



**Exploring Challenges Facing the youth not in employment, education, or training
(NEET) under the Restrictions of the COVID-19 Pandemic: The case study of
Khayelitsha Township.**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION	vi
ABSTRACT	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	viii
CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	2
1.3 PROBLEM CONTEXT	3
1.4 RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	4
1.5 RESEARCH TOPIC	5
1.6 AIM OF THE STUDY	5
1.7 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	5
1.8 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	6
1.9 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY	6
1.10 DEFINITION OF TERMS	7
1.11 STRUCTURE OF RESEARCH REPORT	8
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	9
2.1 INTRODUCTION	9
2.2 NEET	9
2.2.1 Poor Education as a Risk Factor of Becoming NEET	10
2.2.2 Poverty Leading to NEET	11
2.2.3 Negative Impacts of NEET	13
2.2.4 Inactive NEET	14
2.2.5 Gender conversations about NEET youth	14
2.2.6 Long and Short-term effects of being NEET	16
2.2.7 Substance Abuse and Youth that is NEET	17
2.2.8 Health Issues Faced by Young People who are NEET	18
2.2.9 South African Youth Unemployment	19
2.2.9.1 <i>Cost of Unemployment and Opportunity Creation</i>	19
2.2.9.2 <i>Health Challenges and Unemployment</i>	19
2.2.9.3 <i>Gender and Unemployment</i>	21

2.2.9.4	<i>Substance abuse and Unemployment</i>	22
2.3	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS	23
2.3.1	Capabilities Approach	23
2.3.2	Positive Youth Development Approach	25
2.4	POLICY AND LEGISLATION	27
2.4.1	National Youth Policy (2020-2030)	27
2.4.2	National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) established by Act No. 54 of 2008. 29	
2.5	CONCLUSION	30
	CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	31
3.1	INTRODUCTION	31
3.2	RESEARCH DESIGN	31
3.3	POPULATION AND SAMPLING	32
3.3.1	Sampling Technique	32
3.3.2	Sample Characteristics / Population	33
3.3.3	Sampling Procedure	33
3.4	DATA COLLECTION APPROACH	34
3.4.1	Data collection Method	34
3.4.2	Data Collection Instrument	34
3.4.3	Data Collection Apparatus	35
3.5	DATA ANALYSIS	35
3.6	DATA VERIFICATION	36
3.7	LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH	36
3.8	REFLEXIVITY	36
3.9	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	37
3.9.1	Avoidance of Harm	37
3.9.2	Informed Consent	37
3.9.3	Deception of Subjects/Respondents	37
3.9.4	Privacy	38
3.9.5	Anonymity	39
3.9.6	Confidentiality	39
3.9.7	Actions and Competence of the Researcher	40

3.9.8	Cooperation with Collaborators	40
3.9.9	Avoiding Exploitation of participants	40
3.9.10	Avoid data analysis faults	40
3.10	CONCLUSION	40
CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS		42
4.1	INTRODUCTION	42
4.2	DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS	42
4.3	RESPONDENTS NEET LEVEL	44
4.4.1	Economic challenges affecting youth’s sense of future socio-economic opportunities and aspirations	48
4.4.1.1	<i>Effects of NEET</i>	48
4.4.1.2	<i>Support Received from Friends and Family</i>	50
4.4.1.3	<i>Cost of Accessing EET</i>	50
4.4.1.4	<i>Stigma Attached to NEET</i>	51
4.4.2	Economic challenges affecting youth’s sense of trust in the system	52
4.4.2.1	<i>Confidence in Resources from Government</i>	53
4.4.2.2	<i>User-friendliness of Government Services</i>	53
4.4.2.3	<i>Transparency of Pandemic Emergency Processes</i>	55
4.4.3	Economic challenges affecting youth’s political participation	55
4.4.3.1	<i>Satisfaction with The Role Played by Government</i>	56
4.4.3.2	<i>NEET Effects on Youth’s Political Participation</i>	57
4.4.4	Economic challenges affecting youth’s sense of security	58
4.4.4.1	<i>Savings for Education, Employment, and Training Seeking</i>	58
4.4.4.2	<i>Access to COVID-19 relief grant</i>	59
4.4.4.3	<i>Effects of COVID-19 restrictions on accessing EET services</i>	59
4.4.4.4	<i>Limiting factors in accessing EET</i>	62
4.5	CONCLUSION	63
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS		64
5.1	SUMMARY	64
5.2	CONCLUSIONS	65
5.2.1	Objective 1: To explore challenges that affect youth’s sense of future socio-economic opportunities and aspirations	65

5.2.2 Objective 2: To explore challenges that affect youth’s sense of security	66
5.2.3 Objective 3: To explore Challenges that affect youth’s sense of trust in the system	68
5.2.4 Objective 4: To explore challenges that affect youth’s political participation	68
5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS	70
References	72
APPENDIX A: ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER	79
APPENDIX B: INTEVIEW GUIDE	80
APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM TEMPLATE	83
APPENDIX D: DEMOGRAPHIC SHEET	85

TABLES:

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics	42
Table 2: Framework Analysis	47

FIGURES:

Figure 1: A demographics chart depicting the background of the respondents.	42
Figure 2: A chart depicting the last time the respondents were in EET/active.	44
Figure 3: A chart depicting the longest time the respondents were employed in months.	45

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

I, Linda Bathembu, hereby declare that the work on which this thesis is based is my original work (except where acknowledgements indicate otherwise) and that neither the whole work nor any part of it has been, is being, or is to be submitted for another degree in this or any other university. I authorise the University to reproduce for the purpose of research either the whole or any portion of the contents in any manner whatsoever.

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Date 01/09/2023

ABSTRACT

This research study explores challenges facing the youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) under the restrictions of the COVID-19 Pandemic using Khayelitsha Township as a case study. According to the first National Youth Policy for South Africa, young people are a vital resource whose prospects are inseparable from those of the country. However, the approaches aimed at reducing youth unemployment in South Africa seem to have failed. It is of this reason that this study aimed to explore challenges facing the NEET youth under the restrictions of the COVID-19 Pandemic. To do so, a qualitative method and open-ended questions are used. A non-probability sampling technique was used since the exact population size of NEET youth in Khayelitsha is not known. Twenty young people between ages of 18-35 years were selected. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews. COVID-19 protocols were followed. Tech's eight steps in coding process was used to analyse data.

The research findings have shown that not being in employment, training, or education threatens the youth's sense of future socio-economic opportunities. As a result, NEET youth cannot afford better life and are likely to have low educational attainment. As such, they find employment seeking expensive. The research findings further revealed that the NEET youth faced security challenges that include the lack of funds for opportunity searching and difficulties accessing COVID-19 relief grant. In addition, the research findings discovered that there were challenges affecting NEET youth's sense of trust in the government system towards creating opportunities for them. Lastly, the research findings showed some challenges affecting youth's political participation such as those who showed apathy from voting and those who were willing to vote for change.

Due to the research findings, this research study recommends that the government needs to work with employers when implementing training programs to ensure that those programs are aligned with the needs of the labour market. The research study further recommends the government to strengthen the anti-corruption system so that it can eradicate corruption as it negatively affects NEET youth. Lastly, practical legislative principles that promote youth employability and security in the labour markets need to be implemented.

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CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa comes from an unjust past set to discriminate against black people at most (Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities [WYPD], 2020). The apartheid government created few policies to address the needs for non-white young people (National Youth Commission [NYC], 1997). As such, youth experienced poor housing opportunities, limited employment opportunities, high levels of crime and violence, and general disintegration into social networks and communities (NYC, 1997). There was hope that things would change after all South Africans were permitted to vote in 1994.

When the apartheid era ended, plans to improve youth development began to take place through the National Youth Commission, published in the National Youth Policy of 2000. Among the plans, it was clear that youth needed to be included when planning policies. In addition, education and skills development were prioritised for the youth through training and skills development system which aimed to increase the number of skilled people to meet needs of the growing economy (NYC, 1997). This was the change South Africans had been waiting for and many were happy with the new democratic government.

Since 2000, there have been adolescents and youth focused policies for innovating youth. These include youth-oriented programmes, and technologies to promote mental health and well-being, prevention of violence and substance abuse, sexual and reproductive health services, promotion of health nutrition and reducing obesity, empowering adolescents, and youth to engage with policy programming on youth health (WYPD, 2020). However, those have not been efficient in preventing or eliminating the ever-existing trends of those challenges mentioned among the youth. As such, we are now being introduced to the new term of not in employment, education, or training (NEET) which threatens youth development in new ways than initially imagined. This results to hopeless youth who the labour market cannot absorb. This is one of the worrisome challenges for the country and has motivated me to conduct this research. In this paper, NEET will be used to refer to not in employment, education, or training. Coronavirus disease (also called corona, the pandemic, COVID-19) is infectious and caused by severe respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). This was firstly identified in Wuhan, China, and has since spread the whole world leading to an ongoing pandemic (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2020). When COVID-19 hit South Africa, most people lost their

jobs because of the restrictions imposed by the government to limit the spread of the disease (Turko & Visagie, 2021). This led to an increase to the youth unemployment.

This research study explores challenges facing the youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) under the restrictions of the COVID-19 Pandemic using Khayelitsha Township as a case study.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is stated in the first National Youth Policy by the National Youth Commission (1997) that young people are a vital resource whose prospects are inseparable from those of the country. Since coming from an unjust past, the government has been expected to assist young people by providing basic needs and services so that they can participate in the country's growing economy. With youth development, the country gains more than just an increase in GDP (NYC, 1997), but a future of good well-being. In addition, youth will be fully developed and able to transfer knowledge and skills to the following generations. As a result, this will lead to a sustained wellbeing for all citizens. Conversely, the lack of youth development results in an undesired future, with youth being exposed to vulnerabilities and poverty because of the lack of opportunities to improve their lives. Not only is the youth doomed in that future, but the country as well.

The increasing unemployment rate among young people threatens their future and the country's. Challenges faced by NEET youth in South Africa range from poor-quality basic education, lack of career guidance, limited access to information, high costs of work-seeking, low job growth, and exposure to crime and violence (Baldry, Graham & De Lannoy, 2019). Statistics South Africa released a report in the first quarter of 2021 that indicated an official unemployment rate among youth to be 43%, and 9.3% among university graduates (Statistics South Africa [SSA], 2021). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) – in Holte, Swart and Hiilamo, (2019)- says that youth falling under this category are at risk of having their future work career permanently 'scarred' by the prolonged spells of not working.

As indicated in Webb (2021), most of the unemployment interventions are concerned with the supply side rather than the demand side. As such, young people experience low wages, job insecurity, racism, and sexism in their jobs (Webb, 2021). In addition, for those that come from townships that are further from the central business districts (CBD) the costs of entering

the labour markets are high especially when considering transportation (Webb, 2021). As such, Khayelitsha is about 30 km from Cape Town CBD, far from where most employment opportunities can be found (Pijper, Breetzke & Edelstein, 2021). For the NEET youth from previously disadvantaged areas like Khayelitsha Township, the cost of keeping up with the labour market's demands is very expensive. Amongst other challenges, Khayelitsha is riddled with high crime levels due to lack of competence in law enforcement, 'mob justice' incidents provoked mostly by gangsterism, and sexual violence (Pijper et al., 2020). Not only is Khayelitsha covered in poverty, but it has so many social ills that mostly accompany the trend of poverty making it hard for youth to escape.

The approaches that have been used do not focus on limiting youth unemployment as implemented policies and interventions have not yielded desired outcomes. The issue of NEET continues to affect black and coloured young people because of historical, gendered, and racial factors (Holte et al., 2019). Interventions on the demand side of unemployment are needed to secure youth from being excluded and exploited by the labour markets. We must understand how young people navigate the system when trying to find employment and what needs to be implemented in these policies. This research study explores challenges faced by youth in Khayelitsha Township who are not in employment, education, or training.

1.3 PROBLEM CONTEXT

Like other townships in South Africa, Khayelitsha was formed during apartheid to push black people further from the city but close enough to provide cheap labour. The Group Areas Act of 1950 classified residential areas by racial groups and the Coloured Labour Preference Policy which favoured coloured people more than black people in the labour market (Webb, 2021). That caused many black people to lose their jobs due to the Coloured Labour Policy and houses closer to the city due to the Group Area Act of 1950 (South African History Online [SAHO], n.d). They were then moved to this newly created urban settlement for black people who were legally allowed to be closer to Cape Town for means of employment or have been in the city for more than 10 years (SAHO, n.d). Labour market was then divided in such a way that coloureds were given preference into semi-skilled occupations and the black people continued with low wage jobs that required no skills (Webb, 2021). Unemployment for black people was enforced through the system of apartheid. The legacy of such beginnings would result in more challenges, especially when no proper interventions have been used.

Today, Khayelitsha is a partially informal township about 30 kilometres from the Cape Town CBD (Pijper, Breetzke & Edelstein, 2020). The township is synonymous with extreme poverty and socio-economic deprivation (Pijper et al., 2020). As reported in the census of 2011, the township has multiple sub-places such as Bongani TR Section, Bongweni, Ekuphumleni, Graceland, Griffiths Mxenge, Harare/Holomisa, Ikwezi Park, Khayelitsha SP, and many more others (Statistics South Africa [SSA], 2011). At the time of the census, population was just about 400000 with 118 809 household's and the average size of each household was about 3.30 (SSA, 2011). Only 36% had completed matric to those aged 20 and above, 62% of the labour force was employed, 74% of households had R3200 or less for their monthly income, 45% of households were informal dwellings, and 99% of the population are blacks who predominantly speak IsiXhosa (SSA, 2011).

Moreover, high crime levels have been reported in Pijper et al. (2020) and that it is due to lack of competence in law enforcement. Over the past years, ' mob justice' incidents provoked mostly by gangsterism. In addition to those crimes, sexual violence was also reported with 1 in 3 children under the age of 18 years likely to be preys of rape and sexual assault. Not only is Khayelitsha covered in poverty, but it has so many social ills that mostly accompany the trend of poverty. As such it is fitting to explore challenges facing the youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) under the restrictions of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

1.4 RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As a young person raised in the rural parts of South Africa in the Eastern Cape, I aspired to migrate to Cape Town in hopes of getting quality education and employment. The interest on youth development in Townships has always fascinated me, and therefore, shows the researchers interest in the topic. Exploring the views of youth in NEET, this study aims to contribute significantly to the understanding of the youth falling under the NEET criteria and how they navigate their everyday lives to try to make a difference. An in-depth understanding of how youth navigate the system to access resources and services is needed to understand the gaps that cause youth to face challenges when accessing assistance promised on the government legislations such as the National Youth Policy. This will also help add more knowledge to the NEET's growing concept and provide information on how youth navigate the system during COVID-19 restrictions. This will not only allow better policy implementation for youth but will also ensure that development does indeed take place and lives are improved.

1.5 RESEARCH TOPIC

The topic of this research is to explore challenges facing the youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) under the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic: the case study of Khayelitsha Township.

