugees face challenges every day, the Coordinating Body of Refugee Communities: Youth Committee (2009) a committee that represent youth refugees in South Africa, acknowledge the efforts deployed by the South African government and non government institutions as well as the civil society and international organisations in welcoming several hundreds of youth refugees as fellow humans and offering them at least a temporary home (CBRCYC, 2009).

Although there are no special policies and legislative frameworks that are specific for the youth refugees in South Africa, those discussed in this section are general and apply to all refugees regardless of age. The policies in this section will address international, regional and local contexts.

### **2.4.1 International Conventions**

The Charter of the United Nations (1945) cited in the South African Human Rights Commission (2008) addresses political and civil rights and calls for international economic and social cooperation. Article 55 declares that ‘all human beings’ are entitled to enjoy human rights without discrimination.

However, the United Nations recognises that even though governments normally guarantee the basic human rights of their citizens, when civilians become refugees this safety net disappears. Therefore the United Nations formed the United Nations High Commission for Refugees

(UNHCR) at the United Nations General Assembly in 1950, initially helping more than one million European refugees after World War II. Today, it is responsible for the safety and well-being of refugees worldwide. Its most important responsibility is to ensure respect for the basic human rights of refugees, ensuring that no one is returned involuntarily to a country where he or she has reason to fear persecution. The agency therefore provides life saving assistance to those forced to flee their homes, such as shelter, medical care, food, clean water and education (UNHCR, 2011).

In 1951, UNHCR held the Geneva Convention well known as ‘the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees’ recognized as the main international instrument of refugee law. The convention clearly spells out who a refugee is and the kind of legal protection, other assistance and social rights he or she should receive from the countries who have signed the document. It also defines a refugee’s obligations to host governments and certain categories of people, such as war criminals, who do not qualify for refugee status (UNHCR, 2011).

In chapter 4, Article 21-24, the convention clearly states that the host governments should accord to refugees the same treatment as is accorded to nationals with regards to elementary education, housing, public relief and assistance, labour legislation and social security. In addition to this, Article 27 states the need for contracting states to issue identity papers to any refugees in their territory who do not possess a valid travel document (UNHCR, 1979).

#### **2.4.2 Regional Conventions**

The Organisation for African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee problems in Africa was adopted in 1969. Heads of states and governments assembled in Addis Ababa after noting with concern the constantly increasing number of refugees in Africa and for that reason the need to find ways and means of alleviating their misery and suffering as well as providing them with a better life and future with respect to human rights (UNHCR, 1974).

Article 11 of the convention, called for states of the OAU to use their best endeavours consistent with their respective legislation to receive refugees and to secure the settlement of all refugees

who, for well-founded reasons, are unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin or nationality (UNHCR, 1974: 5).

### **2.4.3 South Africa's Refugee Commitments**

With regards to South Africa, UNHCR (2005) reported that although the country received several thousands of refugees in the pre-1994 period especially from Angola and Mozambique South Africa only began to abide formally to international refugee law after signing the Basic Agreement with the UNHCR in 1993. In 1996 the South African government signed the United Nations 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. By signing these international conventions South Africa agreed to formally recognise and provide protection to people classified as refugees (Wentzel & Thlabela in UNHCR, 2005).

In 1998, South Africa endorsed the principles of the UN and OAU conventions by passing the Refugees Act (Act no 130 of 1998). This law became effective in 2000 and continues to be South Africa's primary piece of legislation related to the position of asylum seekers and refugees in the country (UNHCR, 2005).

The Refugees Act (Act no 130 of 1998) confirmed the definitions of a refugee as captured in the UN and OAU Conventions. According to the Act, South Africa has to protect any person who has fled another country because of '*well-founded fears of persecution due to race, ethnic origin, political and religious creed and membership of any particular social groups*'. The country also has to grant asylum (that is refugee status) to anyone compelled to leave their home country because of external aggression, occupation, foreign domination, or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or whole of his country of origin (The Refugee Act 130, 1998).

The Act also sets clear guidelines under what conditions asylum seekers may be refused entry into the country or be expelled. It spells out when an applicant will not qualify, and when a person's status can be revoked. The Refugees Act also sets a clear procedure for asylum seekers to follow once in South Africa. The Refugees Act (1998) distinguishes between those people whose case has been considered and are formally recognised as refugees and those who have

applied for asylum but have yet to have their status determined that is either being recognised or being rejected (The Refugee Act 130, 1998).

Initially, a regulation in the Refugees Act prohibited asylum seekers to work or study during the first six months after submitting their applications for refugee status. This regulation was suspended in 2003 and asylum seekers are allowed to work and study immediately after an asylum application is filed (CASE 2003 in UNHCR, 2005).

The Immigration Act 2002 places the following responsibilities upon the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) in relation to the management of immigration and the risk of anti-immigrant sentiment action: preventing and deterring xenophobia within its own ranks, within the broader state, and at community level; Educating communities and organs of civil society on the rights of foreigners, illegal foreigners, and refugees, and conducting other activities to prevent xenophobia; and organising and participation in community forums or other forms of community-based organisation, amongst other things to deter xenophobia and educate the citizenry on migration issues (SAHRC, 2008).

When it comes to gender, the Draft Refugee White Paper (1998) further recognises the rights of refugee women and children. There is an emphasis that refugee receiving officers and status determination officers should receive training with regard to the needs of refugee women and children, and, where possible, service to women should be done by women. Regulations promulgated in the case of mass influx of refugees shall include provisions designed to protect women and children, such as those relating to the layout and security of reception centres. Unaccompanied minors should also be considered as children in need of care, and therefore subject to the Child Care Act of 1983 (The Draft Refugee White Paper, 1998: 16).

In addition to all legislation and policies, the South African Constitution protects the right to life, freedom and security of person, and freedom of movement for all. The protection of security of person extends to freedom from all forms of public violence. Equally, the constitution prohibits discrimination on grounds including social origin and birth, and speech that advocates hatred or incites imminent violence. It also guards against the arbitrary deprivation of property (SAHRC, 2008).

In brief, all these policies and legislative frameworks emphasize that refugees like any other person are entitled to enjoy human rights without discrimination. Nevertheless, according to Sen's (1999) 'Capability Approach', in order to remove unfreedoms our evaluations of policies should focus on what people are able to do and be, on the quality of their life, and on removing obstacles in their lives so that they have more freedom to live the kind of life they would value. Despite all these policies and legislature, youth refugees continue to battle with many challenges and obstacles. Support systems and structures have become necessary. The next section will therefore look at various support systems and resources used by youth refugees in the Western Cape.

## **2.5 SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND RESOURCES USED BY YOUTH REFUGEES IN THE WESTERN CAPE**

In order to make the difficult transition to the host country easier, there are several non-profit and human rights organisations both globally and in South Africa that aim at assisting this vulnerable population. For purposes of this research, the Cape Town Refugee Centre (CTRC), Scalabrini Centre, the University of Cape Town Law Clinic, the Haven Night Shelter, the South African Police Services and the South African Department of Home Affairs will be discussed.

The UNHCR which is a specialized agency of the United Nations supports a host of implementing partners in many cities of South Africa to assist refugees and asylum seekers. The main aim of the UNHCR's technical and financial support to implementing partners is to ensure that the South African government and civil society are more responsive to the needs of asylum seekers and refugees and that services such as health, education and shelter, which are already provided by South African government, are also extended to asylum seekers and refugees in the country. The UNHCR provides limited financial assistance to implementing partners to bridge the gap that currently exists in enabling asylum seekers and refugees to access social services (National Refugee Baseline Survey, 2003).

In the Western Cape, the UNHCR implements its strategies through various organisations. The organisations /institutions targeted for this study will now be discussed.

### **2.5.1 The Cape Town Refugee Centre**

The Cape Town Refugee Centre (CTRC) is a non profit organisation that works with vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers. The Cape Town Refugee Forum, as it was originally named, was established in 1994 by an alliance of organisations such as the Red Cross Society of South Africa, the Trauma Centre, Catholic Welfare and Development, Catholic Justice and Peace, the Salesians and others, as well as representatives of refugees and asylum seekers and a number of concerned local individuals. The Forum was created with the aim of devising ways to address problems facing the growing number of refugees and asylum seekers in the Western Cape (National Refugee Baseline Survey, 2003).

The centre has staff that provides different forms of assistance to refugees. The centre sees on average twenty clients per day, three times per week. It also provides a number of services to male and female refugees. Due to UNHCR's focus on women, children and vulnerable groups, assistance provided to newly arrived male refugees is made possible by funds obtained from sources other than UNHCR (National Refugee Baseline Survey, 2003).

Asylum seekers and refugees in need of care are provided with blankets as well as hampers containing toiletries, a towel, soap, and a toothbrush. CTRC provides food, medical assistance, education assistance and accommodation. In addition, other forms of assistance include funeral costs, counselling, skills training, clothing, peer education and language interpretation. Currently, the organisation is planning to initiate a foster care programme for children and youth at risk (National Refugee Baseline Survey, 2003).

### **2.5.2 Scalabrini Centre**

The centre takes its name from the Bishop of Piacenza, John Baptist Scalabrini who founded the Scalabrini order in 1887 to care for the welfare of migrants. Scalabrini has historically focused on providing concrete services to migrant men and women, and promoting awareness of the problems associated with human migration. Since 1996, Scalabrini began their work with displaced persons in South Africa. They have a number of programmes of assistance. These include food parcels, education assistance, clothing distribution and language and skills training. The organisation is currently in the process of starting a Skills Development Project, aimed at

displaced South Africans and non-South African nationalities (National Refugee Baseline Survey, 2003)

### **2.5.3 The University of Cape Town Law Clinic**

The University of Cape Town Law Clinic provides assistance to the Refugee Rights Project which was created in order to assist refugees and asylum seekers in the Western Cape, with navigating the asylum process. The clinic also addresses the violation of their fundamental rights. Thus the project engages in wide-range consultations with clients whereby legal services are offered freely to refugees and asylum seekers on a variety of issues (University of Cape Town, 2011).

The mandate of the Project is to ensure that the best legal support and services are made available to these refugees and asylum seekers. The core value of the project is that *'an exile does not cease to be a human being'*. Refugees constitute a vulnerable category of forced migrants who, by their very definition, are unable to avail themselves of the protection of their own governments or embassy. Therefore the clinic is dedicated to the achievement, through education, research and advocacy, of long term societal change, where the rights of refugees and asylum seekers are respected (University of Cape Town, 2011).

### **2.5.4 The Haven Night Shelter**

The Haven Night Shelter was established in 1978 in Cape Town, South Africa, registered as a Section 21 (a) (Not for Gain) Public Company in 1983. It was registered as a Non Profit Organisation in 2000 and as a Public Benefit Organisation in 2004. The organisation provides temporary shelter, physical care, social welfare and family re-unification services to adult homeless persons typically described as 'street people' or 'vagrants' in the Western Cape (The Haven Night Shelter, 2009). Whilst this is predominantly a shelter for South African homeless people, more and more refugees have been seeking shelter there.

The Wynberg branch is a temporary home to 35 adult males and ten adult females. Their vision is to give the homeless a home.

### **2.5.5 The South African Police Services (SAPS)**

Max-Neef, Elizalde and Hopenhayn (1989) mentions human security as a fundamental right. The aim of the South African Police Service (SAPS) is to create a safe and secure environment for all the people in South Africa. The mission of SAPS is to prevent and combat anything that may threaten the safety and security of any community; investigate all crimes that threaten the safety and security of any community; ensure offenders are brought to justice; and participate in efforts to address the root causes of crime (South African Police Service: Annual Performance Plan 2011/2012).

Even though the police clearly state their roles in the communities, Masiloane (2010) cited in Chikamhi (2011) maintains that they have failed to provide protection to immigrants. The police officers through detentions and harassment contribute to the many problems facing immigrants. Landau and Jacobsen (2005) cited in Chikamhi (2011) indicated that the police officers in Johannesburg confiscated immigrants' travel document and ordered them to buy back their documents adding to refugees' disempowerment in a host country.

Police officers should develop a protective role for all persons and be aware of the causes and prevention of xenophobia. The SAPS could play a major role in protecting the refugees rather than adding to their harassment.

### **2.5.6 The South African Department of Home Affairs**

The Department of Home Affairs is the South African organ of state that deals with immigration matters. The Department of Home Affairs issues permits and visas and decides on who may enter South Africa and for how long. The relevant piece of South African legislation is the Immigration Act (Act 13 of 2002). The Act sets out the requirements for the various permits that are available to immigrants. Therefore, the South African Department of Home Affairs' offices have the authority to grant permits and allow people into South Africa (South African Department of Home Affairs, 2011).

Home Affairs has helped its own backlog of administering the applications of many people wishing to immigrate to South Africa, by registering professional immigration practitioners, who are given power of attorney by prospective clients to prepare, submit and monitor permit

applications (South African Department of Home Affairs, 2011). The Department however, has for the past years had a reputation of unfair treatment of refugees and it has received a lot of criticism about this (Landau and Jacobsen 2005, cited in Chikamhi, 2011).

## **2.6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented the review of literature that gave an overview of relevant studies, theoretical models, socio-economic challenges that face youth refugees and the kinds of support systems that they use. The following chapter discusses research methodology.

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## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

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### **3. INTRODUCTION**

Babbie and Mouton (2001) state that research methodology should focus on the research process, tools and objective procedures to be used as well as tasks to be carried out. This chapter presents the research methodology employed in this study. The sections in this chapter will address: the research design, gaining entry/ permission, sampling method, piloting the study, data collection, data analysis, data verification and limitations inherent in such a study.

#### **3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), a research design is a plan or blueprint of how one intends to conduct a research. De Vos (2002) states that there are various approaches to research (qualitative, the quantitative approaches and mixed methodologies). Given the dearth of literature on youth refugees' perceptions of their challenges this study followed a qualitative exploratory research design. A qualitative exploratory design involves understanding the worldview, experiences and perceptions of participants. It explores the opinions, beliefs and attitudes, behaviors and motivations of the participants. In addition, it helps in exploring the context and environment in which certain behaviors are acted out (Rothery, 1996 cited in Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). Thus this approach was deemed appropriate for the study.

#### **3.2 GAINING ENTRY/ PERMISSION**

Firstly, permission was sought from the three purposively chosen organisations that are assisting youth refugees in the Western Cape (Appendix A: 87). These three organisations are the Cape Town Refugee Centre (CTRC), the Haven Night Shelter and Scalabrini Centre. From there, the researcher, through the help of the key informants of the three organisations, identified twelve youth refugees that were accessing support from the organisations.

Permission was also sought from the University of Cape Town Law Clinic, the South African Police Services and the Department of Home Affairs to interview key informants from these

institutions. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, officials from the Department of Home Affairs and the Scalabrini Centre were not interviewed. Repeated contacts were made to secure appointments but this did not happen.

### **3.3 SAMPLING METHOD**

De Vos (2002:42) defines a sample as *'a small representation of a whole'*. The research adopted the use of non-probability, purposive sampling. According to De Vos (2002) a purposive sample is based on the judgment of the researcher, in that a sample is composed of elements that contain the most characteristics, representative or typical attributes of the population (De Vos, 2002:202). Those participants who could provide information to the research questions were identified and interviewed.

The criteria used for selecting the twelve youth refugees were that they would be between the ages of 18 to 35 as this conforms to the youth definition given by the Organisation of the African Union (OAU) in the 2006 African Youth Charter, that they would be connected to Refugee Centers and that they would be legal migrants. The criteria used for selecting the six key informants were that they would all be connected to key resource organizations in the Western Cape (Cape Town Refugee Centre (CTRC), Scalabrini Centre, the Haven Night Shelter, the University of Cape Town (UCT) Law Clinic and the South African Police Service).

It is important to point out that for purposes of this study, a sample size of twenty participants was originally planned for but eighteen participated. The sample cohort included twelve youth refugees and six key informants.

### **3.4 PILOTING THE STUDY**

Terre Blanche et al (2002) cited in Sanders and Thornhill (2003:45) identifies a pilot study as

*'A preliminary study on small sample that helps to identify potential problems with the design, particularly the research instrument'*

The researcher conducted a pilot study on two refugees who were not in the sample. These two were located by the researcher at the University of Cape Town Law Clinic. This pilot study was

done as the researcher was hoping to improve the semi structured interview guide questions. As a result some questions were re-phrased to make it more understandable.

### **3.5 DATA COLLECTION**

This section discusses the data collection strategies.

#### **3.5.1 Data Collection Approach**

The data collection approach was face to face interviews. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) a face to face interview together with an oral administration of an interview schedule is suitable for a qualitative approach. It is a face-to-face or personal encounter where rapport can be built. To obtain accurate information, the researcher needs to obtain maximum co-operation from the participants. This approach was used as it facilitates interaction and enables the researcher to gain a detailed picture of the participant's beliefs, perceptions and accounts of the topic under investigation (De Vos, 2002).

#### **3.5.2 Data Collection Tool**

A researcher needs to develop instruments with which to collect the necessary information. With regards to this research, a structured interview schedule was adopted. A semi-structured interview schedule according to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) is a set of questions that the interviewer uses as a guide (Appendix B: 88). These questions reflect the objectives of the study. The researcher does not stick rigidly to the schedule, as the participants may offer interesting and relevant insights that the researcher may have overlooked in developing the schedule.

#### **3.5.3 Data Collection Apparatus**

The study used a tape recorder to record the interviews as it allows the researcher to concentrate on exploring the topic while also noting the non-verbal cues. The recorder was used with prior consent from the participants and thus it is important to clarify that four of the youth refugees mentioned that they felt uncomfortable about being tape recorded hence note taking was done. The tape recorder allowed for verbatim recording thus facilitating more accurate data analysis (Saunders and Thornhill 2003).

### 3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999)

*'Data analysis should be understood as the process whereby data obtained from the field in raw form is interpreted from a position of empathetic understanding to make sense and to draw meaningful conclusions (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999:149).'*

Babbie and Mouton (2001) however, identifies data analysis as the breakdown of data collected using a qualitative analysis approach. In order to analyze data gathered through the interviews, the researcher transcribed the data from the tape recorder and notes, and used an adaptation of Tesch 1990 (cited in De Vos, 2002 adapted by O'Brien). These steps are as follows:

- The researcher read through all the transcriptions.
- The researcher selected one interview at a time, tried to understand what the respondent was saying in relation to the objectives of the research.
- The researcher jotted down some words (phrases) on the margins that capture the participants' meaning/perceptions.
- In the margin of the transcript, the researcher assigned labels to those meanings.
- All the transcriptions were subjected to the process of assigning labels.
- The researcher then grouped the labels into categories of the main themes.
- The researcher then revisited the main themes and categories in order to make sure that these themes and categories encapsulated the fullness of the data. All categories had sub-categories.
- The categories were reworked to make sure that they are mutually exclusive.
- A coding framework was thus developed.
- Finally, the findings were written up using the coding framework as a guide. Actual quotes were used to illustrate the themes/categories and for subcategories/sub-categories.
- The findings were cross-linked to previous studies done (literature review) thereby validating or contradicting the findings.
- Critical arguments were developed.

### 3.7 DATA VERIFICATION

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003) argue that while the results of a study may appear accurate, it must be recognized that every study contains errors and biases which can result in misinformation. The process of recognizing and managing those errors and biases consistently with accuracy is what is known as data verification. The researcher verified the collected data using Guba's (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 290-296 cited in De Vos, 2001) approach. This approach was used as it ensures accountability to ward off biases and errors in the results of a qualitative analysis. Central to this approach are four constructs: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

#### *Credibility*

Lincoln and Guba, 1985 (cited in De Vos, 2001) refers credibility to the process of demonstrating that the study was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the phenomenon was accurately described. While Babbie and Mouton (2001:277) refer the term to whether there is compatibility between the constructed realities that exist in the minds of the respondents and those that are attributed to them. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001) credibility is achieved through the following procedures: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, referential adequacy, peer debriefing and member checks. In terms of this research, to ensure credibility in relation to these procedures, the researcher had lengthy in depth, face to face sessions one and half hours long, to try to ensure that all important information was collected so that a sound data analysis could be done. The researcher was able to gather in-depth, rich data from at least two perspectives that is youth refugees as well as key informants. In this study, credibility is somewhat compromised by the fact that only face to face interviews were carried out with a very limited sample of twelve youth refugees and six key informants.