1.6 AIM OF THE STUDY

The study aim is to explore challenges facing the youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) under the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic: the case study of Khayelitsha Township.

1.7 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.7.1 To explore the challenges in accessing economic support and resources affect the young people's sense of future socio-economic opportunities and aspirations.

1.7.2 To explore challenges in accessing economic support and resources affect the young people's sense of security.

1.7.3 To explore challenges in accessing economic support and resources affect the young people's sense of trust in the system.

1.7.4 To explore the challenges in accessing economic support and resources affect the young people's political participation.

1.8 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.8.1 How do the challenges in accessing economic support and resources affect the young people's sense of future socio-economic opportunities and aspirations?

1.8.2 How do the challenges in accessing economic support and resources affect the young people's sense of security?

1.8.3 How does accessing economic support and resources affect the young people's sense of trust in the system?

1.8.4 How do the challenges in accessing economic support and resources affect the young people's political participation?

1.9 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The main assumptions of this study are as follows: young people are facing challenges under the restrictions of the coronavirus pandemic. As such, they cannot have a sense of future socio-economic opportunities and aspirations. Young people are facing challenges threatening their sense of security as they are experiencing hunger due to the lack of income and loss of jobs. They face challenges which affect their trust in the system as restrictions prohibit them from going out to find employment or attend their training and education. They also face challenges threatening their political participation through demotivation from having no policies that cushion them through crises. Even when trying to escape unemployment, means to do so are more difficult now that there are COVID-19 restrictions. Having no means of income or financial security can affect more than just a person's purchasing power, but all aspects in that person's life. This study can prove or validate these assumptions.

1.10 DEFINITION OF TERMS

CBD: Central Business District.

COVID-19: Coronavirus disease (also called corona, the pandemic, COVID-19) is infectious and caused by severe respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). This was firstly identified in Wuhan, China, and has since spread the whole world leading to an ongoing pandemic (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2020)

DHET: Department of Higher Education and Training

EET: employment, education, or training.

Khayelitsha: Township located at about 30Km from Cape Town. *Khayelitsha* is a Xhosa word for “New Home” (Webb, 2021).

NEET: not in employment, education, or training (NEET). According to the international definition, NEET age definition includes young people between the ages of 15-24 years (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2017).

NMW: National Minimum Wage

NSFAS: National Student Financial Scheme

NYC: National Youth Commission

NYDA: National Youth Development Agency

NYP: National Youth Policy

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

POPIA: Protection of Personal Information Act, No. 4 of 2013

SSA: Statistics South Africa

UIF: Unemployment Insurance Fund

UN: United Nations

WHO: World Health Organisation

WYPD: Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities

Youth in South Africa: The National Youth Policy identifies youth as people between the ages of 15 years and 35 years (NYC, 1997).

1.11 STRUCTURE OF RESEARCH REPORT

Chapter one introduces the study. This chapter does that by stating the problem of challenges faced by youth in South Africa since the introduction of democracy. This chapter then presents the statement of the problem of NEET youth in South Africa and failure of government policies in addressing issues faced by youth. The rationale of the study is stated, and terms are clarified.

Chapter two of this research study presents a literature review of studies about NEET youth, education, and youth unemployment. This is followed by a theoretical framework of capabilities approach, positive youth development approach, legislation, and policies. The literature review provides lens of how to understand challenges faced by youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions in Khayelitsha Township.

Chapter three discusses the methodology used in this study. The research design, population and sampling, data collection approach, and data analysis methods are discussed.

Chapter four presents' findings from twenty in-depth interviews conducted in Khayelitsha on challenges faced by youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions in Khayelitsha. The findings are presented in themes and categories with subcategories.

Chapter five presents the main conclusions of the research study regarding the challenges faced by youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) under the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. The chapter also presents recommendations regarding what can be done to ensure that young people in townships are in education, employment, or training.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses three sections: overview of previous research in NEET, theoretical frameworks, and policies and legislations. The first section discusses NEET literature review and South African youth unemployment. The second section discusses Capabilities Approach and Positive Youth Development Approach which has been used to analyse challenges faced by NEET youth under the coronavirus pandemic. The last section of this chapter discusses policies and legislations implemented in South Africa for youth.

2.2 NEET

The term NEET first made its appearance in the United Kingdom and during the recession it was also mentioned in the United States of America (Dickens & Marx, 2020). The term NEET is often used in contrast to EET (in education, employment, or training) as opposed to non-NEET. On one hand, NEET includes young people who are not engaging meaningfully, are vulnerable, and at a risk of depending on the state or others (Dickens & Marx, 2020). On the other hand, there is EET youth who are classified by their success or working towards being positive contributors to society (Dickens & Marx, 2020). OECD has defined NEET as the youth not in employment or not active and not involved in education or training. Put simply, NEET stands for those that are not in education, employment, or training.

Challenges in defining the NEET category are associated with the general view of the term by the communities. As a result of NEET's inactivity, they are often named the jobs hanging around off-licences late into the night (Smith, 2007). They are linked with negative activities such as painting wall, with poor grammar, single mothers (Smith, 2007). As such, a young woman raising her children at home in a committed partnership would be categorised as a NEET, so is a recent graduate looking for employment (Smith, 2007). However, in this paper, South African NEET youth refers to any persons between the ages of 15 to 35 years who are not employed, in training or at school.

In South Africa, NEET has been separated into two different categories, the inactive NEET and the unemployed NEET (DHET, 2017). Those who are not actively seeking for jobs, in school, or in training are referred to as inactive NEETs (DHET, 2017). A person may be classed as an inactive NEET for a variety of reasons, including taking care of a home (home

maker), health issues, being too young, too elderly, retired, discouraged from finding job, and other unspecified causes. The unemployed NEET are those who are actively seeking employment and are available to begin working but are not currently employed.

NEET youth in South Africa is defined by combining the two terms, youth, and NEET. The youth definition in South Africa includes those that are from 15 years to 35 years (NYP. 2030). This accounts for 37% of the population in South Africa, according to Statistics South Africa (2019). Although that is the case, the NEET youth may be different from country to country because of the youth age definition and it may focus on specific age groups to fit the context to which the writer focuses on. As such, United Nations defines youth as those that are between ages of 15 to 24 years (UN). We may see the Statistics South African focus on this group. However, in this paper NEET youth in South Africa will be based on the South African youth definition that is between ages of 15 to 35 years.

2.2.1 Poor Education as a Risk Factor of Becoming NEET

Risk factors of falling under People that are not in education, employment or training differs from country to country. Everington, Feng, Ralston, and Dibben (2019) describe the likelihood of becoming NEET in Scotland as youth with no qualifications, with teenage pregnancies, and youth that live in areas where there is high level of people that are not in employment, education, or training. Similarly in Latin America and the Caribbean they identify the NEET group as those that have a few years of education (Alvarado, Conde, Novella & Repetto, 2020). In Sri Lanka, NEET youth is said to consist of youth mostly between 20 to 24 years and have low or very high levels of education, illiterate in English. (Abayasekara & Gunasekara, 2019). For Australia, results displayed that the NEET group was more likely to include Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and have low educational attainment, and some have a disability (Holloway, Rickwood, Rehm, Meyer, Griffiths & Telford, 2019; Mitrou, Haynes, Perales, Zubrick & Baxter, 2021). The relation between lower education levels and the likelihood of falling under NEET for youth indicated in these countries is the same for South African context.

In South Africa, a detailed picture of the NEET youth is provided by Baldry et al. (2019) through different sections that cover important dimensions that young people experience as challenges or deprivations. Covered on these dimensions are challenges and deprivations relating to schooling. Young people from low socio-economic settings describe school environments as uncondusive to learning and teaching because of factors such as lack of materials, overcrowded classes, lack of subject choices, demotivated teachers, and lack of career guidance (Baldry et al., 2019). All those factors combine and lead to poor academic performance, in other cases young people leave school without completing matric.

As Baldry et al. (2019) states, there is evident connection between better schooling and employment opportunities. This connection is explained well in Salisbury (2016) through reports on returns to schooling that shows that tertiary has more returns, followed by secondary schooling, and primary schooling has the least returns. In addition, Sayed and Sodien (2003) discuss the differences between those that went to private schools and those that went to public schools, and findings show that the youth who attended public schools face exclusion from the labour markets. As such, when these young people who have experienced poor quality education continue to face exclusions from tertiary institutions that range from culture ground and financial struggles which eventually exclude them academically for not being able to afford additional assistance, study materials and so on (Sayed & Sodien, 2003). As a result of poor education, young people face unemployment and un-employability.

Post-school has proven to be another dimension that presents deprivations and challenges for young people. Young people struggle to be admitted to universities and colleges and that is due to lack of financial support for applications, registrations, and the cost of studying (Baldry et al., 2019). In addition, financial assistance like the National Student Financial Scheme (NSFAS) might be available but they often do not cover for the application and registration fees in some institutions and that becomes a hindrance to those young people. On other cases, when others manage to pay for application and registrations, they end up dropping out because of not being able to afford additional costs of studying (Baldry et al., 2019). As a result of the lack of information and late applications which do not get processed, some young people decide to take a “gap year” (Baldry et al., 2019). Completing high school does not guarantee instant entry to further education and financial difficulties are proven to be a big hindrance towards studying.

2.2.2 Poverty Leading to NEET

South Africa is labelled as one of the most unequal countries in the world with more than 50% of the population living in poverty (Francis & Webster, 2019). Poverty in South Africa is said to be the result or the legacy of Apartheid (Ngxiza, 2012). Khayelitsha, as part of the settlements formed for black people during apartheid, has one of the highest concentrations of poverty in Cape Town (Ngxiza, 2012). As such, more than 50% of its households are informal dwellings where water and electricity are not easily accessible (UCT article). The poverty in this township also manifests through high levels of unemployment, low household income, and underdeveloped and lack of economic base (Ngxiza, 2012).

Poverty has been identified as a factor that leads to NEET for youth. In Latin America and the Caribbean, Alvarado, Conde, Novella and Repetto (2020) identified NEET group as those that come from poorer households. In Sri Lanka, NEET youth is said to consist of females and people in ethnic and religious minorities coming from low-income households in remote areas (Abayasekara & Gunasekara, 2019). The connection between poverty and NEET for youth seems to be common and a key driver. The consequences of poverty also relate to other social environmental problems such as crime common to poor neighbourhoods.

This is also true to South African NEET youth as it is reported in Baldry et.al (2019) that more than half of young people in South Africa live in poverty. In addition, these young people come from families that depend on only one income in which they depend on other members of the family.

Karyda (2020) states that there is existence of high levels of NEET youth in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods. As a result, that has a negative impact on youth's outcomes as those areas have high crime rates. Karyda (2020) accords this argument with the social organisation theories that postulate that crime and adequacy in deprived neighbourhoods have severe effects on young people's development. This shows that the disadvantages from the environment that one come from has a contribution to their NEET status.

2.2.3 Negative Impacts of NEET

The NEET group consists of both vulnerable youth and non-vulnerable youth with widely varying experiences, attributes, and needs (Abayasekara & Gunasekara, 2019). To better understand the difference between vulnerable and non-vulnerable NEET youth we can differentiate between long-term NEET and Short-term NEET. We can also differentiate the vulnerable and the non-vulnerable NEET by looking at motivations of becoming NEET.

The status of being NEET can be categorised into periods and each different period has its own effects on a young person's life. In Ralston, Everington, and Dibben (2016), it is stated that the NEET status can be either long-term and various for some, while it can be short and a transition phase with minimal effects to others. Su, Wong and To (2020) describe the long-term NEET as the most vulnerable to social exclusion because of their prolonged lack of social recognition as a student, worker, or trainee. In addition, young people who have been in the NEET state are characterised by showing no motivation and having low self-esteem. Furthermore, they have low effort and diligence. Lastly, they have a lack of clear goals for the future, and limitation of personal capacity to pursue aspirations or goals.

Stea, Abildsnes, Strandheim and Haugland (2019) state that young people not in education, employment or training have been identified as a vulnerable group, they are at risk of poor social functioning, have lower educational achievement, and have limited job opportunities and financial hardship. The NEET status can have an impact both at the current period and in future. Difficulties shared by youth when moving from adolescence to adulthood can carry a risk of negative consequences later in life. Those negative consequences can result to a person staying under the NEET category for a long period of time. This means that they will be unemployed, because of being unemployed they will experience a sense of dissatisfaction with life (Amendola, 2021). In addition, they will experience a lack of sense of control in their lives. Lastly, some negative impacts of staying in NEET for an extended period include poor health, drug use, and crime (Ralston et al., 2021).

2.2.4 Inactive NEET

While negative impacts of NEET might be true for some parts of the group, it is not true for the whole NEET group. A better way to look at the NEET group is to adopt the perspective that Robert, Romanello, Lesieur, Kergoat, Dutertre, Ibanez, and Chauvin (2019) used on their study in France. As such, they state that the NEET group comprises of several subgroups and each group has its own characterisation and needs. With this perspective of NEET youth, we can broaden our view and see different subgroups and individuals existing under this group. In addition, this enables us to remove the fallacy of assuming that all people under the NEET category are vulnerable.

Using this view to classify young people under the NEET group can also help identify some of the major categories of NEET. In Gutiérrez-García, Benjet, Borges, Ríos, and Medina-Mora (2018) on their study in Mexico they identify three subgroups of NEET youth which are: the homemakers, the non-homemakers, and those who do not know what to do with their lives. The homemakers group consist of people with motivations such as being mothers and wives and this group was mostly dominated by females (Gutiérrez-García et al., 2018). From this categorisation, those who choose to be homemakers consist of vulnerable and non-vulnerable NEET youth depending on their circumstances. For instance, a person may choose not to be in education, employment, or training so that they can take care of other members of the family like the elders or young children. Housewives or homemakers fall under the NEET category. However, they do so to help within the households. In this case, falling under the NEET category serves as a positive factor.

2.2.5 Gender conversations about NEET youth

Gender conversations about NEET youth include binary gender classifications where scholars differentiate between male and female experiences, or between women and men. As such, Tanton, McDonagh, Cabecinha, Clifton, Geary, Rait, Saunders, Cassell, Bonell, Mitchell, and Mercer (2021) found that for sexual and reproductive health issues, women and men who are NEET were more likely to report cases of unplanned pregnancies and unprotected sexual intercourse. In addition, men showed to have harmful health tendencies and women showed to have poor health outcomes (Tanton et al., 2021). There is no representation of other gender groups for youth that are not in employment, education, or training and this shows an interesting gap that can be studied in future.

Gender consistent mental health problems were associated with a higher risk of being NEET for both females and males. As a result, externalising problems is associated with an increased risk of being NEET among males, while it is the process of internalising problems that is associated with a higher probability of being NEET in females (Plenty, Magnusson & Låftman, 2021). No research has been done to accommodate those that do not identify with the binary gender norms.

Many scholars such as Alvarado et al., (2020), Gutiérrez-García et al., (2018), and Yang (2020) have argued that females are most likely to fall under the category of NEET. As stated above, under NEET characterisation, the NEET category is mostly made up of females in many countries such as China, Mexico, Caribbean, Sri Lanka (Alvarado et al., 2020; Gutiérrez-García et al., 2018; Yang, 2020). As such, in China it was reported that married women and female migrants were more likely to be not in education, employment or training (Yang, 2020). In addition, the case was different for migrant men as they were less likely to fall under NEET. Few countries reported that males make up most of the NEET youth and that has been mentioned in Holloway, Rickwood, Rehm, Meyer, Griffiths, and Telford (2018) in the context of Australia, and by Karyda (2020), where they show women have lower probability of becoming NEET.

The status of not being in education, employment or training in females is mostly associated with roles that females are expected to play in the society. In a study conducted by Gutiérrez-García et al. (2018), findings showed that 62% of women were occupied with domestic duties and that causes them to fall under the not in employment, education, or training category. In addition, those who reported that they were assuming domestic roles were mostly married females. As such, under the NEET categories introduced in Gutiérrez-García et al. (2018), they make up most of the homemakers which are either married, parenting, or doing both. Societal expectations on gender roles are partly contributing to the existence of the NEET phenomenon and research of how gender affect females that NEET are required.

2.2.6 Long and Short-term effects of being NEET

The status of not being in education, employment or training can differ depending on the period spent. For young people that are not in education, employment or training for a short time, the status may have little to no effects as it may be just a transitional phase (Ralston, Feng, Everington & Dibben, 2016). For others that are experiencing the status of not being in education, employment or training the consequences might be scarring as they face the possibility of being confronted by household poverty and social disadvantage (Ralston et al., 2016; Rodwell, Romaniuk, Nilsen, Carlin, Lee & Patton, 2018). As such, those who spend more time with the NEET status tend to occupy a lower occupational position and that shows the scarring that NEET status causes to occupation over time (Ralston et al., 2016). In addition, the scarring effects might be more vivid to those that have high education attainment. Failure to enter employment early could result to loss of opportunity to attain occupational level commensurate with a higher level to education, leading to accumulation of disadvantages and greater difference within levels of educational attainment (Ralston et al., 2016).

Reasons of not being in education, employment, or training for a long-term vary from person to person. The reasons for having a NEET status can include young people who are struggling with mental health and behavioural problems and because of that they are not able to make an easy transition from school to employment (Rodwell et al., 2018). In addition to that, some young people experience health challenges and struggle to participate in education, employment, or training (Rasalingam, Brekke, Dahl & Helseth, 2021). As stated in Ralston et al. (2021) that people who are not in education, employment or training are likely to become economically inactive during their prime time. The inactivity due to varying reasons is likely to lead to poverty in the long-term.

2.2.7 Substance Abuse and Youth that is NEET

Young people that are not in education, employment or training are facing long-term scarring effects which lead to an accumulation of disadvantages as stated above. Part of those disadvantages includes substance abuse. On a study conducted by Stewart, Berry, Przulj, and Treanor (2017) reported that NEETs were significantly more likely to be current smokers, not participate in sports and have an unhealthy body mass index. In agreement, Stea et al. (2019) reported that those who were not in education, employment or training had higher odds of using cannabis, smokeless tobacco, smoking cigarettes, having an irregular consumption of breakfast, lunch, and dinner, not consuming enough vegetables, fruit and berries and fish, and sleeping for short periods during weekends than students. In addition, this highlighted the likelihood of NEETs to participate in cancer related health behaviours that those without the status of NEET (Stewart et al., 2017). This shows the increased risks that those who are not in employment, education, or training face because of being unhealthy and their use of tobacco.

Among those who were using substances, it was found that NEET non-homemakers were more likely to use substances and had substance disorders, some also had suicidal behaviours compared to NEET homemakers (Gutiérrez-García et al., 2018). In addition, another group of NEETs who were likely to be substance abusers were those who did not know what to do with their lives. This behaviour poses health risks to the lives of these young people. As a result, youth that is not in education, employment or training showed higher risk for poorer physical health (Robert et al., 2019). Those who were in NEET were not very much involved in sports or exercise (Stewart et al., 2017). Consequently, youth not in education, employment or training is more likely to experience disadvantage and poorer general health outcomes (Tanton).

2.2.8 Health Issues Faced by Young People who are NEET

It has been reported that young people who are not in education, employment or training are likely to struggle form mental problems. One study has indicated that girls that are not in education, employment or training have poorer self-perceived health and poorer mental health compared to girls attending secondary school (Stea et al., 2019). This has been accorded by Lee, Hermens, Scott, O'Dea, Glozier, Scott, and Hickie (2017), and Plentry et al. (2021) that the prevalence of mental illness among the youth are associated with not being in education, employment, or training. These young people are said to be at an increased risk of depression as they have reported more symptoms associated with depression in a study done by Berry, Easterbrook, Empson, and Fowler (2019). In addition, those who were in education, employment, or training were not showing much depression compared to the youth not in employment, education, or training. The relation between poor mental health and the status of not being in employment, education or training is positive and raises a concern.

The NEET status has been said to create mental health challenges to young people but those that have mental health challenges are also in high risk of not being in education, employment, or training. As such, young adults with long-term mental health challenges are likely to be NEET by the age of 21years compared to those who do not have long-term mental challenges (Rasalingam et al., 2021). A study on individuals with psychosis showed that those who were not in education, employment or training were no likely to disengage from the treatment that those who were active upon entry (Maraj, Mustafa, Joobar, Malla, Shah & Iyer, 2019). In this instance, the status of NEET was an advantage for those who had to attend treatment for mental challenges and being vocationally active while attending psychosis treatment disadvantaged youth as they disengaged from the treatment. This emphasises the impact that mental health has on youth as the high probability of having mental health challenges can lead to NEET.

2.2.9 South African Youth Unemployment

2.2.9.1 Cost of Unemployment and Opportunity Creation

Escaping unemployment in South African has been proven to be more complicating as it has been discussed by De Lannoy, Graham, Patel, and Leibbrandt (2020) when they recognise different barriers existing that contribute to high unemployment among youth. As such, they discuss that even in the case where jobs become available, young people coming from poor communities would still experience exclusion by the labour market as “spatial segregation, a lack of social and cultural capital and the high cost of job search” do affect their chances (De Lannoy et al., 2020). This high cost of job search is one of the most difficult things to overcome as it requires an individual to have money before getting a job. Thus, making it more difficult to avoid remaining in the state of economic need.

While economic challenges and risks are mostly blamed on the individual’s behaviour, governments are also to blame for not paying more attention to creating life-long opportunities for youth. As reported in Arko-Achemfuor (2016) that youth is left out when issues of land reform and food security are being addressed, as well as the related accompanying problems. In addition, this happens although the youth is the most group affected by socio-economic problems, and this is proven by the unemployment rates that are as high as 70% among the group. Advocating for youth to be included in land reform and agriculture is what is required to help curb the high unemployment rates among youth (Arko-Achemfuor, 2016). Moreover, this is an opportunity for youth to exercise ownership of the land and take responsibility for production and businesses. The historical effects of colonialism and apartheid, including the group area acts and forceful removals of many black South Africans on their established land requires government to work hard towards balancing land and resource ownership among different races in South Africa.

2.2.9.2 Health Challenges and Unemployment

Youth unemployment has effects that may affect all aspects of a person’s life including their overall health. Cloete (2015) states that unemployment affects the whole well-being of a person. Mental health becomes at risk when one experiences unemployment as they experience decrease in overall life satisfaction, general well-being and self-esteem, symptoms of depression for those who have been unemployed for extended periods (Cloete, 2015). Above

that, unemployment has psychological effects that include increased anxiety, absent self-confidence, pessimism, fatalism, alcoholism, apathy, suicide, and stress-related psychosomatic disorders such as headaches, stomach ulcers, dermatitis, bronchitis, and heat related disease (Cloete, 2015). It is by no means doubttable that these unemployment effects have dire consequences to one's health.

In a study conducted in Soweto, a low-income suburb of Johannesburg, Cohen, Ware, Pioreschi, Draper, Bosire, Lye, and Norris (2019) show effects of the lack of income that are experienced by young women and the pressures they get from their families which have been proven to lead to mental challenges. As such Cohen et al. (2019) state that direct results of poor mental health caused by poverty do lead to addictive behaviour such as alcoholism and drug use. This representation of rippling effects caused by unemployment have been indicated in the study done by Cloete (2015) as the study states that unemployment can be associated with social ills that include crime, divorce, suicide, and child abuse.

2.2.9.3 Gender and Unemployment

When talking unemployment, it is important to raise issues of gender inequality to understand gender challenges in accessing opportunities. Females seeking employment get exposed to situations where they are forced to be involved in transactional sex to receive employment and experience sexual harassment in the labour force (Baldry et al., 2019; Patel, Khan & Englert, 2020). Sex in this case is being used to earn money directly, or to find a job. Either way, this comes at a cost that poses risks to the lives of these young women.

Gender inequality is mostly promoted by economic dependency of women to men. Economically, women tend to depend on men, and this causes women to have less power in sexual relations (MacPherson, 2014). Waxman, Humphries, Frohlich, Dlamini, and Ntombela (2016) found that young women were willing to be involved in a sexual relationship for economic stability. In addition, this behaviour has been described a coping mechanism of a community in which women have no agency and normalise unequal relationships and are in relationships for material gains that are achieved through sex (Waxman et al., 2016). Often, they are in relationships with older men as they can provide for them financially (Waxman et al., 2016). In this case, women loose power when negotiating relationship matters and receive no protection against sexual violence (Waxman et al., 2016). Women see these transactional relationships to escape poverty as they receive a relief from financial problems. Therefore, inequalities caused by financial gains outweigh the importance of other aspects of life such as their health and protection from violence.

George, Amin, de Abreu Lopes, and Ravindran (2020) argue that biological and social factors play a big role in young women's vulnerability to sexual and transmitted disease. With less education and information on sexuality than boys, they have higher risk of unsafe sex as well as no negotiation power and intimate partner violence (George et al., 2020). In Erasmus, Knight, and Dutton (2020), and in Pillay, Manderson, and Mkhwanazi (2020) they discuss challenges to access pre-natal care for young mothers who mostly did not intend to become pregnant. In both studies it has been found that these young mothers experience challenges that are accompanied by being pregnant which include the bad treatment they receive from the nurses as they are being viewed as ignorant, irresponsible, and immature. Moreover, the perception that these young women get on health care systems tends to inhibit them from accessing quality services (Pillay et al., 2020). Therefore, unintended pregnancies among these young mothers are affected by their low power to negotiate within their relationships.

As a result of engaging in sexual relations for financial reasons, they suffer consequences of unplanned pregnancies due to having no power to discuss the use of condoms.

2.2.9.4 Substance abuse and Unemployment

A more recent shocking discovery of unemployment social ills amongst youth in KwaZulu Natal is the relation between violent crimes and unemployment in which the failure of the labour markets to consume most youth has resulted to murder (Mazorodze, 2020).

While that is the case, Cheteni, Mah, and Yohane (2018) have found a relation between crime, drugs, and unemployment amongst youth offenders. They discuss their discovery of how these young offenders use drugs to be able to commit crimes. Conversely, Hunter (2021) displays a picture of how young black men who are victims of unemployment have turned to the heroin drug and how the rise of “*amaphara*” has affected families because of petty crimes. As such, findings have shown that in families where “*amaphara*” live, members are always worrying and stressing about their possessions at home as these drug users tend to take items around the house to sell so they can afford heroin (Hunter, 2021). Young people can therefore use drugs to be able to commit crimes as shown in the first case or commit crimes to be able to afford drugs. No matter what the decision is, unemployment seems to be one of the underlying reasons behind committing crime.

De Wet, Muloiwa, and Odimegwu (2018) found that illicit drug use is another risky behaviour found among young people. Consequently, this results to dependency, physical diseases such as liver and kidney failure and social consequences that involve the loss of employment, broken families, and imprisonment (De Wet et al., 2018). Hendricks, Savahl, and Florence (2015) states that peer pressure and leisure boredom among young people in low income or impoverished areas in Cape Town have been found to influence substance use. These young people from these low-income areas are left alone by their parents with no access to leisure activities and they spend most of their time with their peers (Hendricks et al., 2015). Thus, they engage in risky behaviours such as substance use. As such, the South African youth risk survey has shown that about 49.6% of young people use alcohol, followed by 12.8% that uses cannabis, and other drugs with significant lower percentages.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.3.1 Capabilities Approach

Using Sen's capabilities approach can help us understand how youth navigated to be in education, find employment, or secure training during the world crisis of COVID-19. Nussbaum (2000) describes the capabilities approach as what people can do and to be provided that all life deserves the dignity of the human being. According to Sen (2001), unfreedoms must be removed to ensure that development takes place as such, examples of sources of unfreedom are poor economic opportunities, tyranny and poverty, and systematic social deprivation. As a result of these unfreedoms we get people who cannot satisfy their hunger, malnourishment, indeed of remedies for treatable diseases, in need of shelter, proper sanitation and drinking water. In the context of this paper, we investigate how unfreedoms lead to NEET in youth.

Sen has argued in his book that development is a process of expanding the real freedoms enjoyed by people and those freedoms have determinants including social and economic arrangements and civil and political rights (Sen, 2001). He continues to discuss two reasons for the importance of freedom one is evaluative - "assessment of progress has to be done primarily in terms of whether the freedoms that people have are enhanced" - and the other is effectiveness - "achievement of development is thoroughly dependent on the free agency of people (Sen, 2001)." On effectiveness, Sen (2001) notes the importance of free agency as a major drive of development and how it boosts freedoms of other kinds. As such, there is an instrumental perspective consisting of five developmental freedoms used to help advance general capability of a person which are: political freedoms; economic facilities; social opportunities; transparency guarantees; and protective freedoms (Sen, 2001). In addition, these may complement each other and are interconnected, and they can help us investigate the promotion of better life. These are the freedoms that have informed the objectives of the study as well as the main research questions shown on the previous chapter. The five freedoms that are instrumental to this perspective are discussed below:

As described by Sen (2001), political freedoms refer to the opportunity for one to participate in appointing a leader in governance and set policies of how they should be governed, scrutinize, and criticize authority, have a political freedom of expression, and press that is uncensored, and freedom to choose political parties, and so on. This freedom is important

as it helps to investigating if the policies concerned with youth are effective in ensuring that the status of NEET among youth is reduced.

Economic facilities are opportunities for persons to enjoy and use economic resources for purposes of consumption, production, and exchange (Sen, 2001). In addition, economic entitlements each person has depend on resources made available. This freedom is used to evaluate those entitlements made available to young women and men in South Africa to ensure that they can afford necessities and costs of employment seeking, education, and training attainment.

Social opportunities refer to arrangements made by the government towards education, health, and many other things (Sen, 2001). For the context of this research the social arrangements are based on youth's access to better education, employment, or training.

Transparency guarantees deal with the openness that is required by the people and freedom to deal with one another under guarantees of disclosure or lucidity, to ensure society functions on some basic presumption of trust (Sen, 2001). This is the level of openness on all services, policies and legislation, and government arrangements relating to young people.