#### *Transferability*

Transferability, according to De Vos (2001) is the burden of demonstrating the applicability of one set of findings to another context. Babbie and Mouton (2001:277) explain that the qualitative researcher is not primarily interested in making generalizations as all observations are defined by the context in which they occur. The qualitative researcher therefore does not maintain, or claim

that knowledge gained from one context will necessarily have relevance for other contexts or for same context in another time frame. Lincoln and Guba (1984) as cited in Babbie and Mouton (2001) states that the following strategies could be used to ensure transferability: thick descriptive and purposive sampling. In this research, limited transferability is evident due to the lack of thick description. Although the researcher was able to transcribe the report exactly like what was said in the face to face interviews the number of participants are limiting factors.

### *Dependability*

De Vos (2001) explains dependability as any attempt to account for reliability of the study. Qualitative researchers need to assure their audiences that if their study was to be repeated in the same or similar context, it would reveal similar results. Guba's approach to data verification (Lincoln and Guba 1984 as cited in Babbie and Mouton 2001) argues that there can be no credibility without dependability. As a result of this, the techniques used to demonstrate credibility can also be used to demonstrate dependability. Furthermore, an inquiry audit should be done. Which involves critically examining all the different information, methods and techniques used within the study. In doing so, the auditor will be determining if the research is dependable or not. In terms of this research study, no triangulation of various methods was done. Hence, dependability is also weak.

### *Confirmability*

Lastly, confirmability focuses on whether the results of the study could be confirmed by another (De Vos, 2001). The researcher was guided by her supervisor in checking for the 'trustworthiness' of this data. The transcriptions were submitted to the supervisor. On these transcriptions, the researcher made notes with regard to how she came up with her interpretations, conclusions and recommendations.

## **3.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) a limitation is any aspect of the research that may influence the results negatively but over which the researcher has no control. The following are some of the limitations that were encountered during the study, in relation to the research design,

the sampling technique, the data collection method, the data collection tool and apparatus, the data analysis, language limitations and the researcher's own limitation.

- **The Research Design Limitation**

The limitation with regards to research design is that the design chosen was a qualitative research design. A qualitative research design is highly subjective and usually the sampling technique that is used is non-probability sampling which is generally small and cannot be generalized to a larger population (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). However, since perceptions of refugees and key informants were being explored in the study this design was used to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning they gave to their situation and hence it was an appropriate design to use.

- **The Sampling Technique Limitation**

A non-probability, purposive sample was used. Non-probability, purposive sample does not allow generalizability because of its small idiosyncratic sample size. However, purposive sampling was appropriate for the study in that only the participants who could provide the needed information were interviewed (De Vos, 2002).

- **The Data Collection Approach Limitation**

The data collection approach was face to face interviews. Even though Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003) argue that face to face interviews require a high level of communication and interpersonal skills, this approach was used as Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) assert that it allows maximum co-operation between the researcher and the participants and it is used to probe for deeper meanings. Biases may occur in such a situation but the researcher was aware of 'bracketing' her own feelings.

- **The Data Collection Tool Limitation**

The research used a semi-structured interview schedule. The use of a semi-structured interview schedule can be 'misused' as a novice researcher could stick too rigidly and not allow for the

free flow of communication. However, the researcher was aware of this and tried to allow for maximum information.

- **The Data Capturing Apparatus Limitation**

As the study used a tape recorder to capture data, it is more likely that participants may have been reluctant to give information as they knew they were being taped. Some participants may have been suspicious of its use or felt intimidated by it. However, the tape recorder was used for some interviews where consent was given since verbatim recordings allow for all the verbal details to be captured and analyzed (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2003).

In this research four of the youth refugees said that it was better if they were not tape- recorded during the interviews. As a result this may have affected the outcome of the study as the researcher may not have written everything down during the interviews.

- **The Data Analysis Limitation**

The researcher used an adaptation of Tesch (1990) cited in De Vos (2002), which required the researcher to identify themes and categories. This procedure allows the data to be analyzed in a subjective manner, it may be wrongly interpreted and biased, as some categories may be overlooked and others overemphasized. As a result, this can affect the accuracy of study findings. Nonetheless, the approach was used as it allowed data to be analyzed using empathetic understanding to make sense and to draw meaningful conclusions (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). In addition, Lincoln and Guba's approach (cited in De Vos 2001) was used to verify data.

- **Language Limitation**

Most refugees spoke their home language with some being proficient in English. The researcher chose only those participants who could speak English. As a result such a sample had a language bias. However, the participants chosen were 'information rich' and could provide responses to the questions being asked.

- **Limitation of the Researcher**

The researcher is still a 'novice researcher' and needed the guidance of her supervisor.

### **3.9 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented the research design; gaining entry/ permission; sampling method; piloting the study; data collection; data analysis; data verification and limitations of this study. The following chapter presents and discusses the research findings.

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## **CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

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### **4. INTRODUCTION**

The participants' profiles and framework for analysis will firstly be presented. Thereafter, the findings will be presented and discussed in relation to this framework where the main themes and categories have been laid out.

#### **4.1 Profile of all the Participants**

Twelve youth refugees who access services from the Cape Town Refugee Centre (CTRC), Scalabrini Centre and the Haven Night Shelter were selected and interviewed. Eight key informants who work with organisations and government departments that deal with issues of refugees in the Western Cape were also identified to participate in the study. However, due to unforeseen circumstances only six key informants took part in the study. In total eighteen participants were interviewed during the study.

##### **4.1.1 Youth Refugees' Profile**

Table 1 presents the profile of the youth refugees who participated in the study. The table will indicate their alias names, gender, country of origin, age, entry into South Africa, residential location and the name of the organization that supports them.

**Table 1: Profile of the Youth Refugees**

| <b>Alias and Type of Refugee</b> | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Country of Origin</b> | <b>Age</b> | <b>Entry into SA</b> | <b>Residential Location</b> | <b>Name of Organization Providing support</b> |
|----------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. Angel*                        | Female        | Rwanda                   | 24         | 2005                 | Rondebosch                  | The Cape Town Refugee Centre                  |
| 2. Rachel*                       | Female        | DRC                      | 22         | 2010                 | Goodwood                    | The Cape Town Refugee Centre                  |
| 3. Bruno*                        | Male          | DRC                      | 30         | 2003                 | Sea Point                   | The Cape Town Refugee Centre                  |
| 4. Zack*                         | Male          | Cameroon                 | 25         | 2007                 | Observatory                 | The Cape Town Refugee Centre                  |
| 5. King*                         | Male          | Cameroon                 | 30         | 2007                 | Kenilworth                  | The Cape Town Refugee Centre                  |
| 6. John*                         | Male          | Burundi                  | 19         | 2010                 | Wynberg                     | The Cape Town Refugee Centre                  |
| 7. Peter*                        | Male          | Zimbabwe                 | 18         | 2012                 | Wynberg                     | The Haven Night Shelter                       |
| 8. Aubrey*                       | Male          | Zimbabwe                 | 29         | 2008                 | Wynberg                     | The Haven Night Shelter                       |
| 9. Kattie*                       | Female        | DRC                      | 23         | 2011                 | Bellville                   | Scalabrini Centre                             |
| 10. Joy**                        | Female        | Uganda                   | 32         | 2008                 | Belhar                      | Scalabrini Centre                             |
| 11. Matt**                       | Male          | Uganda                   | 29         | 2001                 | Woodstock                   | Scalabrini Centre                             |
| 12. Lisa*                        | Female        | DRC                      | 24         | 2010                 | Goodwood                    | Scalabrini Centre                             |

\*Impelled refugees

\*\*Forced refugees (Rogge, 1994 cited in Collins, 1996)

All the twelve youth refugees that were interviewed were legal migrants coming from various African countries. The sample population included refugees from Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somali, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Rwanda and Burundi. Six of these have at least accessed socio-economic services from the Cape Town Refugee Centre (CTRC), two from the Haven Night Shelter and four from Scalabrini Centre. For reasons of confidentiality alias names have been used to protect the participants' real identities. It should also be noted that due to issues around privacy four of the youth respondents felt uncomfortable about being tape recorded hence note taking was done.

- **Type of Refugee**

The African refugee theory (cited in Collins 1996) identifies two classes of refugees, impelled and forced. Ten youth refugees interviewed in this study were 'impelled refugees' while two were 'forced refugees'.

- **Age**

The average age of the refugees in this study was 25 years. The African Youth Charter (2006) defines 'youth' as a person ranging from the ages of fifteen to 35 years. Hence this cohort was described as a 'youth'.

- **Gender**

There were five females and seven male refugees interviewed in this study. The number of males and females who participated was determined by their voluntary consent and by their availability. There were more males than females using the services of these refugee organisations.

The average age and the gender profile in this study could reflect the findings by the UNHCR (2005) which estimated that a majority of the overall refugee population in South Africa are males and of which a majority of these are young people less than 40 years old (UNHCR, 2005).

- **Entry into South Africa**

The majority of the refugees had entered the host country in the past seven years.

#### 4.1.2 Key Informants' Profile

Table 2 presents the profile of the key informants who participated in the study. The table indicates the name of the organization, the role of the organization and the services they provide to youth refugees.

**Table 2: Profile of the key informants**

| <b>Key Informant</b> | <b>Organization</b>                             | <b>Role of Organization</b>                             | <b>Services Provided</b>  |
|----------------------|---|---|---|
| K. 1                 | The University of Cape Town Law Clinic (Org. A) | Legal aid   | Assists refugees and asylum seekers in the Western Cape, with navigating the asylum process, and in addressing the violation of their fundamental rights. These legal services to refugees are offered for free.                                      |
| K. 2                 | The Cape Town Refugee Centre (Org. B)           | Refugee NGO   | Provides food, medical assistance, education assistance and accommodation to refugees. In addition, other forms of assistance include funeral costs, counselling, skills training, clothing, peer education and language interpretation.              |
| K. 3                 | The Haven Night Shelter (Org. C)                | Refugee Shelter   | Assists in making available temporary shelter, rehabilitation opportunities, social welfare services, family reunification services, physical care and support to adult people living on the streets who are committed to reintegration into society. |
| K. 4                 | The South African Police Department (Org. D)    | Government institution that ensures safety and security | Provides services in order to create a safe and secure environment for all the people in South Africa.  |

\*Note: all organisations/institutions agreed to having their names identified.

The six key informants interviewed in this study included two officials from the Cape Town Refugee Centre (CTRC), two from the Haven Night Shelter, one from the University of Cape Town Law Clinic and one from the South African Police Department. All these organisations provide services that are related to dealing with the socio-economic challenges of youth refugees in the Western Cape.

#### **4.2 FRAMEWORK FOR DISCUSSING FINDINGS**

Using an adaptation of Tesch 1990 (cited in De Vos, 2002) the researcher identified themes and categories (refer to Chapter Three, Section 3.5:49, for Tesch's Approach to Analysis). Four major themes that were linked to the research objectives and sixteen categories were identified. Various categories of these themes emerged from an analysis of the findings.

Table 3 presents the framework for discussing findings by outlining the themes and the categories.

**Table 3: Framework for Discussing Findings**

| THEMES   | CATEGORIES   |
|--|--|
| <b>Key socio-economic challenges facing youth refugees</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language</li> <li>• Documentation</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Housing/Settlement</li> <li>• Safety/Security</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Access to social services</li> </ul> |
| <b>Support systems and resources used to address socio-economic challenges</b>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personality factors</li> <li>• Friends/Family</li> <li>• NGO's</li> <li>• DHA</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Refugees' awareness of policies and legislative frameworks that deal with socio-economic challenges</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of knowledge</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Youth refugees' perceptions on strategies to address challenges they face</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need for bursaries/scholarships</li> <li>• Gain understanding of policies/rights/laws</li> <li>• Improve services at DHA</li> </ul>   |

The findings will now be discussed in accordance with the logical sequence of this framework.

#### 4.3 KEY SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES FACING YOUTH REFUGEES

The findings in this section are linked to the first research objective which was aimed at investigating the key socio-economic challenges facing youth refugees in the Western Cape.

- **Language**

Four out of the six key informants pointed out that language was one of the three most important challenges that youth refugees face in adjusting to their host country and particularly to Cape Town. Furthermore, seven out of the twelve youth refugees also indicated that they had problems with language.

*‘...when I came here it was hard because like you can see I speak not well English but now I had to at least to learn speak English’ (Participant 2, Rachel).*

*‘You have no idea imagine when I just came here with my friends I wanted to make a phone call at a public phone and then I wanted to ask this guy how to do it but I couldn’t and when he heard me speaking not a South African language he said “ahh look at you so you are a kwele kwele, @\$ go back home” and he went away’ (Participant 10, Joy).*

*‘The challenges mainly is language barrier people from Congo Rwanda and Burundi those French colonial countries you find that they only speak French and when they come they battle to stabilize as they are not communicating freely and they feel unsafe. So classes attended at the CTRC helps them at least as now they are able to communicate. Those who now speak local languages now are accommodated because they are not seen as foreigners as they can speak local languages. They are also afraid when they come here because people call them kwele kwele and it’s all because they cannot speak the local language’ (K3, Organization C).*

It is clear that refugees who cannot speak English or other South African languages find it hard to adjust to their new communities. Without English proficiency, refugees are readily excluded from many aspects of life such as employment, education, access to services and social interaction (National Refugee Baseline Survey, 2003). The responses reflect a greater need for various organisations to provide language classes.

It is also significant to understand that being unable to speak any of the South African official languages, especially English impacts on refugees trying to obtain refugee status document. One youth participant said:

*'To get a document that was the worst part I came in 2007 and I only got the legal refugee in 2009 so you can imagine. Then also that time was before I went to the English school in town so I could not speak good English and then that was trouble to communicating with them and they thought well am just thinking they were like ahh rubbish this one can't even speak English don't waste our time asking for documents. But You know God is good so am there I met another person from my country she helped me a lot and then she was translating for me now I laugh when I can speak English well and you even chose me because I can speak English with you' (Participant 4, Zack).*

These experiences indicate the importance of having some translators employed at the Department of Home Affairs.

- **Documentation**

Article 27 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees clearly spells out the need for contracting states to issue identity papers to any refugees in their territory who do not possess a valid travel document. Although the South African government is a co-signatory to this convention (UNHCR, 2005) it has not put in place processes to facilitate access to such documents. All the twelve respondents mentioned that their greater challenge was to obtain legal documents.

*'Getting papers from Home Affairs takes along long time' (Participant 7, Peter).*

*'I think for me my biggest challenge was to get papers at the home affairs like all what my friends say' (Participant 1, Angel)*

Confirming these responses were those of all the six key informants who concurred that accessing legal documents was problematic. One key informant said:

*'Mostly it's the papers because even for minors it's not easy for their parents to get the permits from home affairs an home affairs takes time but we cannot write a letter to DHA to say give this child a permit unless when they go to social development dept then they can go to court and have a court order then they take that order to DHA and they get permits and so it's really a long process' (K2, Organization B).*

Over the past years the Department of Home Affairs has received a lot of criticism levelled at their handling of refugees (Landau and Jacobsen 2005, cited in Chikamhi, 2011). Likewise UNHCR (2005) claimed that after failing to deal with 32,500 new asylum applications in 2004, the department had a backlog of pending applications in 2004 of 115,400 cases, an increase of 28% from 2003.

However, it is important to note that the DHA argued that some of the people who apply for asylum are economic migrants using the system as a way to legitimise their stay in South Africa (UNHCR, 2005). Nevertheless, Article 11 of the 1969 Organisation for African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa calls for states of the OAU to use their best endeavours consistent with their respective legislation to receive refugees and to secure the settlement of all refugees who, for well-founded reasons, are unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin or nationality (UNHCR, 1974: 5).

It is also important to understand that the lack of documentation also affects youth refugees in accessing socio-economic activities such as finding employment. Five of the youth refugees and three key informants believed that without legal documents it is very difficult to find a job as employers are reluctant to employ those without papers.

*'... and it's also a problem how to find work because you need papers to get a job' (Participant 11, Matt).*

*'I would say in fact having papers is the most difficult because when you want a job they will ask for papers and it is very hard to get papers. Home affairs it's just that of permit if you don't have its hard but if you have you can do all things slow slow' (Participant 2, Rachel).*

*'I think the challenges are the same. What many refugees complain about is that when they find a job they are denied to have to permanent employment because they do not have travel documents or refugee IDs. And so that is the responsibility of DHA but we see for the past years they have not really tackled the issue so these people have not been allowed to travel...' (K1, Organization A).*

The UNHCR (2005) indicated that the delays in processing the new refugee and asylum applications has caused great uncertainty about many refugees' legal status and their rights to services and economic activities such as employment and education (UNHCR, 2005).

- **Education**

In spite of the UNHCR (2005) claiming that delays in the processing of refugee and asylum applications affects refugees right to economic activity, it also affects access to education. It was surprising to learn that all the nine youth participants who were not studying during the time of this research did not mention that documentation was a hindrance to their access to education. The reasons given for not accessing education varied from lack of money to giving up on further studies due to life circumstances. Nine youth refugees indicated that they were not enrolled at any school or learning institution. Nevertheless, all twelve refugees indicated that if they were given a chance they would have continued with their education.

*'If I was given a chance yes I would go to school you see the other problem is that there are no scholarships for refugees and then we cannot continue education' (Participant 1, Angel).*

*'Ya I definitely do it cause I already know what I want I want to do a business administration course. Right now all I need is just to get a sponsor who can pay for my school fees then everything will be fine' (Participant 11, Matt).*

*'Oh yes I would definitely study up to a PHD' (Participant 3, Bruno).*

A key informant who is also a refugee indicated:

*'They are so much willing, the problem is just the structure of some universities that not all can access loans and scholarships cause it also happened to me I was told to pay my fees in full. I was not even allowed to pay in installments and yet the policies say we are also entitled to full social and economic rights it's not practical, it's there but just on paper. So you see if I did not have full fees my studies would have failed' (K3, Organization C).*

In the study all the twelve youth refugees had completed high school. Three had started their university education. This concurs with previous studies conducted by the UNHCR which revealed that a large proportion of the asylum and refugee applicants who come to South Africa are fairly well educated and that over two thirds of the interviewees in that study had completed secondary schooling (UNHCR, 2005).

*'I finished high school and I am about to go to University, in my country I would have gone to university but there are no good education and there are a lot of disturbances I don't want to suffer because even in schools you cannot say a lot about politics' (Participant 2, Rachel).*

*'I actually went to my university in DRC I have a degree in business but I wanna continue with my education coz it's the only way' (Participant 3, Bruno).*

It is evident from these responses that refugees need more assistance with regards to education. After all education is a fundamental right according to the Education, Section 27(g) of the Refugees Act 130 of 1998. Besides, Amartya Sen in his Capability Approach (1999) identified access to education as an essential human capability that is integral to the overall well-being of a person.

Further education provides knowledge and skills, but also decreases the risk of youths from being involved in gangs, sexual violence, HIV/AIDS transmission, crime and drug use. It is moreover argued that the unstructured life of a refugee (especially those in refugee camps) can be hard on children and school provides children and young people with a structure in difficult times (Machel, 2000).

In addition, since 2003 after amending the Refugees Act, refugees and asylum seekers are all allowed to study and find employment after an asylum application is filed (CASE 2003 cited in UNHCR, 2005).

- **Employment**

Employment was another key challenge that was explored during the study. In a case study conducted by the UNHCR (2005) results showed that 24% of respondents were unemployed at the time of the survey. In this small study, eleven youth refugees indicated that at the time of the research they were employed with one person being unemployed. Nevertheless, all the twelve youth participants pointed out that it is very challenging to find employment in Western Cape. Ten youth refugees specified that some employers had negative attitudes towards refugees and that not having their papers was the main problem.

*‘Eish I really had a bad luck in finding employment at this place and they almost gave me work but they said no, show us your papers first so that we know you are not going to steal from us and so I had problems because you see I am just waiting for my papers to come cause I have been going to Home Affairs for the whole month but still they are not giving me my papers...’ (Participant 7, Peter).*

*‘I would say mostly it’s because when you just come here you do not have a permit so that is when you have difficulties to get a job because everyone will ask for your permit....’ (Participant 12, Lisa).*

*‘I would say in fact having papers is the most difficult because when you want a job they will ask for papers and it is very hard to get papers (Participant 2, Rachel).*

*‘It has been really hard, we keep on looking but when you find it we are happy but when they ask for your papers that is when the problem comes they don’t want to employ refugees (Participant 6, John).*

While youth refugees saw their lack of papers and negative stereotyping of refugees as a problem, the key informants felt that some refugees lacked the skills needed for the jobs.