Protective security ensures social safety net for preventing affected population from being reduced to misery, starvation, and death (Sen, 2001). In the context of this study, the NEET youth is vulnerable. This freedom is key at evaluating the arrangements made by the government to ensure that young people do not end up in misery or death because of risky behaviour because of not being able to escape NEET.

2.3.2 Positive Youth Development Approach

Using Positive Youth Development Approach can help us form a direct social emphasis on the impact of NEET youth on the field of Social Development. Moreover, this development approach more suitable to accompany the challenges faced by youth not in employment, education, or training under the restrictions of COVID-19. Positive youth development is an asset-based approach aimed at focusing on factors present when youth experiences healthy physical, emotional, intellectual, and social development by shifting its focus away from youth's negative behaviour (Krasny, 2020).

This approach assumes that all youth can become successful adults when given appropriate support (Krasny, 2020). For youth to develop to their full potential, positive youth development focuses on their interactions with their social and physical environment (Krasny, 2020). In addition, this approach considers both the youth assets and characteristics of the setting that allows youth to develop. These assets are self-efficacy, pro-social norms, and meaningful relationships with peers and adults, as well as social, emotional, cognitive, behavioural, and moral competence (Krasny, 2020).

When positive youth development approach is applied successfully the individual – context relations form (Krasny, 2020). Youth develops the ability to contribute to their community and environment, therefore, changing the context in which they can realize their assets (Krasny, 2020). Feedback between youth and their surroundings can be mutually beneficial to the youth and the environment to which they exist in (Krasny, 2020).

One of the approaches to positive youth development are the "Six C's" by Learner (2011) defined as competency, confidence, connection, character, caring, and contributions to the community and civil society.

Competency: Competency includes social refers that to interpersonal skills including communication, assertiveness, and conflict resolution. It also includes cognitive that refers to critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, planning and goal setting. Academic refers to school achievement, attendance, and graduation rate. Furthermore, it includes vocational that refers to work habits and career explorations. In the context of this study, competence is based on how NEET youth can participate socially, cognitively, academically, and vocationally.

Confidence: Self-esteem, self-efficacy, identity, belief in the future. Confidence is used to evaluate NEET young women and men's confidence and beliefs to be successful when doing what is required for success.

Connections: building and strengthening relationships with other people and institutions such as school. In this study, this is used to evaluate NEET youth's abilities in building and strengthening those mentioned relationships.

Character: decreasing engagement in health-compromising (problem) behaviours, respect for cultural and societal rules and standards, a sense of right and wrong (morality). For the context of this research, character is used to evaluate ways in decreasing NEET youth's engagement in behaviour that compromises their health, their respect for cultural and societal rules and standards, as well as their morality.

Caring: empathy and identification with others (in environmental education this would include nonhuman life). In this study, caring is used to evaluate these NEET young people's empathy and identifications with others.

Contribution: to one's community through civil engagement. In this study, contribution is used to evaluate how these NEET young people give back to their community through civil engagements,

2.4 POLICY AND LEGISLATION

2.4.1 National Youth Policy (2020-2030)

The National Youth Policy is developed by the Department in the presidency of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities (WYPD, 2020). This document has been reviewed under the Coronavirus Pandemic, as such, the document states that health is mostly prioritised during this period as well as protection of young people against the negative impacts of COVID-19. There are five pillars that make up the themes of the policy have been indicated below: Quality Education, Skills, and Second Chances; Economic transformation, Entrepreneurship and Job creation; Physical and Mental Health Promotion including COVID 19; Social Cohesion and Nation Building; and Effective and responsive youth development machinery (WYPD, 2020).

Above all five pillars, Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is the cross-cutting theme which threatens current jobs as technology replaces most tasks previously done manually by human labour (WYPD, 2020). This policy advocates that youth must be kept up to date regarding technological advances.

With a goal to build and enhance capabilities amongst youth in hopes of fostering responsible and contributing members of society, the objectives of the policy are stated below:

- a) Integrate youth development into the mainstream of policies, programmes, and the national budget.
- b) Promote positive youth development outcomes in addressing the needs of young people and building their assets.
- c) Support young people, particularly those outside the social, political, and economic mainstream.
- d) Ensure responsiveness by linking young people with relevant service providers.
- e) Promote and advocate for young people's access to quality services as a means to facilitate their smooth transition into independence.
- f) Strengthen a culture of patriotic citizenship among young people to help them become responsible adults who care for their families and communities.

g) Strengthen the capacity of key youth development institutions in delivery of coordinated package of services for the youth.

h) Facilitate young people's engagement in building a better South Africa, Africa, and a better world. (WYPD, 2020).

Based on the five pillars discussed above, this paper will put focus on two pillars which relate to the topic of this study, exploring challenges faced by youth falling under the NEET criteria in Khayelitsha Township under the under the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, and those are: Quality Education, Skills, and Second Chances; and Economic transformation, Entrepreneurship and Job creation.

The document highlights the intention to improve access to quality education and ensure economic participation and transformation (WYPD, 2020). In addition, education will unlock the potential of young people and build their capabilities. Moreover, the document states government efforts in creating job opportunities through public employment programmes targeted at youth. Furthermore, included are promising policy initiatives created in partnership with public, private, and civil society such as youth employment services (YES) and ETI. Monitoring and evaluation have been indicated as lacking to ensure the continuity of such programmes.

Challenges faced by youth which relate to education, employment and training have been indicated in the policy and among those the document puts to light the high drop-out rates and low transitions from schools, low skills level and skills mismatch, endemic and structural youth unemployment, and low entrepreneurial spirit (WYPD, 2020). As such, those challenges are acknowledged to have been amplified through the coronavirus pandemic, especially the increasing unemployment rates under the lockdown restrictions.

Proposed interventions under quality education, skills and second chance are:

- Ensuring universal access to quality ECD and early learning programmes for all
- Teacher development and curriculum review to promote problem solving, employability, entrepreneurship, and adaptation to the 4IR
- Implement inter-disciplinary early intervention programmes for healthy development of young people
- Provide second chances to facilitate completion and re-engagement with educational institutions

- Career guidance for technical, technology-based, and productive sectors of the economy, and ongoing support for young job seekers
- Increase opportunities for quality post-school skills training for all (WYPD, 2020)

Proposed interventions under economic transformation, entrepreneurship and job creation are:

- Implement the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative Pillars for holistic youth development
- Introduce Basic Universal Income for Unemployed Youth
- Implement set-asides for youth across sectors
- Implement improved public employment schemes that provide meaningful work opportunities for youth
- Rural development and land reform for young people
- Cross-cutting interventions for economic transformation and job creation
- Development and support of youth-owned businesses and cooperatives (Spurring Entrepreneurship) (WYPD, 2020).

2.4.2 National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) established by Act No. 54 of 2008.

This Act is for the creation and coordination of youth development matters, to provide in a governed and managed manner, to give regulation of its staff matters and financial affairs, to administer funds related to demutualisation Levy Act of 1998 under a new name, replace the National Youth Commission Act of 1996, as well as providing for any related matters (National Development Agency [NYDA], 2008).

The Act aims to prove competencies and capabilities in its operations through the national youth services and social cohesion; economic participation; policy, research, and development; youth advisory and information services; and national youth fund (NYDA, 2008).

To achieve this goal, the agency functions to conduct investigations that it considers necessary, considers recommendations and all suggestions concerning the youth (NYDA, 2008). In addition, The Umsobomvu Fund is administered through the NYDA. Moreover, the agency provides services such as career guidance services, access to information, services of

the National Youth Fund, employment opportunities. It also provides financial assistance to small, micro, and medium enterprises, and cooperatives owned by youth (NYDA, 2008). Other services provided by the agency include mentoring, bridging programmes, training and all other services regarded necessary for the youth (NYDA, 2008).

2.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed three sections: literature review, theoretical frameworks, and policies and legislations. The first section discussed NEET literature review and South African youth unemployment. The second section was on Sen's Capabilities Approach and Positive Youth Development Approach. The last section of this chapter discussed the National Youth Policy (2020-2030) as well as the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) established by Act No. 54 of 2008.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter, the methodology that was used in this study is discussed. The first part of this chapter discusses the research design that has been used in this study. The following part is on population and sampling and the subheadings discussed are sampling techniques, sampling characteristics, and sampling procedure. This is then followed by the data collection approach in which the data collection method that has been used is discussed, followed by data collection instrument, and data collection apparatus. The last part of this chapter discusses the data analysis method, data verification, reflexivity, and ethical considerations.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Qualitative research has been described as an approach which involves the exploration of emerging questions and understanding meanings made by individuals or groups (Creswell, 2014). In addition, this approach supports looking at the individual's perspective and the importance of rendering the complexity of the situation. Creswell (2014) argues that in qualitative study the purpose of the researcher is to seek for meaning made by participants. To be able to explore the question of this research a qualitative method was used, and open-ended questions were asked (Creswell, 2014). This made it possible to collect meanings from respondents and at the same time bring their personal values to the research (Creswell, 2014).

3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

3.3.1 Sampling Technique

I used a non-probability sampling technique since the exact population size of NEET youth in Khayelitsha is not known. This sampling method has been described as a method used when the odds of selecting an individual are not known by the researcher as there is no certain population size available (De Vos, Delpont, Fouche & Strydom, 2005). Under the non-probability sampling, used the snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is described as a technique directed at the identification of the difficult to reach individuals (De Vos et al., 2005). Snowball sampling requires a researcher to collect data from few members of a targeted population located. In addition, the first few participants located enables the researcher to locate more participants of that population through referrals (De Vos et al., 2005). I involved participants in the process of identifying more suitable participants to meet the targeted number of my study. I followed the POPIA for the lawful acquiring and processing of personal information which is exempted for research purposes (Protection of Personal Information Act, No. 4 of 2013). As a result, I gave out letters of invitation to the first few participants. On the letter of invitation, I placed my contact details for those that are interested to take part on the study to contact me. This process limited the need to acquire contact information of the referred participants.

Khayelitsha was selected based on feasibility, time, and its size and distance from Cape Town CBD. As a young person who completed school in Khayelitsha, it was easy and safe for me to navigate the township in search of community youth leaders and participants. This was due to the familiarity I have with the neighbourhoods and existing high school links. The size of the township made it possible for me to get participants willing to participate regardless of the conditions and restrictions of COVID-19. There were more restricting factors in Khayelitsha compared to other Townships near Cape Town, one of those included the distance from the Cape Town CBD and challenges that come with travelling. Khayelitsha located further away from Cape Town compared to other Townships such as Langa or Gugulethu.

3.3.2 Sample Characteristics / Population

Representativeness is a very important part of sampling. This means that a sample should have approximately the same characteristics as the population relevant to the study in question (De Vos et al., 2005). The respondents that I sought in this study were young people between the ages of 18 and 35 years. This definition of youth is broader than the NEET youth definition by the Department of Higher Education and Training (2017), that is 15 to 24, and excludes those that are from 15 to 17 years as they are still regarded as children attending school. Moreover, this provided extended experiences up to 35 years, as the national youth definition stipulates (NYP, 2021). In addition, as included in the topic of the research, these young people were from Khayelitsha and were not in employment, education, or training. In other words, they fall under the NEET category.

In this research, all respondents were between 18 and 35 years. The youngest respondent was 18 years, and the oldest respondent was 32 years. There were 11 males and 9 females interviewed. At the time of the study, all respondents were not in school, the youngest respondent had recently dropped out of school. At least 12 of the respondents had completed grade 12; only two respondents had a tertiary qualification (graduated). The remaining 7 respondents do not have grade 12 and one more has a college certificate.

A researcher must identify the population and size, if the size is unidentifiable the individuals in the population must be defined (De Vos et al., 2005). In this study, the population size is unidentifiable. I managed to interview 20 young people. The reason for this sample size is motivated by the qualitative nature of this study. In addition, this number is feasible for an exploratory study.

3.3.3 Sampling Procedure

The POPIA states that all research projects that involve human participants - including where any personal information is collected, processed, or stored - are required to undergo a prior ethics evaluation from a suitably constituted research ethics committee (Protection of Personal Information Act, No. 4 of 2013). In the context of this study, I gained the ethics approval from the Department of Social Department at the University of Cape Town.

To establish the initial contact for the first set of respondents I approached a local community leader in Khayelitsha to recommend and identify young people that are not in employment, education, or training. When the first few respondents were identified, I received

more participants from their referrals until the desired sample size was reached. To ensure that the chain of referrals does not become broken, I asked the first few respondents to give me at least five names of people they know who fit the sample characteristics.

My procedure of gaining access was through ethical clearance from the Department of Social Development at the University of Cape Town. As such, I presented a simplified format of the ethical clearance on the letter of invitation to the study. In that way, the respondents were aware of what they are consenting to. When I got the first few respondents, the first step was to inform them about the study. The second step was to ask respondents to sign consent forms to give me permission to interview them and use the data obtained. Those who agreed to participate were given consent forms and signed them. The consent forms also explain the procedure of the information handling after the interview.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION APPROACH

3.4.1 Data collection Method

This is a qualitative study, as such, the data was collected through semi-structured interviews (de Vos et al., 2005). The in-depth interviews were conducted as one-on-one interviews. As noted in de Vos et al. (2005) that all interviews require a format and follow a process. Necessary tools were used to ensure that the interviews follow a specific format. Moreover, COVID-19 protocols have been followed.

3.4.2 Data Collection Instrument

A semi-structured interview schedule is best used when a researcher aims to get detailed information from participants or their perception on a topic (de Vos et al., 2005). This paper brings focus to the issue of youth falling under the NEET (not in employment, education, or training) group in Khayelitsha Township and how they navigate their challenges under the National Lockdown restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For these in-depth interviews to follow a specific format, there was an interview guide drawn to ensure that. In addition, a recording tool was used to capture everything that is discussed in an interview and to make sure that as a researcher I engage with the respondent thoroughly.

3.4.3 Data Collection Apparatus

Recordings were used in this study as notes cannot not be taken during the interviews. The reason for not taking notes during the interview is because I wanted to fully engage in the interview without interrupting and asking the interviewee to repeat or wait for me to finish writing a statement. Recordings have been recommended by researchers as they allow a fuller record than the notes (de Vos et al., 2005). The use of recordings in interviews carries its own limitations such as making the interviewees feel uncomfortable. Therefore, it is important to ask for permission from the interviewees and make them aware of the recorded session (de Vos et al., 2005). I asked for the permission to record at the beginning of the interview and explained the reason behind using a recording device and shared who will have permission to the recordings.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of data analysis is to ensure that the data is classified using as many categories as possible to attempt to understand and describe patterns and themes from the respondents' perspectives (Creswell, 2014). When analysing the data, I used Tech's (1990 as cited in Creswell, 2014) eight steps in coding process which are listed below:

1. Read all the transcripts thoroughly to get some ideas. I noted those ideas as I read.
2. I selected one interview transcript, the most interesting one in the case of this study. I reviewed it while asking myself questions to get an understanding of the underlying meaning.
3. I grouped topics according to their similarities.
4. I made abbreviations of topics and wrote those codes next to suitable sections. I continued to evaluate if new codes can be seen. The transcripts were highlighted into different colours to indicate which ones were similar in terms of the respondent's response.
5. I used suitable and descriptive words for the topics and turned those topics into categories. In addition, I reduced the categories by grouping related categories together. Other themes ended up being merged because of the respondent's similar response.
6. Finally I decided on which abbreviation to use for each category, put it in alphabets as a code.
7. I collected all data from each category in a single place and analysed it preliminary.

8. The codes were compared to the transcripts to provide a deeper understanding.

3.6 DATA VERIFICATION

To examine whether the data were collected and reported with care and accuracy, the validity of the data must be established (de Vos et al., 2005). In addition, validity is the assessment of whether the conclusions are true from the perspective of the researcher, the participant, or the audience of an account (Creswell, 2014). In this study three methods have been adopted for data verification. Firstly, this study has been examined by my research supervisor who is an expert with knowledge of qualitative research techniques. Secondly, I have clarified my bias in the first chapter under the rationale of the study. Lastly, to paint a complete and accurate picture of the procedures employed in this study, data collecting, and analysis techniques have been described in depth.

3.7 LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH

The first limitation of this study were COVID-19 restrictions. Most interviews were conducted outside, with participants wearing face masks and maintaining 1.5 meters social distance. As a result of those restrictions, taking notes of factors like facial expressions was limited. This might have an impact to the responses received from the respondents.

The second limitation was having limited resources. I was not able to get respondents from other parts of Khayelitsha. This was both due to limited research time and finances. With sufficient resources, it would be interesting to conduct this study over a longer period to measure any changes or stabilities.

3.8 REFLEXIVITY

Creswell (2014) states that reflexivity is more than advancing biases and values in the study, it is also to show how the researcher's background may shape the direction of the study. As a researcher of this study, and as a young person who lives in Khayelitsha, I am aware or some of the challenges that youth face. However, I am not aware of the challenges faced by young people not in education, employment, and training. In this study, I wanted to understand the experiences of NEET youth's experiences and how they navigate the system to find opportunities under the restrictions of COVID-19.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

3.9.1 Avoidance of Harm

Creswell (2014) states that a researcher should avoid collection of harmful information and foresee the possibility of disclosed sensitive and harmful information during data collection. According to de Vos et al. (2005), there are two ways in which subjects can be harmed, physical and emotional harm. The researcher's duty is to protect participants. In this study, I explained the process of the research and my expertise to participants. They were aware of the study, and they were allowed to withdraw from the interviews for any reasons which may threaten their psychology. Questions that invoke harm were avoided.

3.9.2 Informed Consent

It is necessary to have informed consent as it allows participants to fully comprehend the study and be able to make a voluntary well thought decision of participating (de Vos et al., 2005). The South African Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) specifies that the researcher must have the onus proof of the consent and respondents are allowed to withdraw on consent anytime (Protection of Personal Information Act, No. 4 of 2013, 2013: Sections 9-12). Participants should not be pressured into signing consent forms and participation should be seen as voluntary (Creswell, 2014). Participants in this study were not pressured to sign the consent forms. In addition, they were allowed to withdraw their consent at any stage of the research as the POPIA permits. I did explain the extent of their involvement and availed myself to answer all arising questions and concerns before, during, and after the interviews.

3.9.3 Deception of Subjects/Respondents

De Vos et al. (2005) mentions that the deception of respondents happens when the researcher discloses information from the participants or gives false information, verbal or written, to ensure participation with a possibility that participants would reject taking part should they know the truth. In addition, Creswell (2014) states that participants need to understand their active involvement in the study. In this study, participants received verbal and written aim of the study before the interviews began. This was done to avoid false expectations

from the participants. Participants were told that this study is purely conducted for academic purposes. No false promises or expectations were raised to participants.

3.9.4 Privacy

Privacy of participants can be affected by hidden apparatus such as hidden cameras, one-way mirrors, or microphones (de Vos et al., 2005). In this study, participants were informed when such apparatuses will be used. In addition, the interviews were conducted in a private venue with no disruptions.

De Vos et al. (2005) continues to state that it is the researcher's duty to protect the participant's right of privacy. The information that was gathered will be between the researcher and the supervisor, for supervision purposes only. In addition, I disassociated the names from the responses during the coding and recording just as stated in Creswell (2014). I ensured that all the conditions for the lawful processing of personal information laid out in POPIA are complied with at the time of the determination of the purpose of processing and during processing (Protection of Personal Information Act, No. 4 of 2013, 2013: Section 8).

3.9.5 Anonymity

De Vos et al. (2005) states that ethical issues become relevant when participants are assured of anonymity and the information that is given by participants should be disguised anonymously. For this study, participants are not assured of true anonymity as I know who they are. In addition, for participants that do not want to be anonymous on the final report, I have informed them of the possible risks of non-confidentiality, as stated in Creswell (2014), such as the inclusion of data in the final report. However, information that infringes the rights of others remains concealed (Creswell, 2014). The responses and identities of participants remain anonymous on the final report. Their names will not be revealed under no circumstance.

3.9.6 Confidentiality

In de Vos et al. (2005) it is stated that confidentiality places a strong obligation to the social worker to guard the information provided. In this study, all information that the participants provided has been handled confidentially. The participants were told that the information they provide will be handled confidentially and only the researcher and the supervisor, for supervision purposes, will have access to the information.

I handled the information with confidence by following Creswell's (2014) reporting, sharing, and storing the data ethical guidelines. Those include the following: providing accurate account of the information; check accuracy of data with participants by using different strategies; avoid plagiarism by giving credit to the words of others and using direct quote marks for exact words used from participants; avoid disclosing information that will harm others; anticipate the consequences of conducting research in Khayelitsha, communicate clearly using an appropriate language (Creswell, 2014). I have adhered to the POPIA which states that responsible parties must ensure that personal information is kept secure to maintain confidentiality and integrity, and to prevent data breaches (Protection of Personal Information Act, No. 4 of 2013, 2013: Sections 19-22). As a result, I will report any data breaches to the Information Regulator.

3.9.7 Actions and Competence of the Researcher

It is the researcher's duty to ensure that he or she is competent and adequately skilled to undertake the proposed study (de Vos et al., 2005). In addition, Creswell (2014) states that a researcher must respect the potential power imbalances. I have evaluated the possible risks and advantages of this study. It is my responsibility to ensure that I fulfil all promises that have been made to the participants. In this study, the data and results of the study have been reported correctly and that was made possible with the help of my supervisor. It is also my duty to be aware of the power imbalances that exist between me as a researcher and the participants.

3.9.8 Cooperation with Collaborators

It has been stated in de Vos et al. (2005) that colleagues are sometimes formally or informally involved in a research project. They continue to say that the colleagues often contribute to in selecting the relevant problem, drawing suitable sampling frame, and deciding on which research design should be employed (de Vos et al., 2005). Regarding this research, the problem area was selected collectively with my supervisor. We decided on the topic of the research, and I individually decided to focus on NEET youth living in Khayelitsha.

3.9.9 Avoiding Exploitation of participants

In avoiding exploitation of participants in this research, I followed what has been stated in Creswell (2014) by giving some reciprocity back to participants for their involvement in the study. This was done in the form of sharing the final report with the participants. In addition, respondents were given R30 to cover for the local travelling fees to and from the interview site.

3.9.10 Avoid data analysis faults

In my data analysis, I provided a report on all findings. As stated in Creswell (2014), I did that in a way that avoids going native, a way that does not "take sides" by favouring participants. I disclosed all findings, this includes reporting on findings that may be contrary to the themes (Creswell, 2014). Lastly, I reported diverse perspectives of the study topic (Creswell, 2014).

3.10 CONCLUSION

In this Chapter, I discussed the methodology that were used in this study. The first part of this chapter discussed the research design that was used in this study. This is followed by the part on population and sampling and the subheadings discussed were sampling techniques, sampling characteristics, and sampling procedure. Then followed by the data collection approach in which the data collection method used was discussed, followed by data collection instrument, and data collection apparatus. The last parts of this chapter discuss the data analysis method, data verification, reflexivity, and ethical considerations.

CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents findings from in-depth interviews conducted with twenty respondents. The central discussion of this paper is the challenges they face as the youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) under the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. The chapter contains 4 main sections. Firstly, section 4.2 begins with a presentation of the demographic profile of the respondents. Secondly, section 4.3 outlines the respondents' NEET level analysis follows this. The last part of this chapter, section 4.4 presents major findings of this research, and it does that by dividing the finding into four themes.

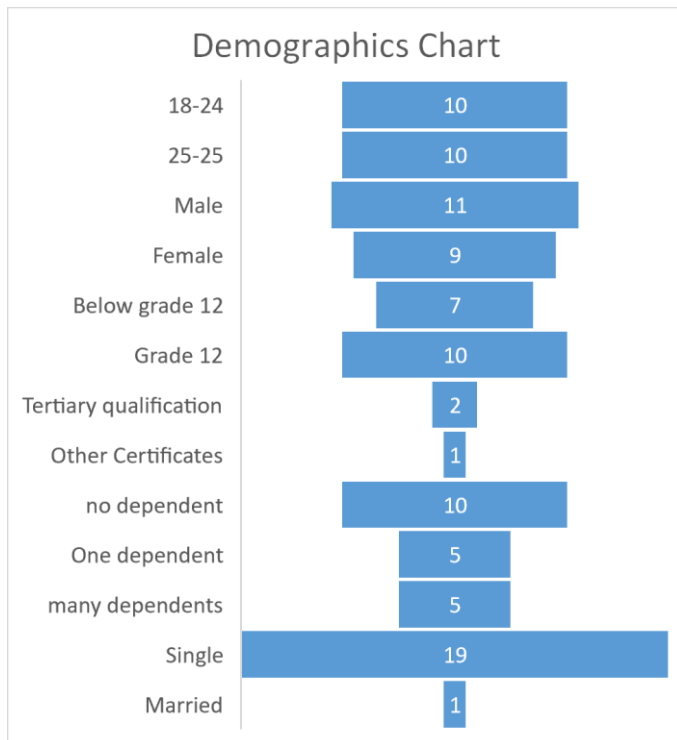
4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

Age cohort	18-24	10
	25-25	10
Gender	Male	11
	Female	9
Education	Below grade 12	7
	Grade 12	10
	Tertiary qualification	2
	Other Certificates	1
Dependents	None	9
	One	5
	Many	6
Marital status	Single	19
	Married	1
Respondents	20	

Source: Field Research (2022)

Figure 1: A demographics chart depicting the background of the respondents.



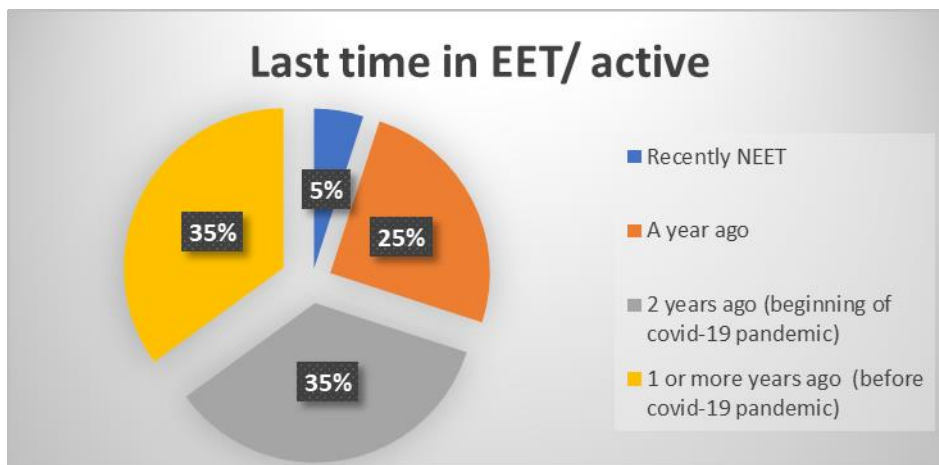
Source: Field Research (2022).

Table 1 and figure 1 present the demographic profile of respondents. A detailed table of the demographics of respondents can be found attached on annexure D. The research targeted young people in Khayelitsha that are represented. The descriptions displayed relate to the youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) under the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. All respondents were between 18 and 35 years. As shown in table 4.1, the youngest respondent was 18 years, and the oldest respondent was 32 years. There were 11 males and 9 females interviewed. At least 12 of the respondents had completed grade 12; only two had a tertiary qualification. The remaining 7 respondents do not have grade 12 and one more has a college certificate. Ten respondents indicated that they have no dependents, five indicated one dependent, and the other five indicated more than one dependent. Nineteen respondents were single and only one responded indicated to be married.

4.3 RESPONDENTS NEET LEVEL

All respondents were not in employment, education, or training by the time they were interviewed. They all indicated that they knew nothing about the NEET phrase. The following charts indicate their responses when asked about the last time in employment, education, or training and the longest time they have been employed.

Figure 2: A chart depicting the last time the respondents were in EET/active.



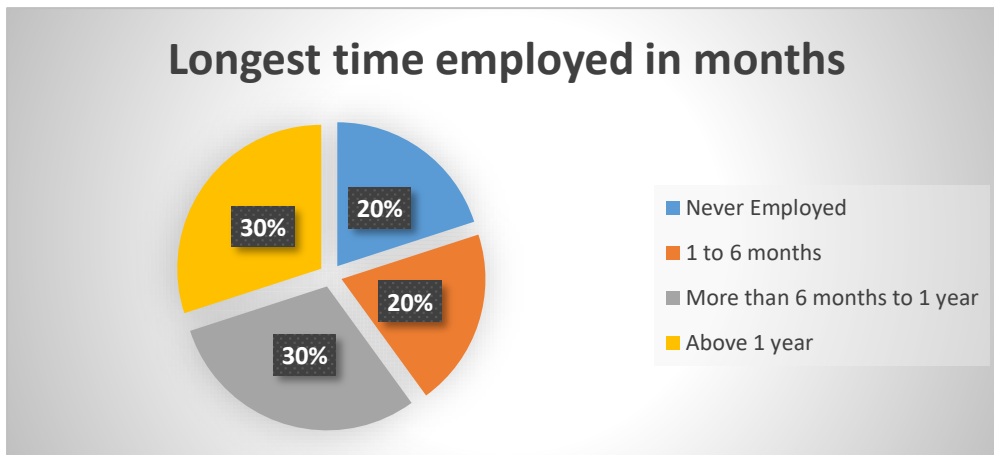
Source: Field Research (2022)

The Figure 4.2 above aims to find the length of inactivity period for the selected respondents. The NEET status can be either long-term and various for some, or a short transition phase with minimal effects to others (Ralston et al., 2016). This helps us determine the number of respondents who have been NEET for the longest time and those recently enrolled. It also helps us determine the number of respondents who started being NEET after implementing COVID-19 restrictions.