*'It's because they are not really educated because if they had scholarships they would be able to get education and be competitive' (K2, Organization B).*

*'They youth really find it hard because they do not have skills to find employment and also they are not educated because the time they were coming to South Africa maybe they were still at school going age' (K4, Organization D).*

Despite a country having a good welfare system there is always a group that may be somehow excluded from the mainstream benefits of that society (Davids et al., 2009). According to Peberdy (2002) negative attitudes towards non-nationals could prompt service providers and employers to exclude all categories of migrants including refugees from services they are entitled to and also need (Peberdy, 2002).

It is evident that this study plainly concurs with the findings that were reported by the National Refugee Baseline Survey (2003) which revealed that there are some difficulties that refugees face when looking for a job. In particular, the lack of proper documentation whether in the form of an ID or work permit, acts as a hindrance. The Coordinating Body of Refugee Communities: Youth Committee (2009) argued for the need to formulate policies that will allow the employment and assimilation of young refugees and asylum seekers. With an influx of young refugees it would be foolhardy to exclude them from education and the prospects of employment as they would be vulnerable to anti social activities in order to survive.

- **Housing/Settlement**

Housing and settlement are also issues of concern when it comes to refugees. All twelve youth refugees mentioned that accommodation is expensive in South Africa. It is for this reason that nine of the youth refugees indicated that they were sharing a house with other people other than their family members.

*'I stay in a two bed roomed flat with a couple from another country...' (Participant 3, Bruno).*

*'How can you say I have everything comfortable when you stay so many people in a house (Participant 9, Kattie).*

The researcher also noted that four youth refugees were unhappy with the fact that they were sharing a house with other people.

*'The rent here is so expensive and the only good part is that I am staying with other people otherwise I can't manage to pay the rent on my own ...I stay with my other friends and her, there are three of us in our room them three also in the other room and I in the other, we are a lot but the others are also from South Africa. It's really a lot of us and not very nice because it the same when there are a lot of people there are always people who will say bad things about one another and there are always people fighting even about boyfriends and so I don't like all that (Participant 12, Lisa).*

*'And then also to find a cheap house it is really bad and you share then with other people who have bad behavior you fight and fight about a small small thing it is bad here but when I get my money I will go back home and maybe I will not come back' (Participant 4, Zack).*

Four key informants concurred with this by stating that most youth refugees find it difficult to find accommodation because they do not have money to pay monthly rent.

*'...the real reason why they cannot find housing is because they do not have rent money...' (K4, Organization D).*

*'They must also have money for upkeep and also rent' (K3, Organization C).*

Sadie & Borger (2004: 85) cited in UNHCR (2005) stated that one of the primary housing issues facing youth refugees and asylum seekers was the fact that they were charged higher rentals in comparison to South Africans. There is a need to allocate more housing to refugees, sharing of accommodation has negative health implications and it creates security problems.

- **Safety/Security**

The South African constitution protects the right to life, freedom and security of persons and freedom of movement for all. The protection and security of persons extends to freedom from all forms of public violence (SAHRC, 2008). Even though the constitution clearly outlines this, youth refugees indicated that they did not feel safe in the locations where they stayed.

*'The community I live in now is not very safe there are a lot of thugs not because I am a foreigner but it's just to anyone and then when you are a foreigner it's just worse. There are a lot of thieves and when you move at night they rob you...there should be more police especially at night because some of us we come home from work at night and so sometimes I get scared and the place I live is near a river where I hear many people have been killed before' (Participant 11, Matt)*

*'Sometimes it is not that safe because the boys who come to visit here steal our things but when we tell them we are afraid those boys will come and beat us up because they know us and they are also South Africans' (Participant 12, Lisa).*

The Consortium for Refugee and Migrants in South Africa (2009) claims that difficulties in accessing services (such as police services) in the country renders youth refugees being vulnerable to robbery (CORMSA, 2009).

However, a key respondent from the South African Police Department claimed that access to police services was readily available for youth refugees and children in the Western Cape.

*'Refugees come to find us here at the Wynberg station every time especially those who are homeless. You see when they are homeless most of the times they are attacked in the streets so they come to us needing help... you know there is this belief that SAPs are not cooperative they have negative assumptions, that is not right we deal with refugees each and every day and we help them every time...' (K4, Organization D).*

Nonetheless three of the youth refugees expressed their discontent with the police services rendered to refugees.

*'...the police it's hard when they robbed me I did not even go to police because I knew they will ask why I was drunk at night' (Participant 6, John).*

*'Sometimes they are harsh because the other time we were just walking in the streets and the way they asked us so many questions I was even scared if they had asked me for my refugee papers' (Participant 7, Peter).*

Similarly one key informant said:

*'...the police we had other people who used to say they were getting directions from the police to do all sort of things in 2008 I don't know what the reality is but I don't know how the police really are. But there were a lot of complaints about the police where refugees were ignored and some cases coming to us where the refugees said they were unable to open up a case and the Police did not open up cases' (K3, Organization C).*

Refugees' dissatisfaction of police services could also be the reason why the Consortium for Refugee and Migrants in South Africa reported that during the 2008 xenophobic attacks, youth refugees and other migrants claimed that some police were reluctant to stop the violence in their jurisdiction and that some of their members were involved in looting or assisted perpetrators (CORMSA, 2009).

Max-Neef, Elizalde and Hopenhayn (1989) mentions human security as a fundamental right. Amartya Sen (1999) identified protective security as one of the five distinct freedoms which helps to advance the general capability of a person. Sen added that such security should be concerned with safeguarding and expanding people's vital freedoms (Sen, 1999). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights article 22 further states that everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to its realization, through national effort (UNHCR, 2005). It would seem as if much more public education about the rights of refugees is needed in South Africa.

- **Health**

Section 27(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa states that everyone has the right to health care services. Furthermore, section 27(g) of the Refugees Act 130 of 1998 also

states that refugees are ‘entitled to the same basic health services which the inhabitants of the Republic receive from time to time’ (Pursell, 2004: 95) cited in UNHCR (2005: 13). Still Pursell (2004) cited in UNHCR (2005) argues that the Act does not cater for the needs of asylum seekers that are awaiting the outcome of their application for refugee status, and these continue to face challenges in accessing health services. Eleven of the refugee participants in this study stated that they did not find any problems in accessing health services.

*‘With health I think well even if I was to talk in general terms not just for the youth but it has changed for the past years. They are able to access all health services either if they are refugees or even if they are asylum seekers so it is really a thing that has changed overtime’ (K2, Organization B).*

*‘... I just go to the clinic and I get the medicine like I said I was in hospital for a long time I think 8 or 9 months I don’t know I should have died but I think I was unconscious coz I don’t remember’ (Participant 8, Aubrey).*

One of the youth refugees indicated that she had a bad experience.

*‘I went to a community hospital and they asked for papers and when I showed them my refugee papers they were like we don’t want these papers they threw them to my face haha (laughs) up to now I have never gone to that hospital ever again’ (Participant 10, Joy).*

One of the findings of the Consortium for Refugee and Migrants in South Africa indicated that refugees received poor treatment from public health care providers (CORMSA, 2009). No person should be robbed of his/her freedom to obtain health assistance for treatable illnesses (Sen, 1999).

- **Access to Social Services**

This section will look at refugees’ access to social grants and banking services.

## **- Social Grants**

The Consortium for Refugee and Migrants in South Africa (2009) declares that refugees may access foster-care grants and disability grants. In addition, the Social Relief of Distress grant also applies to anyone in dire need of food support, since it does not initially require identity documentation for eligibility (CORMSA, 2009). Regardless of all these grants that refugees are entitled to, it was shocking to note that all the twelve youth respondents were not aware of the type of grants that can be accessed.

*'It's only South Africans who can access grants' (Participant 6, John).*

*'I don't think everyone can access grants coz I don't have a child' (Participant 2, Rachel).*

*'No I can't access social grants the way I am I think a refugee no but South Africans do that' (Participant 8, Aubrey).*

However, one key informant said:

*'Ya at some level they can access grants if you are disabled for example or HIV positive or you have TB It's only if you have refugee status not an asylum seeker even if you have a 0 point CD4 count now you see that is where the problem is' (K3, Organization C).*

It could be true that refugees do not benefit from the social grants that the law allows (CORMSA, 2009). It is also evident with the findings that even though key informants were aware of the grants that refugees can access, the youth refugees were uncertain of this. Refugees need to be informed about the type of grants that they are entitled to. This can probably be done through the organisations from which they are presently seeking help (Cape Town Refugee Centre, Scalabrini Centre and Haven night Shelter).

## **- Bank Accounts**

When it comes to opening bank accounts the researcher identified that four had bank accounts with FNB, four with the post office and two at other banks while two did not have bank accounts at the time of the study.

*'I have an account at FNB' (Participant 2, Rachel).*

*'I have not yet opened a bank account but I think it's the same thing they will ask me for papers' (Participant 7, Peter).*

*'I have a bank account I decided to open at the post office here' (points at post office) (Participant 1, Angel).*

One key informant said:

*'You see even banks sometimes turn down refugees and even if it's in the policies but people are refused and post office even says no sometimes the easy one is FNB. It has happened to me before but I never backed down I showed them the policy book and said do you see here. If your head office says this...why you in Wynberg are refusing me' (K3, Organization C).*

The findings clearly indicate that access to banking services also remains a challenge for many refugees. Consequently, this reduces their physical and financial security (CORMSA, 2009). It seems like FNB and the Post office are the only places more likely to allow refugees to open accounts.

Youth refugees use different support systems and resources in order to deal with all the challenges that have been discussed. The section that follows will present these support systems and resources.

#### **4.4 SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND RESOURCES USED TO ADDRESS SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES**

All the responses in this section are linked to the second research objective which was to find out how youth refugees deal with the socio-economic challenges they face.

- **Personality Factors**

Even though refugees face a lot of socio-economic challenges in the Western Cape there are several non-profit and human rights organisations both in South Africa and globally that assist

this vulnerable population (UNHCR, 2004). However, individual factors such as a good work ethic, determination and resilience enable refugees to cope with their challenges. Nine youth refugees assert that it is their personal character that enabled them to cope and deal with these challenges.

*‘I just have a hard working spirit... (Participant 2, Rachel).*

*‘I think it’s my character cause you see other young people do bad things they do bad things drinking alcohol and drugs but also I pray a lot it just depends with the kind of character someone has like I said some people have problems to cope’ (Participant 1, Angel).*

*‘It is because I am very determined and I know what I want to its just money that I don’t have but I also work hard there was a time I had three jobs just to earn a living so you see not many people can afford and more especially South Africans they are so lazy and yet they stay with their parents they don’t pay rent and yet the money they earn they do not want to do school’ (Participant 11, Matt).*

*‘Congolese are hard working people and so I really work hard so that I can have money to pay for my rent’ (Participant 3, Bruno).*

Two of the key informants also said:

*‘...They are just hard working and are eager to survive’ (KI, Organization A).*

*‘The youth are always willing to survive that is a good part’ (KI, Organization B).*

When one understands the reality of youth refugees and the challenges that they face not only upon their arrival but also during their stay in South Africa then it is clear that personality factors do play a role. One key informant captured some of the difficulties:

*‘You know you flee your country you don’t just decide uhm literally fleeing and once you are here though young you have to make arrangements with your country and some stage you do not have proper documentation but your family comes and all of a sudden you have to adjust and also you have to get documentation for your family and it’s such a lot*

*of money to go to DHA and get documentation and the department I don't think we don't know the problems. If we go to Maitland its ten times worse you wait its really crazy and so you have to be there early before six in the morning so you see they are just hard working and are eager to survive' (K1, Organization A).*

Given the many challenges, the trauma that some have gone through, counseling services are also needed. Four key informants spoke about the need for trauma counseling:

*'We also work with trauma center so they get counseling' (K2, Organization B)*

*'It is really traumatizing so immediately we have to refer them to a shelter or a refugee organization that is working with refugees in the area' (K4, Organization D).*

*'Firstly its trauma, haunted by the past witnessing parents being tortured, or being raped or other things so we have to make them understand to try to cut that out and find the way forward' (K3, Organization C).*

- **Friends/ Family**

Refugees shared how friends and family helped them to cope. Nine youth participants mentioned that at one point or another they have been helped by their friends while six also indicated that they were being helped by their family members such as parents, siblings and cousins.

*'...also yes my friends have helped me...' (Participant 12, Lisa).*

*'My father and mother they help me when I need anything and I also help myself and get a job' (Participant 6, John).*

*'If I don't have money at that time I can ask from my friends' (Participant 3, Bruno).*

*'My friends and my sister...I get help from my friends we just help each other when we want something...' (Participant 1, Angel).*

*'I would say my husband has always been there for me and then my family back home have also been very good and helped me that is why I ended up here but it was really hard for us to leave our country' (Participant 9, Kattie).*

Even though it is evident in this study that youth refugees also get help from their family and friends it has to be stressed that as a signatory state to the UNHCR Basic Agreement, the South African government has the obligation to provide legal protection, other assistance and social rights to all refugees.

In a similar vein, two key informants said:

*'The government, it is their responsibility when we agreed and signed international obligation we must honor that and make those rules work we must honor the constitution and I don't think the refugee population is that huge' (K1, Organization A).*

*'It is yes the responsibility of the government because they have to fulfill the obligations of the agreement for the fact that they allowed refugees here' (K3, Organization C).*

- **NGO's**

All twelve youth refugees also indicated that they have been helped by refugee organisations. This was not surprising since all the youth participants interviewed access services from the Cape Town Refugee centre, the Haven Night Shelter and Scalabrini Centre.

*'I also have support from the organization' (Participant 8, Aubrey).*

*'This organization is also very helpful you see so many refugees come here every day and still they have not said no we will not help you, they continue to help us' (Participant 5, King).*

*'Ya sometimes it's the support we get at refugee organisations' (Participant 12, Lisa).*

The UNHCR, a specialized agency of the United Nations supports a host of implementing partners in many cities of South Africa to assist refugees and asylum seekers (UNHCR, 2005). The Cape Town Refugee Centre, Scalabrini Centre and the Haven Night Shelter are all

organisations in the Western Cape that are partly funded by the UNHCR. Table 2:49 describes the services that these organisations render to refugees.

- **The Department of Home Affairs (DHA)**

All the twelve participants had also been to the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) in order to process their refugee status documentations. Although there are some negative attitudes about their treatment at the Department Home Affairs, they recognize it as a central resource to get crucial documents.

*'I cannot lie here because you ask questions you see as much as we refugees are not happy with what happens at the Home Affairs you see we even sleep there let me say I have slept there twice and did not get in, but at the end of the day I am happy they helped me because if it wasn't for them I would not have even got a job today coz everywhere its show us your permit papers papers papers' (Participant 4, Zack).*

*'Home affairs also helped me get permit because to visit these NGO's you must go to Home Affairs first and get papers' (Participant 6, John).*

The Department of Home Affairs (DHA) is a South African state department that deals with immigration matters. The Department issues permits and visas and decides on who may enter South Africa and for how long in accordance with the Immigration Act 2002 (DHA, 2011). The same Act also places the responsibility on the DHA of educating refugees on migration issues and educating communities and organs of civil society on the rights of foreigners (SAHRC, 2008). The section that follows will present the refugees awareness of rights, policies and legislative frameworks.

#### **4.5 REFUGEES' AWARENESS OF LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS AND POLICIES THAT DEAL WITH SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES**

With regards to the third research objective, youth refugees were asked if they knew any legislative frameworks, policies and rights pertaining to their situation.

- **Lack of Knowledge**

It was evident in the study that refugees expressed their lack of knowledge with regards to policies and legislative frameworks as nine of the youth refugees mentioned that they were not aware of these. Five key informants also mentioned that refugees are not aware of these policies and legislative frameworks.

*'No I don't know policies and legislature to deal with refugees' (Participant 7, Peter).*

*'I don't know what they are ah ah but maybe there are there we just don't know them but what are they coz I don't feel there are there' (Participant 8, Aubrey).*

*'I just think they do not know the rights in the constitution so there is need to disseminate that kind of knowledge out there...' (K1, Organization A).*

However, some (three) of the youth refugees were uncertain and thought that education could be one of their rights.

*'I don't know them but I know I have a right to go to school at least that a law must be there if it is not already' (Participant 6, John).*

*'I don't know which ones are refugee rights but I know everyone can be able to get medicine and go to high school' (Participant 1, Angel).*

This lack of knowledge could be partly the reason why the Coordinating Body of Refugee Communities: Youth Committee, (2009) stated that even though youth refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa have some reasonable amount of legal rights, accessing such rights are far from guaranteed. On the other hand, this lack of awareness could be due to the fact that even though the country received several thousands of refugees in the pre-1994 period, it only began to abide formally to international refugee laws after signing the Basic Agreement with the UNHCR in 1993 (SAHRC, 2008). Nevertheless, there is still a lot that should be done to make youth refugees aware of their rights.

The next section will look at some of the strategies that could be put in place in order to address the situation of youth refugees in the Western Cape.

#### 4.6 YOUTH REFUGEES' PERCEPTION ON THE STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES THEY FACE

All the responses in this section are linked to the final research objective which was to identify youth refugees' perceptions on strategies to address various socio-economic challenges they face.

- **The need for Bursaries/Scholarships**

As mentioned earlier, initially, a regulation in the Refugees Act prohibited asylum seekers from education during the first six months after submitting their applications for refugee status. This regulation was however suspended in 2003 and asylum seekers are allowed to work and study immediately after an asylum application is filed (CASE 2003 cited in UNHCR, 2005). Nevertheless, the research still revealed that a lot of youth refugees are failing to further their education because of lack of money (refer to Section 4.3:55). Eight youth refugees felt that there is a need for bursaries and scholarships for refugees.

*'Right now all I need is just to get a sponsor who can pay for my school fees then everything will be fine...there should be grants and scholarships for refugees' (Participant 11, Matt).*

*'Umm the government has a lot of things that they can do they must always try to help us with education maybe giving even if its little money to refugees it's a starting point so that at least we can go to school' (Participant 7, Peter).*

Clearly from the findings it would be helpful if refugees were provided with financial assistance in order to help them pay their school fees. The Coordinating Body of Refugee Communities: Youth Committee (2009) suggested that youth refugees and asylum seekers should be included in the South African educational budget. Some institutions in South Africa like the University of Cape Town (UCT) do provide special scholarships for refugees.

- **Gain Understanding of Rights/ Policies/Laws**

Nine youth refugees mentioned that they would like to gain an understanding of their rights and other policies that exist in the country. The researcher also noted that the youth refugees placed the responsibility for rights education largely on the DHA as well as on refugee organisations.

*'I think refugee rights should be available in all NGO's and places like Home affairs and where refugees should be able to learn there' (Participant 6, John).*

*'I think Home affairs should be giving information to people about where they can learn or where they can go to teach or about rights and everything that a refugee need' (Participant 2. Rachel).*

Three key informants also felt that DHA should educate about rights, but also indicated that schools should teach pupils about policies and rights pertaining to refugees.

*'For the youths in schools they must be taught there...really DHA can also help by giving pamphlets to these youths' (K4, Organization D).*

*'Definitely it should be done in schools and also with the help of the Home Affairs and when they just arrive they could at least try to give a small booklet and say here you are in Cape Town and this is what you should expect that kids will be in school, you will have opportunity to be employed and all that' (K2, Organization B).*

*'I think when they arrive when they go to that Home Affairs then they must be given a paper or something and that must be the first place where a refugee get a paper you see and so I think they have to be issued and so you see if this is the first time for this person to be in this country then they must put like a paper together with all that information' (K3, Organization C).*

It is an issue of concern that participants still felt that the DHA has the prime responsibility to educate about rights/policies and laws. The concern that the researcher has is that the DHA according to the Immigration Act (2002) has to manage immigration and the risk of anti-immigrant sentiment action such as: preventing and deterring xenophobia within its own ranks,

within the broader state, and at community level; educating communities and organs of civil society on the rights of foreigners, illegal foreigners, and refugees, and conducting other activities to prevent xenophobia; and organising and participation in community forums or other forms of community-based organisation, amongst other things to deter xenophobia and educate the citizenry on migration issues (SAHRC, 2008). It is clear that the DHA has not been effectively managing this broad mandate.