As shown in figure 4.2, only 5% of the respondents have recently been active in employment, education, or training. Consequently, 25% of respondents indicated they were active about a year ago. A huge percentage of respondents, 70% indicate to have been inactive for more than 2 years, as such 35% or respondents were last active at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic while the other 35% were last active before the year 2020. This chart also shows that many respondents became NEET as the pandemic restrictions were announce. Other studies have shown that groups who have always been more vulnerable – such as women, African/Blacks, youth, and less educated – have been disproportionately negatively affected

by the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown (Ranchhod & Daniels, 2020). It is 65% of the respondents who are now in NEET since the beginning of the pandemic, this is a sum of those who indicated to be in NEET recently, a year ago, or two years ago when the nation lockdown started.

Figure 3: A chart depicting the longest time the respondents were employed in months.



Source: Field Research (2022)

Figure 4.3 presents the longest time that respondents have been employed. 20% of the respondents indicated to have not been employed before. Another 20% indicated to have had 6 months or less time in employment. Those that had spent more than 6 months to a year accounted for 30% of the respondents. While the last 30% of respondents indicated to have been previously employed for more than a year.

This section analyses key themes that arise from the respondents' answers. The responses are grouped into four themes. The first theme examines challenges affecting youth's sense of socio-economic opportunities and aspirations. The second theme analyses the challenges affecting youth's sense of trust in the system. The third theme analyses the affecting youth's political participation. The last theme analyses the challenges affecting youth's sense of security.

4.4 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section analyses the key findings of this study according to the respondents' answers on questions asked. The questions were asked under the 4 themes. The first theme, in section 4.4.1, discusses challenges affecting youth's sense of socio-economic opportunities and aspirations. The second theme, section 4.4.2, discusses challenges affecting youth's sense of trust in the system. The third theme, section 4.4.3, discusses challenges affecting youth's political participation. Lastly, section 4.4.4 discusses challenges affecting youth's sense of security. Table.2 below represents a framework of analysis developed from the findings. On this table, themes, categories, and their subcategories under the themes are presented.

Table 2: Framework Analysis

THEMES	CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES
Challenges affecting youth’s sense of socio-economic opportunities and aspirations.	Effects of NEET	Dependability
		Inability to provide for others
		Incomplete education
	Support Received from Friends and Family	Information and motivation
		Financial assistance
	Cost of Accessing EET	Data bundle costs
		Transportation costs
	Stigma Attached to NEET	Uselessness of NEET
		Disrespect towards NEET youth
		Avoiding responsibility
Challenges affecting youth’s sense of trust in the system.	Confidence in Government	Dissatisfaction with government services
		Government means are not enough
	User-friendliness of Government Services.	Use of smartphones to access government resources
	Transparency of Pandemic Emergency Processes	Corruption on food parcels Abrupt end to COVID-19 relief grant
Challenges affecting youth’s political participation.	Satisfaction With the Role Played by Government.	Lack of information on opportunities
		Usefulness of the COVID-19 relief grant
	NEET Effects on Youth’s Political Participation.	Apathy to voting
		Voting for change
Challenges affecting youth’s sense of security.	Savings for EET Seeking.	Lack of funds
	Access to COVID-19 Relief Grant	No access due to pending UIF
	Effects of COVID-19 Restrictions on Accessing EET services	No activity due to lockdown restrictions
		Inability to use internet and devices for education
		Dropping out from school because of reduced schooling days
	Limiting Factors in Accessing EET	Location
		Age
		Gender

Source: Field Research (2022)

4.4.1 Economic challenges affecting youth's sense of future socio-economic opportunities and aspirations

Respondents were asked to share economic challenges that affect their sense of security. This theme aimed to find the kinds of EET resources available to these young people. In addition, it was to find inhibiting factors that stop these young people from securing education, employment, or training. As such, respondents shared their experiences and touched on tools and places they attend to access EET resources. They shared the kinds of support they receive from their surroundings. They also shared the financial implications of accessing EET resources. Lastly, they shared their views on the stigma surrounding youth not in employment, education, or training.

4.4.1.1 Effects of NEET

Respondents shared the impacts that the NEET status has on their lives and how it impacts their families. The first challenge that was shared was the inability to provide financially. On one hand, respondents shared how the NEET status stops them from providing for themselves. They highlighted the effects of having to depend on others.

- (1) Not being employed, firstly, has affected me in a way that when you wanna do something for yourself and you don't have money, you have to ask for money. And you get depended on people, and it's not nice to be depended on people. So, it's not nice in that way (Respondent 2, female, 23)*
- (2) I don't even have those finances. I make means. I have to ask from people. I have pride... I must humble myself and go beg, and kneel to someone to give me money to go to an internet café to print a CV. (Respondent 3, female, 24)*

On the other hand, some respondents share how they could not provide for their children as parents.

- (1) There are a lot of things, for example I have children, I can't provide for their needs. I end up requesting for assistance from my family and that doesn't feel good. (Respondent 17, male, 29)*
- (2) Not being able to afford and support your children, you know when you've birthed, and you are not working, there are things that they need, and you cannot provide them. So, that aspect of not being able to live the life that you want to leave, like the entertainment life for example, there are restricting things because you are not working. The unemployment life affects a lot. Not being able to provide, I'd say. (Respondent 7, male, 26)*

As narrated in example 1 and 2, the respondents shared their difficulties as they are not in employment, education, or training. Some shared how they are not able to provide for themselves. In example 4 and 4 they shared how they are not able to provide for their children. In addition, they shared how they had to ask from other people to assist them. Asking for assistance meant that they had to sacrifice their pride. Amendola (2021) has reported that dissatisfaction and lack of sense of control are part of the difficulties faced by the NEET youth. The inability to provide causes one to be dissatisfied with the kind of life they live. Moreover, they do not have control of their lives as they must rely on the support received from other family members. Furthermore, they must lower their pride and ask for assistance from other people.

The second challenge these young people face is the lack of education, training, and experience. Respondents shared that they were unprepared for the positions they wanted to apply for. This lack of preparedness for work is mostly caused by incomplete education, lack of training, and experience.

- (1) ... I did not finish school, I ended up in grade 12. It is difficult to get to other places because you must have qualifications and things like those. (Respondent 17, male, 29)
- (2) ... most of the posts I get require grade 12 at which I did not get the chance to be able to finish school with my own reasons. So, it is like that, my school and my report are for grade 11. (Respondent 8, female, 27)
- (3) I feel like some posts that are being advertised want education. Maybe their requirements. I have matric, and then I have one and a half year and then maybe they will need a degree, or a diploma and I don't have it. I feel like if maybe I finished my studies, by now it was going to be more easy. (Respondent 3, female, 24)
- (4) I wasn't hired because I did not have higher education... It was a cleaning job, office administration, and at a restaurant. (Respondent 11, male, 24)

The experiences above examples show how education affects employability of the respondents. Respondents share that their chances of getting employed would have been better if they had complete education. Firstly, Example 1 shares how the respondent was not able to finish grade 12 and because of that, he finds it hard to get to other places. Secondly, example 2 shares that most places of employment require grade 12. Thirdly in example 3, the respondent feels that if she had completed her tertiary qualification, it would be better to find employment. Lastly, in example 4, the respondent shares that he was not able to get a cleaning job without grade 12. Multiple scholars have shown that NEET youth is characterised by low education

attainment (Mitrou et al., 2021; Stea et al., 2019). As such, Stea et al. (2019) state that because of low educational attainment, NEET youth faces limited job opportunities and financial hardships. The respondents accord this as they see their incomplete schooling impacting their employability.

4.4.1.2 Support Received from Friends and Family

Family and friends are shown to support the respondents in escaping the NEET status. As part of supporting techniques, they assist in providing respondents with money to prepare for searching for education, employment, or training. They also provide the respondents with information and motivation to continue the escape from the NEET status. When the respondents were asked about ways in which their families and friends assist them to get education, employment, or training, they responded as follows:

- (1) They help by motivating me to find school as they say school is important. Friends are also motivating me to find school because it is the most important thing in life. (Respondent 15, female, 21)*
- (2) They help by supporting me with money, things like those, so I can go searching. [Is that family?] Yes. [And then friends?] They also support me and give me advice. (Respondent 13, male, 30)*
- (3) By bringing posts when there's a job post out, they bring them for me so that I can apply... And motivation, I can say. (Respondent 7, male, 26)*

The narratives above show each respondent's support from family and friends. Many respondents shared that they receive motivation and information support from their families and friends. Fewer respondents mentioned money as a form of support received. Branson (2019) agrees and states that most young people are likely to find work through friends, family, or household members. In addition, these family members and friends use word of mouth to inform these young people about employment opportunities.

4.4.1.3 Cost of Accessing EET

Respondents shared their experiences and financial implications of paying for access to NEET resources. All respondents shared how expensive it is to look for employment. Paying for internet use and transportation are struggles that are faced by young NEET people.

- (1) *They're not affordable for an unemployed person because you need data to access Indeed, LinkedIn or whatever. So, if you're unemployed and you have no one to look after you or to even send you R20 for data and then you won't have money to buy data. (Respondent 3, female, 23)*
- (2) *I'd say they affect me because you must travel, even the Wi-Fi at home, sometimes we don't get money to buy Wi-Fi. So, it becomes difficult in other months. (Respondent 17, male, 29)*
- (3) *It costs a lot of money, even though you don't have it but obviously we've got families they help there and there. It costs a lot, and sometimes you don't even get it because our families have other depended people besides me asking money to go somewhere, I got a post someplace and I want to go apply, it takes a lot of money. (Respondent 8, female, 27)*

The above responses show that respondents are finding difficulties accessing resources relating to employment, education, or training. As such, example 1 shows that they are forced to spend money they do not have on buying data bundles to access the internet. Kunene (2019) found that people living in low-income areas experience challenges such as expensive data bundles and poor network coverage when using internet to look for employment. The respondents have accorded this as they use internet to search for jobs. The limited access to internet caused by expensive data bundle is a challenge young people not in employment, education, or training face when looking for employment.

As shown in example 2, transportation is another challenge to the respondents as they find it expensive to go to places of employment to submit applications. De Lannoy et al. (2020) finds that the spatial segregation caused by the legacy of apartheid in South Africa impacts the cost of finding employment for those living in Townships. As a result of a lack of social and cultural investment in Townships, young people must go to Central Business Districts located in towns to find employment. Travelling to the CBD requires money, therefore, it is expensive for someone with no income to travel.

4.4.1.4 Stigma Attached to NEET

Respondents were asked to share their views of how young people not in employment, education, or training are perceived. They shared a range of experiences and feelings and mostly indicated a negative perception towards NEET youth.

- (1) *They are seen as useless people who don't want to work and don't want to take responsibility. (Respondent 9, female, 32)*
- (2) *I'd say, they are not taken seriously. Even within the homes, they are looked down on within the families because they put nothing on the table. (Respondent 4, female, 24)*
- (3) *when you are not employed, besides the community outside, even inside your family, when you're unemployed you get treated like a nuisance in some type of way, even by Children. If, let's say for instance that I'm 32 and my younger sister is 20 years. If my younger sister is employed and I'm unemployed, she's going to be more respected even though she's younger. She'll also see me as nothing because I'm not working. (Respondent 3, female, 24)*

These young people expressed their perceptions of people who are not in employment, education. Their perceptions indicate that NEET youth is seen as useless. In addition, because of the inability to put something on the table, they are ignored, undermined, and disrespected. Moreover, they are seen as avoiding responsibility. Su et al., (2020) states that NEET phase can be characterised by some common if not stigmatised personality traits. Firstly, those traits include showing no motivation and having low self-esteem. Secondly, having low effort and diligence are also identified as traits of NEET. Lastly, lack of clear goals for the future and limitation of personal capacity to pursue aspirations or goals. The sense of uselessness can be caused by being not motivated and having low self-esteem. Avoiding responsibility can be attributed to having low effort and diligence. In addition, avoiding responsibility may also be attributed to a lack of clear goals and capacity to pursue those goals.

4.4.2 Economic challenges affecting youth's sense of trust in the system

Under this theme, respondents were asked to share challenges that affect their sense of trust in the system. The purpose was to assess the views and experiences that these young people face in the government system. In addition, it was also to evaluate their perceived level of government openness and if they trust processes put in place. Firstly, their responses express the confidence they have in government systems. Secondly, they shared experiences on the user-friendliness of government services. Lastly, they shared views on the level of transparency received on the pandemic emergency processes.

4.4.2.1 Confidence in Resources from Government

Respondents were asked to share their level of confidence in government services. They were asked if they felt confident on services offered by government regarding education, employment, or training. Respondents shared the following:

- (1) What I can say is, when it comes to the government, I don't have much knowledge to say they are putting in 100% but through what I see in my situation I'd say no. When you check the unemployment rate, it's increasing instead of decreasing whereas they say, and they promise they will decrease it. (Respondent 18, male, 22)*
- (2) It's not enough because they say those things and we hear them, but when we ask for full information there's no one there to answer when we have questions. It ends there, we only see it on TV. (Respondent 17, male, 29)*
- (3) They don't do a lot because there's nothing visible, there's many of us needing work in the township. We do things that we didn't plan to do, like because of idling around. (Respondent 12, male, 30)*

Respondents shared dissatisfaction with the government services and resources relating to education, employment, and training. In example 1, the respondent indicated that not much is done because unemployment rate is high, and because they are also not in employment, education, or training. In example 2, respondents felt that the opportunities are advertised but when they inquire about those, they do not get response. Lastly, in example 3, the respondent shared that there are no visible outcomes to what the government is doing as many people in the Townships are unemployed. Masuku and Jili (2019) state that it is the role of the government to provide services aimed at improving the quality of life for people. They continue to say that the interference of politicians on public administration affects the effectiveness and efficiency of service provision. As a result, corruption is reported frequently in South African government. The corruption in government which inhibits efficient service delivery to people causes dissatisfaction with government services and resources.

4.4.2.2 User-friendliness of Government Services

Feelings relating to support received from government were not always positive. Respondents shared their experience of access to government services and resources. They shared how unsatisfied they were with government's user-friendliness, especially when accessing the COVID-19 relief grant (R350).

- (1) *No, it's not user friendly because remember, not everyone has a smart phone. It's a bit difficult when it comes to that. Plus, COVID hit and other people don't want to help others, using another person's phone to apply and maybe it gets approved or not, all that process is not user friendly. No, we don't use free Apps, you use your data which is money out of your pocket. (Respondent 14, female, 21)*
- (2) *I'd say they tried with the R350 but now how many people do have smart phones and how many people do get robbed. (Respondent 18, male, 22)*
- (3) *I don't have a phone, I used to ask people here at home and they don't want to lend me their phones as this uses data. You must go buy data. (Respondent 12, male, 29)*

The responses above show the difficulty in accessing government resources, especially resources relating to COVID-19 relief funds. Example 1 shows that the use of smartphones was not easy because it required the use of data from the respondents. In example 2, those that have phones that are not smartphones struggled and had to use airtime to send SMS's. Lastly, example 3 shows that those without phones were excluded as the only available mode to apply was through phones. Some findings report that COVID-19 grant is benefiting people who did not qualify for government support before (Turok & Visagie, 2021). In addition, the number of shack dwellers receiving these and other grants is surprisingly low considering their levels of poverty and distress. As respondents have shared the difficulty in accessing these grants, it is no surprise that the most deserving people do not access the grant given the requirement to have a phone and know how to operate it. This finding is a barrier in accessing the COVID-19 relief grant provides part of the explanation of why the most deserving people are not accessing the grant.

4.4.2.3 Transparency of Pandemic Emergency Processes

When the respondents were asked to share their feelings about transparency in government regarding the COVID-19 relief funds, they shared their dissatisfaction with the level of transparency. Dissatisfaction was due to government resources that were supposed to be received by vulnerable groups but were not.

- (1) They were not transparent because on the food parcels, I did not get them. Including the “business rescue”, there are some small businesses that I know of and that got nothing. It ends there, it only reaches connected people and counsellors, but not all people. (Respondent 16, male, 30)*
- (2) What did they do? They only gave us R500. I did not see anything else. Do you remember those R500 for grant? That's the only thing I know. [How long did that happen, wasn't it for a limited time? Yes, plus the R350, it did not continue for long, it stopped soon. (Respondent 6, female, 30)*

Respondents also share their level of transparency to the government interventions. Among their experiences, example 1 mentioned corruption on the delivery of services in their community. Secondly, example 2 highlighted the abrupt stop on some of the services provided by the government. This abrupt stop of temporal reliefs relating to COVID-19 caused misery to the vulnerable groups (Turko & Visagie, 20021). Masuku and Jili (2019) found that ward committees are controlled by ward counsellors who get elected according to political factions. In addition, political favours and interference leads to corruption in the South African government. Budhram and Geldenhuys (2018) also report that corruption happens on a larger scale in South Africa, and it does not get reported. Resources that are supposed to be aimed at assisting vulnerable groups get used as political favours to support political agendas.

4.4.3 Economic challenges affecting youth’s political participation

Respondents were asked to share the impact that their NEET challenges have on their political participation. The purpose was to find experiences of these young people on matters relating to political participation. On their responses, respondents highlighted their satisfaction on the role played by government. In addition, they responded by stating the effect that their NEET status has on their political participation.

4.4.3.1 Satisfaction with The Role Played by Government

Respondents were asked if they feel that government playing its role in addressing NEET issues. Responses highlighted less satisfaction with government interventions due to lack of information on available services. In addition to that, the COVID-19 relief fund was regarded as a helpful role played by the government. Their responses were as follows:

- (1) No, because there are few people who are informed about things. Most of us don't know about the things happening in front us. (Respondent 17, male, 29)*
- (2) They do try, harder because on these R350, yes you can use it to apply with it, use it for transport to go look for a job because recently they said they will create employment opportunities for people to work. So, this R350 does make a difference, you can go apply or use it for data online. (Respondent 6, female, 30)*

In example 1, the Respondent shared that government is not playing enough role in addressing youth issues relating to NEET because not everyone is informed about opportunities. Secondly, example 2 shows that the respondent felt that the government is trying to address issues relating to youth and NEET because of the COVID-19 relief grant. Findings have shown that corruption done through political favours in government might exclude other people from accessing public services and resources (Masuku & Jili, 2019). Moreover, the lack of access to information relating opportunities for young people remains a barrier to employment, education, or training (Patel et al., 2020). This lack of access to information contributes to South Africa's high rate of youth in NEET.

The COVID-19 relief grant offers economic benefits to the young people who are NEET. The respondents state that they use this grant to search for employment. This grant provides benefits that are like the NMW (National Minimum Wage). Patel et al. (2020) state that NMW are used by other countries to create opportunities for young people to access the labour market. Many respondents have indicated that they use this grant to buy data bundles for internet job search. Others have indicated that they use this grant to travel in search of employment.

4.4.3.2 NEET Effects on Youth's Political Participation

When respondents were asked if falling under NEET affects their political participation, many of them responded that they will not vote. Their responses highlighted that they were abstaining from voting because of the lack of change. In addition, they highlighted the lack of delivery on promises made by political parties demotivates them.

- (1) *Yes, it affects me a lot because you wake up without ambition in the morning because you know that you don't have a programme for your day. So, you are not motivated waking up. I didn't vote on these locals, I told myself that I am not going to vote. (Respondent 16, male, 30)*
- (2) *I'd rather not vote because you won't see change even if you can vote for any party. They will be here and talk now because they want to be voted for, when voting ends, they will disappear again, and things will remain the same. (Respondent 10, male, 22)*

A very few respondents indicated that their reason to vote would be in hopes that there will be change.

- (3) *We do vote as we must vote thinking that there could be change. What makes us continue is us thinking that there could be change. (Respondent 9, female, 32)*
- (4) *Yes, I can vote now since I want things like school. Yes, I would vote for change. Yes, I am motivated. (Respondent 19, male, 18)*

The responses above show how lack of change affects the respondents' political participation. On one side, example 1 and 2 shows that some respondents lost ambition and see no use to vote as there is no change. On the other side, example 2 and 3 shows that others are motivated to vote in hopes that there will be change in opportunities available for EET. Oyedemi and Mahlatji (2016) found that the reason why most young people do not vote is because they unemployment, lack of service delivery, and seeing no significance of voting. The promises that do not get delivered to these young people about employment opportunities causes them to see no significance in voting.

4.4.4 Economic challenges affecting youth's sense of security

On this theme, respondents were asked to share challenges that affect their sense of security. The purpose of this theme is to find protective securities put in place for youth and the effectiveness of those measures. Respondents shared their experiences on basic needs and savings for searching for EET. In addition, they shared their experiences with accessing the COVID-19 relief funds. Furthermore, they shared their experiences with COVID-19 restrictions. Lastly, they shared other limiting factors in accessing EET.

4.4.4.1 Savings for Education, Employment, and Training Seeking

Respondents were asked to share if they have financial savings to look for employment, education, or training. Their responses show that it was impossible for the respondents to save money as they had other financial responsibilities and no money to save.

- (1) I don't have them (savings), they are depleted. Especially with things for December, because it's things for children and all, and then now in January it's stationeries and all the back-to-school things. I could only save to cover for January until the first week of February, for travelling to job seeking. So, it ended fast. (Respondent 20, male, 30)*
- (2) I wouldn't say I necessarily have savings because remember that R350 we receive is not enough for a month. Because we are old enough and we should really take care of ourselves. Now I need to rely on my parents. (Respondent 14, female, 21)*

In example 1, The respondent shared that he did not have savings due to having responsibility of taking care of their children. In example 2, the respondent shared that she does not have savings and were relying on the COVID-19 relief grant and assistance from their parents. Turok and Visagie (2021) reported that 48% of Township households ran out of money to buy food by April 2020. In Ralston et al. (2016) it is stated that household poverty and social disadvantage are experienced by young people not in employment, education, or training. These young people have responsibilities and they do not have enough money to save for future job hunting. Even the little they get from the COVID-19 relief grant is not enough.

4.4.4.2 Access to COVID-19 relief grant

Respondents were asked if they had access to the COVID-19 relief grant as they are not in employment, education, or training. Out of twenty respondents, fifteen respondents applied for the COVID-19 relief grant. Only ten respondents indicated that they were receiving the grant. Those that did not receive the grant and those who did not apply indicated that they had UIF (Unemployment Insurance Fund) pending or that they might still be registered as working.

- (1) *No. I don't receive it because of the UIF. I do go at SARS, but it gets full and the capacity. (Respondent 17, male, 29)*
- (2) *I never received it because I stopped working last year in October. So, I think I was still showing on the system as a person working and a person waiting for things like UIF. (Respondent 20, male, 30)*

Examples 1 and 2 above show that the respondents with UIF pending did not have access to the COVID-19 relief grant. In addition, example 1 shows that the respondent struggled to go claim for the funds because it gets full at the Labour offices. Turok and Visagie (2021) reported that more people lost their jobs in Townships and informal settlements. In addition to COVID-19 restrictions on access to public spaces, it is no surprise that people were not able to claim their UIF funds as many of them had recently lost their jobs.

4.4.4.3 Effects of COVID-19 restrictions on accessing EET services

Respondent were asked to share their experiences as young not in employment, education, or training during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the influence of the pandemic's restrictions in their lives. When asked to share if the COVID-19 pandemic influenced their decisions relating to EET, they responded with the following:

- (1) *In terms of work, it has been really tough. Because since 20... when did I start working, 2020... yes. Ever since the internship, I knew that was an internship so I cannot be comfortable. It was a contract. 2 years contract. Ever since I started applying there has been nothing, nothing at all. It's bad. (Respondent 1, female, 25)*
- (2) *It was difficult a lot to get a job, it was really difficult. It was this COVID that made things difficult. With other jobs it was difficult to go to them, not getting something (transportation) to take to jobs, yes, I'd say transport. (Respondent 5, male, 23,)*
- (3) *It was very bad. Even at first it was very bad because in some places they were not open, like the internet cafes had a specific operating time and it quickly closed, and - also have certain number of people coming in. As a result, if you could not get there in time because with us there are no taxi's here in the township, so, you have to walk to the mall. (Respondent 8, female, 27)*

- (4) *It was difficult because even when you go to seek, a person would look down on you thinking that you have COVID. It is then difficult for you to get a job. they also don't know if you have it or not. (Respondent 5, male, 23)*

As narrated above, respondents shared that during the lockdown restrictions. Firstly, Example 1 shows that the respondent was not getting any responses from the posts that she applied for. Secondly, example 2 shows that the respondent struggled to travel and look for employment as restrictions also affected transportation. As such, example 3 accords that as he states that he started to walk to places. In addition, when getting to some venues, example 3 shows how the respondent was faced with difficulties relating to operating times and capacity limitations. Lastly, example 4 shows how the respondent experienced barriers relating to fear of obtaining COVID-19. Sen (2001) states that the violation of freedom can be caused by the restrictions imposed on the freedom to participate in the social, political, and economic life of the community. COVID-19 restrictions did violate these young people's freedom to participate in finding jobs at the labour market. In addition, these young people were denied the freedom to participate on the social, political, and economic life of their community.

Some of the experiences shared by respondents on the restrictions of COVID-19 were the effects it had on education. Respondents shared how the online transition affected schooling.

- (1) *When it comes to education, I think...this thing of studying online, other people don't like it and they end up quitting when it comes to studying online. They don't get motivated as they don't understand what they do as they have to study online. They end up quitting and dropping out. So, I think it has affected in that way. (Respondent 2, female, 23)*
- (2) *Lockdown and COVID arrived and everything were a mess. And then with education the most, kids had to study online. So, you get kids who are not computer literate, if I may put it that way. So, if you're gonna expect a child to study online, not knowing a computer, maybe they are a first-year students from Qoboqobo, and you expect them to connect to Wi-Fi. They don't even know how to connect. That will be a challenge to that kid. So, it plays a big role to them. (Respondent 3, female, 24)*

Example 1 above shares the distress that the COVID-19 restrictions had on young people who are forced to transition to online studying. Furthermore, example 2 shows the limiting factors of transitioning to studying online such as the inability to use digital devices and internet. This accords with the findings that state most people from rural and township

areas in South Africa do not have skills in utilizing information and communication technology (ICT), particularly those who are not in employment, education, or training (NEET) (Matli and Ngoepe, 2020). Although the National Youth Development Plan does propose adaptation to fourth industrial revolution (4IR) that encompasses learning online and through digital devices (WYPD, 2020), those interventions have not reached schools in rural areas and Townships. As such, learner attendance at school is still happening under new restrictions.

Respondents continued to share their experiences with education under the restrictions of COVID-19. Some shared how they ended up quitting because of reduced days of schooling. In addition, others shared how they were not able to get into schools because of the restrictions.

- (1) Some of the things that came with COVID caused me to jeopardise my schooling, not like before. We used to go for two days. So, I decided to look for things like work (Respondent 19, male, 18)*
- (2) COVID-19 has affected me in many places, including not getting work and education. COVID-19 sat us down, we were not able to look for work or for education because of it. So, everything stood still. (Respondent 11, male, 24)*

The findings above show that schooling days were reduced for learners attending public schools. As a result of those restrictions relating to COVID-19, example 1 shows how the respondent's interest in education was reduced and caused him to drop out of school. Secondly, example 2 shows that the respondent was not able to get enrolled to schools. Learning and teaching factors such as lack of materials and overcrowded classes experienced by learners from low-income areas as reported in Baldry et al. (2019), led to newer restrictions. Those new restrictions involved decreasing the number of schooling days for each learner per week in hopes of avoiding overcrowding. In addition, this meant that no more students or learners were being enrolled to those schools in low-income areas. As such, this led to some learners losing interest in school. Given the restrictions of COVID-19 on top of the difficulties faced by learners at those schools, it is no surprise that young people decided to leave school.

4.4.4.4 Limiting factors in accessing EET

Respondents were asked to share factors that limit their access to education, employment, or training. They shared their experiences from their previous attempts. Some of the key limiting factors highlighted were location, age, and gender. Location was the most discussed limitation.

- (1) *Location. In Khayelitsha there are strikes mostly. In Khayelitsha you'll find the bridge that enters N2 closed, the one that enters Burden Powel is closed, Mew Way... Maybe on that day you have an interview that's maybe on a Monday. Already it's closed, you understand. You can't make it to the interview. Maybe you were going to get the job already but because of the strike happening, you can't get there and there's no means of transportation. You can't Uber because the Ubers will get bitten up, you can't even use a public or a private transport. There's no way. So, I think that maybe the area that I'm in plays a big role. It has a huge impact. (Respondent 3, female, 24)*
- (2) *There are limiting things, they look at where you're staying and in which area. They usually want people... not even people closer to that place. Just like people from Khayelitsha, they don't get hired in Town because of location. (Respondent 11, male, 24)*
- (3) *I'd say it's location because Khayelitsha is far, and it is expensive to travel from here to town. Money is not always available to travel. (Respondent 17, male, 29)*

Some respondents felt that gender played a limiting role in getting employment, education, or training.

- (4) *Most of jobs prefer the gender of males. (Respondent 6, female, 30)*
- (5) *So, I generally wanted to be in construction, civil. So, it's most men that have better opportunities. It's gender based because of course they have more power in terms of physical appearance. (Respondent 14, female, 21)*
- (6) *There are restrictions, there and there. And those things, let me say, in the call-centre fields, they mostly request for females, that's what I realised, than males. (Respondent 7, male, 26)*

Lastly, age was also shared as a limiting factor by other respondents.