Refugee organisations could be doing much more education on legislative frameworks, policies and rights with regards to refugees. This may help refugees to orientate themselves on the services that are already available to them.

- **Improve Services at DHA**

It is a well known fact that asylum seekers and refugees have to wait for long periods before their applications are processed. The delays in processing the new refugee and asylum applications continue to cause great uncertainty about their legal status (UNHCR, 2005)

*‘So maybe Home Affairs should not delay in giving us the papers’ (Participant 7, Peter).*

*‘You see my friend people and the NGOs do not understand the main problem is the Department that gives permits they have to change, people stay long hours there and also months and months and yet papers don’t get approved unless that changes, at least I got mine without trouble but others wait even a year’ (Participant 3, Bruno).*

*‘There should be a way to make it possible that refugees should be able to easily get their permits than to wait a long time and also those people using bad language on us’ (Participant 12, Lisa).*

*‘Like I said an office at the home affairs to help people know what to do and also they should lessen the time to process papers’ (Participant 1, Angel).*

It is also important to understand that a further dimension of refugee exclusion is the exclusion from entitlements associated with particular visa categories for refugees and asylum seekers.

These prohibit or limit access not only to employment, health services, education and income support, but also to settlement services and even to family reunion. The temporary nature of some of these visas means refugees spend their lives waiting, in fear of being sent back against their will (The National Refugee Baseline Survey, 2003). It is somewhat edifying to know that in the past the DHA in Cape Town has been trying to speed up the process.

#### **4.7 CONCLUSION**

Youth refugees face many challenges upon their arrival and during their stay in the Western Cape. The long wait in obtaining documentation is an issue of concern. Employers are not willing to provide work for refugees because of their refugee status and this often affects their ability to sustain themselves financially and as a result they cannot pay for proper accommodation or further their education. It was however, satisfying to learn that accessing health services was not seen as a problem by the majority of the refugees and key informants.

In spite of the fact that refugees face many socio-economic challenges, a fate they share with fellow South Africans, it would appear that they have a much sounder work ethic. In addition there are support systems and resources in place to help refugees to cope with these challenges. There seems to be a lack of education about refugee rights across many sectors.

It is clear that despite South Africa having the most progressive Bill of Rights and adhering to the Refugee Act 130 of 1998, the basic and human rights and freedoms (Sen, 1999) have not always been accorded to refugees. Refugees continue to be socially excluded in many ways.

The chapter presented the profile of the participants, the framework for analysis, and the discussion of the findings that emanated from semi- structured interviews with twelve youth refugees and six key informants. The chapter that follows presents the main conclusions and recommendations emanating from this study.

# CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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## 5. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations proceeding from findings of this study.

### 5.1 CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusions drawn from the research findings will be presented in relation to the research objectives.

#### **5.1.1 Objective One: To Investigate the Key Socio-Economic Challenges Faced by Youth Refugees in the Western Cape.**

The main conclusions drawn from the findings regarding challenges facing youth refugees are:

- **Language**
  - That seven youth refugees and four key informants indicated that being unable to speak English or a South African language affected their ability to access documentation, find jobs and exposed them to anti-foreigner sentiments.
- **Documentation**
  - That all twelve respondents mentioned that getting legal documents was their main challenge upon their arrival in the country.
  - That five youth refugees and three key informants indicated that without legal documents it is very difficult to get a job, besides the fact that refugees are being discriminated against by employers.
- **Education**
  - That nine youth participants were not doing further studies at the time of this research and they wished they had access to bursaries and scholarships to further their education.

- That all twelve refugees indicated that if they were given a chance they would have continued with their education, since most had gone through high school.
- **Employment**
  - That despite negative employer experiences, eleven youth refugees were employed at the time of this research.
  - That in general, four key informants linked difficulties in accessing jobs to a lack of education and necessary skills.
- **Housing/Settlement**
  - That all twelve youth refugees and four key informants mentioned that finding accommodation is difficult in South Africa and that rental charges are too high. Many shared accommodation to cover costs but found that it had added problems.
- **Safety/Security**
  - That most youth refugees indicated that they did not feel protected by the police despite a key informant from the Police Department claiming that they do protect refugees.
- **Health**
  - That it was interesting to find out that eleven youth refugees and all six key informants showed their satisfaction with access to health services.
- **Access to Grants**
  - That regardless of several grants that refugees are entitled to, all the twelve youth refugees were not aware of the type of grants that can be accessed and therefore did not apply.
  - That two key informants felt that the South African government needed to provide social assistance to all refugees.

### **5.1.2 Objective Two: To Find out Which Support Systems and Resources Youth Refugees use to Address their Socio-Economic Challenges**

The main conclusions drawn from the findings regarding support systems and resources used to address various challenges are:

- **Personality Factors**

- That nine youth refugees claimed that it is their personal character particularly their capacity for hard work and resilience that enabled them to cope and deal with the socio-economic challenges.

- **Friends/Family**

- That it was interesting to find out that nine youth refugee mentioned that they have been helped before by their friends while six also indicated that they were being helped by their family.

- **NGO's**

- That all youth refugees were accessing services from their refugee organisations and felt that these NGOs were a source of support to them.
- That four key informants mentioned that trauma counseling is always provided to youth refugees at the organisations that they were involved in.

- **DHA**

- That all youth refugees had contact with the Department of Home Affairs. Although they were poorly treated they recognized the DHA as an invaluable resource for obtaining their much needed papers.

### **5.1.3 Objective Three: To examine whether Youth Refugees are Aware of Legislative Frameworks and Policies that are in Place to Deal with their Socio-Economic Challenges**

The main conclusions drawn from the findings regarding refugees' awareness of policies and legislative frameworks that deal with socio-economic challenges are:

- **Lack of knowledge**

- That nine youth refugees expressed their lack of knowledge on policies/laws/rights.
- That three youth refugees were unsure but felt education should be one of the rights.

### **5.1.4 Objective Four: To Identify Youth Refugee's Perception on strategies to address Various Socio-Economic Challenges they face.**

The main conclusions drawn from the findings regarding youth refugees' perceptions on strategies to address challenges they face are:

- **The Need for Bursaries/Scholarships**

- That eight youth refugees felt that there is need for more bursaries and scholarships for refugees.

- **Gain Understanding of Legislative Frameworks/Policies/Rights**

- That nine youth refugees mentioned that they would like to gain an understanding of their rights and other policies pertaining to refugees.
- That both the youth refugees and key informants placed the main responsibility for rights education on the DHA.
- Three key informants felt that not only should DHA teach about rights but the broader community should be informed and it should be taught in schools.

- **Improve Services at DHA**

- That four youth refugees felt that DHA should improve its services in general.

## **5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the main conclusions drawn, the following are some of the recommendations that have been drawn from the participants and the researchers' opinion.

### **5.2.1 Recommendations to the Department of Home Affairs (DHA)**

- The Department should consider employing translators to help refugees with communication problems.
- The Department should provide multilingual information leaflets about refugee rights, bursaries and other necessary information.
- The Department should consider employing more staff to manage the processing of issuing refugee documents as there is an increasing backlog.
- There is need for strict regulations to guide staff on how they should treat refugees.
- There is a need to educate South Africans about Xenophobia.

### **5.2.2 Recommendations to Refugee Organisations**

- There is need to consider having more awareness campaigns on the rights of refugees.
- There is a need to help youth refugees with getting through the process of getting documentation.

- There is a need for more trauma counseling for refugees.
- NGOs should work more closely with universities such as UCT so that they can help youth refugees to access scholarships.

### **5.2.3 Recommendations to the South African Government**

- The government should consider youth refugees in their education budget.
- There is a need for the Department of Labour to institute more direct guidelines to employees about refugee job seekers.
- South Africa's youth policy should indicate the empowerment of youth refugees.

### **5.2.4 Recommendations for Further Research**

- There is a need for further large scale research to find out the challenges of youth refugees in the whole province and compare it to other provinces.
- There is a need for further research on the impact of refugees on the South African economy so that South Africans are aware of the contributions that youth refugees can make.

## **5.3 CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

This study has explored the key socio-economic challenges facing twelve youth refugees in the Western Cape. The study explored the challenges that youth refugees face in trying to access education, employment, health services, accommodation and housing and social services. In addition to responses from the youth refugees, the researcher also interviewed officials from organisations that are working with youth refugees in the Western Cape. Much more research is needed in this field.

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University of Cape Town

# APPENDIX A: Permission to conduct a study

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



## Department of Social Development

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20<sup>th</sup> February, 2012.

Dear Sir/ Madam

**RE: Permission to Conduct Academic Research**

My name is Elizabeth H.L. Shawa. I am currently studying towards a Master of Social Science Degree at the University of Cape Town in the Department of Social Development. As part of my course I am currently undertaking a study entitled "Exploring the key socio-economic challenges facing youth refugees in the Western Cape". The research is a qualitative exploratory study, which will adopt the use of semi-structured interview schedules. Please find attached my interview schedules.

I hereby request permission to undertake research on youth refugees who use the services of your organization. I would also like to talk to some key informants from the organization in order to get a better understanding of some of the challenges that youth refugees are facing in the Western Cape.

I would like to make it clear that I do not represent the interests of the police, Home Affairs, NGO's, and other Government Departments, Legal Boards and other institutions. The information provided will be strictly confidential. As a researcher, I am bound to comply with the research code of ethics. I am carrying out the research for three reasons:

- To fulfill the obligations of my academic degree
- To provide information on the challenges facing youth refugees
- To advocate for an improvement in policy concerning youth refugees

I am being supervised by Dr Connie O'Brien, a senior lecturer in the Department of Social Development at the University of Cape Town. For any queries her contact details are: Tel: **021650 3480**, Email: **Constance.obrien@uct.ac.za**.

Lastly, thank you in anticipation of your much needed participation. I look forward to collaborating with you.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth H.L. Shawa *E. Shawa*

Tel: **0736715572**, Email: **Shawaelizabeth@yahoo.com**

Supervisor: *Co'Brien*

"OUR MISSION is to be an outstanding teaching and research university  
educating for life and addressing the challenges facing our society."

## **SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

### **(YOUTH REFUGEES)**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

My name is Elizabeth Shawa. I am a Master of Social Science student at the University of Cape Town in the Department of Social Development. I am conducting a research on “Exploring the key socio-economic challenges facing youth refugees in the Western Cape”. I would like to talk with you about your life and your challenges and how you cope with those challenges. Please note that everything you say to me is confidential. You are under no obligation to answer questions that you do not want to answer. I would also like to ask your permission to use a tape recorder so that what you say will be accurately recorded. If you have any queries about this research please feel free to ask me.

#### **2. Profile of the respondents (Identity will not be disclosed)**

##### **1. Can you tell me about yourself (probe)**

- What alias do you want to give yourself? ( For purposes of confidentiality we do not want to use your real name)
- How old are you?
- Can you tell me the highest level of education you completed?
- Are your parents still alive?
- What kind of work did your father/mother do?
- Are you the youngest or oldest member of your family?
- How many brothers and sisters do you have?
- Where is the rest of the family?
- Which country did you originally come from?
- Why did you leave your country?
- What is happening to the rest of the family?
- Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

## 2. Coming to Cape Town and its challenges

- Where are you presently living?
- With whom are you presently staying with? (Explore the challenges)
- Did you experience any problems coming to South Africa? ( Explore challenges at the borders and upon arrival)
- How long have you been here in the Western Cape? (Explore adjustment)

## 3. Making a living

- Can you tell me about your occupation? (Explore)
- How do you manage to make a living?
- What difficulties do you have finding employment here in South Africa?
- Are you working on your own?
- Do you think you have everything that you need that would make your life comfortable within your stay in South Africa?

## **3. The key socio-economic challenges faced by youth refugees in the Western Cape.**

### 1. What are the key challenges

- What are the key socio-economic challenges that you are or have faced since your arrival in the Western Cape? (Explore, education, health, housing, employment, social assistance)
- Which are the 3 most important challenges that have affected your stay in Cape Town?
- Which are the most important challenges facing female youths?
- Which are the most important challenges facing male youths?

### 2. Education

- If you think back on your life, is there anything that has prevented you from gaining more education? (Explore issues in the country of origin, family life)
- What are some of the issues preventing you now from getting further education?
- If you were given a chance would you consider furthering your education?
- Have you made any attempts to furthering your education?

- What are some of your goals and aspirations? (What would you see yourself doing, what would you like to become?)
- What are the biggest challenges to fulfilling your dreams? (Explore money, support, permit)
- Who has assisted you in accessing education?

### 3. Health

- Can you please tell me about your health?
- Are you currently on medication?
- Are you able to access medication when you fall ill?
- Can you tell me about your experience in accessing health facilities?
- What are some of the challenges that you face in trying to access health services?
- How do you deal with such challenges?
- What would you like to change in terms of how you can better access health services?
- Who has assisted you in accessing health services?

### 4. Housing and Settlement

- Can you please describe the community in which you live? (Explore where, attitudes, challenges and support networks)
- Does the community accept refugees and immigrants? (Explore how people get along with each other, problems and challenges)
- Do you feel safe in your home and community? If yes, what makes it safe? If no, what makes it unsafe?
- Are there things that you feel could be done differently in your community?
- Can you please describe your household? (Explore how many people in the house, who pays rent, what is expected of the youth refugee)
- Describe your access to water and electricity?

- What are the services that your community has access to? (E.g. refuse removal)

#### 5. Employment

- Are you presently employed? (If not employed explore why, if yes explore what kind of employment)
- Are you currently looking for employment?
- What has been your experience in seeking employment? (Explore difficulties and challenges)
- How do you deal with such challenges?
- What do you think could be put in place in order for you to easily find employment?
- Who has assisted you with finding employment?

#### 6. Social services

- Are you able to access social services? (Explore separately social grants, banking systems, and police services)
- Which of these services do you find the most difficult to access? (Explore why?)
- Has anyone assisted you in accessing social assistance and services?

#### **4. How youth refugees deal with the socio-economic challenges they face.**

- What is it about yourself that makes it possible for you to deal with the challenges? (Explore personality, characteristics e.g. confidence, hard worker or has necessary support)
- Who has given you the most support in coping with all these challenges?

#### **5. Identifying support systems and resources used by youth refugees in the Western Cape.**

- Which support systems and structures have you used? (Explore the nature of these support systems such as friends, NGO's and other structures)
- How does this NGO provide for your needs?
- Has anything changed since you started accessing services from this organization?
- If yes what has changed?

- Which are the support systems and resources would you need in addressing your socio-economic needs? (Explore)
- Can you tell me some of the ways in which you feel this organization can improve in providing services to refugees?
- Give me some of the examples of how this NGO has helped you in a practical way?

**6. Examining whether youth refugees are aware of legislative frameworks and policies that address refugee issues**

- Do you know of any legislative frameworks and policies that exist to deal with refugees? (Probe whether they know about Human Rights, UN refugee policies, South African policies)
- Are you aware of any other refugee laws or policies?
- Do you know any refugee rights? If yes, which right of yours do you feel has been violated the most? (Please explain)
- How can you access more information about these policies and laws? (Probe if they think NGO's can help them)

**7. Identifying youth refugees' perception on strategies to address various challenges they face.**

- Can you think of any strategies the government can implement to deal with your socio-economic challenges? (Give some examples of what could be done)
- What role do you think NGO's can play to deal with the various challenges that you are facing? (Give some examples of how they could assist you)
- What role do you think you can play to deal with the challenges you face?
- What do you think is the most crucial strategy that could be implemented to address the challenges that refugees face? (Laws, policies, refugee organization)
- Who do you think could really assist in implementing that specific strategy (Home affairs, police, NGO, government)?
- Are there any other questions or comments you would like to include?

Thank you so much for your participation.

## **SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

### **(KEY INFORMANTS)**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

My name is Elizabeth Shawa. I am a Master of Social Science student at the University of Cape Town in the Department of Social Development. I am conducting a research on “Exploring the key socio-economic challenges facing youth refugees in the Western Cape”. I would like to talk with you about the role of your organisation/ Department with regards to the youth refugees in Western Cape. Please note that everything you say to me is confidential. You are under no obligation to answer questions that you do not want to answer. I would also like to ask your permission to use a tape recorder so that what you say will be accurately recorded. If you have any queries about this research please feel free to ask me.

#### **2. Profile of the key respondents (Identity will not be disclosed)**

- Can you please tell me about yourself? (Explore religious background, age, South African citizenship, married, children)
- For how long have you been with the organization? (Explore length of time and experiences gained)
- What is the role of your organization/ department? (Explore, aim, vision, objectives)
- How do you work with refugees? (Explore the nature of direct or indirect involvement)
- What kind of relationship do you have with refugees? (Explore attitudes, perceptions about refugees)
- What kind of qualifications do you have and what experience do you bring to this job? (Explore work experiences, certificates, degree.)

#### **3. The key socio-economic challenges faced by youth refugees in the Western Cape.**

1. What are the key challenges
- What are the key socio-economic challenges that youth refugees face in the Western Cape? (Explore, education, health, housing, employment, social assistance)

- Which 3 of these do you think are the most important challenges that have affected their stay in South Africa?
- Which are the most important challenges facing female youths?
- Which are the most important challenges facing male youths?

## 2. Education

- What do you perceive to be some of the issues preventing youth refugees from getting further education?
- Do you think given a chance youth refugees would consider furthering their education?
- Does your organization/department provide any support with regards to furthering their education?
- Who else should be assisting them (besides this organization) in accessing their education?

## 3. Health

- Are you aware of some of the challenges that refugees encounter in trying to access health services?
- How do you think they deal with such challenges?
- In your opinion what do you think should be done in terms of how they can better access health services?
- In which way does this organization assist them with health services?
- Who else do you think should be assisting them (apart from this organization) in accessing health services?

## 4. Housing and Settlement

- What do you suppose are some of the challenges that youth refugees face with regards to the communities in which they settle?
- In your opinion do you think the South African community accepts refugees and immigrants? (Explore how people get along with each other, safety, problems and challenges)

- What could be some of the challenges that refugees encounter in finding housing and settlement? (Explore Xenophobia, access to water, electricity and other services)
- In which way can this organisation assist them in getting housing?
- Who else do you think should be assisting them (apart from this organisation) with housing and settlement?

#### 5. Employment

- What do you identify as some of youth refugee experiences in seeking employment? (Explore difficulties and challenges)
- How do you think they deal with such challenges?
- What would you suggest could be put in place in order for youth refugees to easily find employment?
- In your opinion who do you think should assist in helping them find employment?
- How does this organization assist in employment?
- Who else should be assisting (apart from this organization) with employment?

#### 6. Social services

- What do you suppose are some of the difficulties the youth refugees face with regards to accessing social services? (Explore separately, social grants, banking systems, and police services)?
- Which of these do you think is the most difficult to access? (Explore why?)
- How does this organization help in assisting them access social services?
- Who else do you think should be assisting (apart from this organization) with social services?

### **4. How youth refugees deal with the socio-economic challenges they face.**

- What do you think makes it possible for them to succeed in dealing with the challenges? (Explore personality, characteristics e.g. confidence, hard worker or has necessary support)

- How does this organization provide support to meet the socio-economic challenges that youth refugees face?
- Which other institution/ organization should be assisting them to deal with their socio-economic challenges?

**5. Identifying support systems and resources used by youth refugees in the Western Cape.**

- How does this NGO/ department provide for their needs?
- Do you think anything has changed since they started accessing services from this organization/ department? (Explore what has changed)
- Can you tell me some of the ways in which you feel this organization/department can improve in providing services to youth refugees?
- Give me some of the examples of how this NGO/department has helped in a practical way?
- What are other support systems and resources do you think should be given to assist the youth refugees?

**6. Examining whether youth refugees are aware of legislative frameworks and policies that address refugee issues**

- In your opinion do you think youth refugees are aware of any legislative frameworks and policies that exist to deal with their wellbeing? (Probe whether they know about human rights, UN refugee policies, South African policies, laws, rights)
- What do you suggest could be a better way through which they can access more information about policies and laws (probe if they think NGO's can help them)
- What are other policies, laws and rights that should be put to address issues of youth refugees?
- Are there any other questions or comments you would like to include?

Thank you so much for your participation.