- (7) *There is a limit, but since I have not fallen under it because I am still in. But there were posts that were 18 to 25, and I was above the age. (Respondent 7, male, 26)*
- (8) *Yes, like recently there are posts that have age like 18 to 25, at which I no longer fall under that category even though I need a job. (Respondent 8, female, 27)*

The responses above display the limiting factors that relate to the demographic background of the respondents. Firstly, in example 1,2, and 3 the respondents shared that location as a limiting factor is related to the area of Khayelitsha and the trends that happen around such as the strikes. Secondly, in example 4,5, and 6 respondents shared that gender as a limiting factor relates to what the labour market requires and prefers. Lastly, in example 7 and 8 respondents shared that age as a limiting factor also relate to what the labour market requires. De Lannoy and Mudiriza (2019) find that these factors such as age and gender are key factors associated with the probability of being NEET in South Africa. It can be said that, because of the requirements of the labour market we have more people that are at risk of remaining as NEET. These demographic background barriers of age, gender, and location is the result of the larger percentage of the NEET population in South Africa.

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented findings from in-depth interviews conducted with twenty respondents on the challenges they face as the youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) under the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. The first part of the chapter presented demographic profile of the respondents. This was followed by the respondents' NEET level analysis. The last part of this chapter presented major findings of this research into four themes.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

This study was conducted in the township of Khayelitsha, on the outskirts of Cape Town. The study's aim was to explore challenges facing the youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) under the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic using Khayelitsha Township as a case study. There were twenty respondents who participated in the study. Eleven of them were males and nine were females. Research questions were based on the capabilities approach by Sen (2000) and Positive Youth Development Approach by Learner (2011). Questions explored the following five aspects: Social aspects, Access, Socio-economic opportunities, Protective security, Transparency and trust in the system, and Political participation. In addition, all those aspects were used to assess young people's experiences as NEET and the effects of COVID-19 restrictions in their everyday lives.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this study was to explore personal and structural challenges faced by young people who fall under the NEET criteria under the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic and how that affects their capabilities. The findings of this study and conclusions are in line with the objectives. To discuss the conclusions that capture the challenges faced by NEET youth, I use the five instrumental freedoms found in the capabilities approach (Sen, 1999). These freedoms are social opportunities, economic opportunities, protective security, trust and transparency, and political participation.

5.2.1 Objective 1: To explore challenges that affect youth's sense of future socio-economic opportunities and aspirations

The freedom of social opportunities relates to the arrangements that government makes towards education, health, and many other things (Sen, 1999). In addition, the freedom of economic opportunities depends on the resources made available for each person. Therefore, NEET youth's sense of socio-economic opportunities and aspirations will be assessed using these two freedoms.

The first challenge for NEET youth is not being able to afford life and this makes them feel that they do not have control over their lives. Amendola (2021) reported that some young people in NEET reported that part of the difficulties they experience are dissatisfaction and lack of sense of control. As a result, findings showed that NEET youth are not financially able to take care of themselves and they must depend on other members of their family for support. Furthermore, young people in NEET with children are not able to provide for them as the quality of life is affected because of economic freedoms, this causes dissatisfaction.

Secondly, low educational attainment affects NEET young people's chances of being employed. Since some of them lack the education required to enter the job market, they end up missing opportunities of becoming employed. It has been shown that NEET youth are characterised by low education attainment (Mitrou et al., 2021; Stea et al., 2019). As a result of missed job opportunities, young people face financial hardships (Stea et al., 2019). Education qualification provides better chances of employment to young people not in employment, education, or training.

Family and friends are supportive in terms of assisting youth to escape the NEET status. Branson (2019) states that most young people are likely to find work through friends, family,

or household members. As part of supporting techniques, families assist in providing financial support for NEET young people to be able to prepare for searching for education, employment, or training. Family and friends also provide NEET youth with information and motivation to continue the escape from the NEET status.

The cost of looking for employment is expensive for NEET youth. As such, NEET youth are unable to look for employment opportunities because they cannot, for example, afford the cost of paying for data bundles to access the internet, Kunene (2019) accords this finding. In addition, these young people cannot afford to pay for transportation to go search for jobs in CBD. Spatial segregation that is caused by the legacy of apartheid in South Africa impacts the cost of finding employment for those that live in Townships (De Lannoy et al., 2020). To get better employment opportunities, one must travel from the Townships to the cities where there are better chances.

The stigma around NEET youth has an impact on the treatment that these young people receive from their families and communities. Su et al., (2020) mentions that some of the characterizations of the NEET youth are stigmatised. Those characteristics include low self-esteem which may be caused by being undermined and ignored. In addition, NEET youth are seen as avoiding responsibility. This causes them to be seen as not having enough personal capacity to pursue goals and aspirations.

5.2.2 Objective 2: To explore challenges that affect youth's sense of security

The youth's sense of security is explored using Sen's (1999) protective security freedom. This freedom ensures a social safety net for preventing affected population from being reduced to misery, starvation, and death.

NEET youth do not have funds that are placed aside for searching for opportunities. Responsibilities, such as taking care of children, make it impossible for them to save for future job seeking, or school and training investment. Those that receive the COVID-19 relief grants can add to what they get from their parents to take care of themselves. It is, therefore, impossible to avoid poverty when you are NEET youth in low-income areas. During strict lockdown restrictions, 48% of Township households ran out of money to buy food (Turok & Visagie). To accord that, in Ralston et al. (2016) it is stated that NEET experience household poverty and social disadvantage. These young people are vulnerable and need to be protected through proper government interventions.

Access to the COVID-19 relief grant is limited to those that do not have UIF. As such, NEET youths were not able to get the grant as they were told that they have UIF that has not been claimed. Claiming for the UIF is a challenge because it is always full in the government labour offices. This is no surprise as Turok and Visagie (2021) reported that more people lost their jobs in Townships and informal settlements. This meant that more people went to claim for UIF. The restrictions of COVID-19 that limited access to public spaces added to the struggle of claiming for UIF.

COVID-19 restrictions placed a strain in the access to employment, education, and training opportunities. At the beginning of the implementation of strict national lockdown restrictions, youth applying for employment opportunities were not getting responses from the companies they applied to. These restrictions caused youth to be unable to enter the labour market. Sen (2001) states that restrictions violate the freedom to participate in the social, political, and economic life of the community. As such, most NEET youth were restricted from participating in the labour market during strict national lockdown.

Transitioning to online learning caused distress to many young people who were at school during the early stages of national lockdown. Most people from rural and township areas in South Africa do not have skills in utilizing information and communication technology (ICT), particularly NEETs (Matli and Ngoepe, 2020). There are proposed plans to adapt to the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) that encompass learning online and through digital devices (WYPD, 2020). However, those plans are taking too long to reach young people in rural areas and in Townships. As a result of the distressed caused by online learning, some young people opt out at school.

Reduced schooling days decreased young people's interest in schooling. Most schools in Townships reduced days of attendance to accommodate social distancing COVID-19 measures. Baldry et al. (2019) reports that schools in Townships are overcrowded. To exercise COVID-19 restrictions, this meant that learners were divided to attend school in different days. Consequently, findings have shown that some NEET youth stopped schooling because of the reduced attendance which affected their interest in learning.

Other challenges that are faced by NEET young people when attempting to enter the labour market include location, age, and gender. Khayelitsha is far from cities where there are employment opportunities. When young people manage to reach these employment spaces, they are met with age limitations and gender limitations. As such, some occupations prefer to hire males compared to females and they prefer to hire young people in their twenties. De

Lannoy and Mudiriza (2019) find that these factors, such as age and gender are key factors associated with the probability of being NEET in South Africa.

5.2.3 Objective 3: To explore Challenges that affect youth's sense of trust in the system

The trust and transparency freedom deals with the openness that is required by the people (Sen, 1999). In addition, it includes the freedom to deal with one another under guarantees of disclosure or lucidity, and to ensure society functions on some basic presumption of trust.

The lack of confidence in government services is due to poor efforts that are made to create more opportunities for NEET youth. The main objective of government should be aimed at improving the lives of people (Masuku & Jili, 2019). However, this objective is not achieved as there is corruption in government. NEET youth are not aware of what opportunities are provided by government. Moreover, they do not get responses when they inquire about available opportunities that can assist their situation.

When accessing social safety nets put in place by the government for the COVID-19 pandemic, there are factors that inhibit access. The use of technological devices has created challenge and is a barrier that stands between NEET youth and COVID-19 relief grant. As a result of this exclusion, the COVID-19 grant is benefiting people who did not qualify for government support before (Turok & Visagie, 2021). The use of smartphones and phones is a barrier in accessing the COVID-19 relief grant and provides part of the explanation of why the most deserving people are not accessing the grant. As such, some of the NEET youth do not have internet access on their smartphones. Others do not have smartphones or any other type of phones to access the online portal or send SSD for COVID-19 relief grant application.

Corruption in government threatens access to resources provided by government. Pandemic measures in place for vulnerable groups by government were viewed by NEET youth as not transparent. Food parcels that were meant to reach the deserving families did not reach some and COVID-19 relief grants were stopped before the ease of restrictions. Turko and Visagie (2021) state that this abrupt stop on temporal relief grants relating to COVID-19 cause misery to vulnerable groups.

5.2.4 Objective 4: To explore challenges that affect youth's political participation

The political participation freedom includes the opportunity for people to choose who will lead them in governance and how they want to be led (Sen, 1999). Youth feels that the government is not doing enough in addressing the issue of NEET as most young people are not informed of opportunities available through government interventions. The political favours done through public resources cause corruption in the government (Masuku & Jili, 2019). As a result, resources that the proposed interventions state should go to vulnerable populations are being used by politicians to gain political favours. Moreover, the lack of access to information relating to opportunities for young people remains a barrier to employment, education, or training (Patel et al., 2020). Therefore, the challenge of corruption in government has a negative impact on the NEET.

Some young people not in employment, education, or training are benefiting from the COVID-19 relief grant. As such, some use the money to buy data for online job searching and to travel to the city to look for employment. Others use the money to buy necessities like toiletries. Patel et al. (2020) provides benefits and shortcomings of having a NMW and part of the benefits are that the NMW provides young people access to labour markets. NEET youth used the COVID-19 relief grant to buy data bundles to use for searching for jobs online. This shows that young people need financial assistance to enable them to look for jobs.

Most young people do not vote because they are not employed (Oyedemi & Mahlatji, 2016). In addition, they see no significance of voting as there is a lack of service delivery. On one hand, some young people that are NEET vote in hopes that there will be changes in service delivery. On the other hand, other young people that do not want to participate in voting are discouraged by the lack of change in their current NEET situation.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations in this section are suggested based on the main conclusions above. The suggestions provide an idea of a roles to ensure youth is active. In addition, those roles can be played by these young people, their families, the community, the institutions, the government, and the employers.

- Young people who are not in employment, education, or training need to have access to funds that they can use to search for jobs, or education and training. Patel et. al (2020) has evaluated the benefits of having a national minimum wage and states that it could enable youth to engage in formal employment, and it could stimulate job-seeking to those that have been discouraged. The government does promise to introduce the “Basic Universal Income” for young people who are not employed (WYPD, 2020). However, the promises are still proposed on the National Youth Policy and are yet to be implemented.
- Society needs to be educated on the effects of unemployment. Social education needs to be targeted at dismantling stereotypes of youth not in employment, education, or training. Educational programs like Peer Education must be made available at all schools and community centres. Organizations like Soul City must be given more airtime on South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) platforms.
- Government needs to work with employers when implementing training programs to ensure that those programs are aligned with the needs of the labour market. This should also apply to education offered in schools. Similarly promised by government are policy initiatives which will be created in partnership with public, private, and civil society such as youth employment services (YES) and ETI (WYPD, 2020). However, the National Youth Policy fails to put in detail how those partnerships will be formed, and which stakeholders will be invited.
- Access to government facilities need to be inclusive of those with and without access to technological devices. The NYDA (2008) is said to provides services such as career guidance services, access to information, services of the National Youth Fund, and employment opportunities. However, it has failed to ensure that youth from all parts of South Africa are able to access those services. Their offices are in CBDs and far from Townships. For instance, there is no NYDA office in Khayelitsha, the closest office is

in Cape Town. This calls for evaluation of, and changes to existing government services.

- Corruption on government services needs to be eradicated. Budhram and Geldenhuys (2018) propose that the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies must be improved to reinforce the entire anti-corruption system. With corruption out of the way, youth development will be possible. The eradication of corruption can start with proper monitoring and evaluations teams on each government departments as recommended by the Public Service Commission (2009). Those teams need to ensure that the *Batho Pele* principles stated on the white paper are being followed at all management levels as re implemented.
- Practical legislative principles that promote youth employability and security in the labour markets need to be implemented. As a result of ineffective policies aimed towards protecting youth in South Africa, Branson et al. (2019) proposes that all current policies need to be evaluated by the government and civil society. This highlights the need for proper policy implementation and measures to hold all stakeholders accountable.
- Lastly, there is still a gap on studies about NEET in South Africa. Longitudinal studies are needed to explore trajectories and constants of the issues affecting young people who are not in education, employment, or training. As such, factors that affect young people's NEET status like education and employment requirements need to be explored in-depth.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER

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17 December 2021

Student: **Linda Bathembu (BTHLIN016)**

Outcome: **ACCEPTED**

I am pleased to inform you that ethical clearance has been given by an Ethics Review Committee of the Faculty of Humanities for your study, ***Exploring Some Challenges Facing the Youth Not in Employment, Education, or Training (NEET) Under the Restrictions of the Covid-19 Pandemic: The Case Study of Khayelitsha Township.*** The reference number is SWK-REC-2021-SR014.

I wish you all the best for your study.

Yours sincerely
Dr Khosi Kubeka
Senior Lecturer
Chair: Ethics Review Committee

The University of Cape Town is committed to policies of equal opportunity and affirmative action which are essential to its mission of promoting critical inquiry and scholarship.

APPENDIX B: INTEVIEW GUIDE

Respondent:

Research Topic: Exploring Challenges Facing the youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) under the Restrictions of the COVID-19 Pandemic: The case study of Khayelitsha Township.

Background

- Gender?
- How old are you?
- What is your current employment status?
- What is your marital status?
- What is your current highest level of educational attainment?
- Do you have any training outside of school?
- What is the longest time of your employment? If previously employed.
- Do you have kids or dependents? How many?
- Who do you live with?
- What is the primary source of income in your family?

Not in employment, education, or training (NEET)

- Have you heard of the term NEET before?
- When last were you in EET (education, employment, or training)? Year?
- Have you made efforts to escape NEET?
- What has stopped you from attaining desired level of education, employment opportunity, or training?

COVID-19

- Have you looked for education, employment, or training during the pandemic?
- Have you applied for the COVID-19 relief grant?

Social Aspects

- How are your family/friends helping you to be in education, employment of training?
- Are there any religious and/or cultural beliefs and actions that influencing you to be in education, employment of training?
- What role does your community or surrounding environment play in influencing to be in education, employment of training?
- How comfortable do you feel in discussing matters relating to your education, employment of training?

- What is the perception of young people who are not in employment, education, or training in your community?
- Has the COVID-19 pandemic influenced your decisions relating to EET?

Access

- Where do you usually go to access resources and services related to education employment or training?
- Do you find accessing education, employment opportunities and training services and resources affordable?
- Have any of these experiences and/or factors changed over time? If so, how have they changed and why?
- Is there a stigma attached to NEET and if yes, how does it influence future endeavours?
- Are there other limiting factors such as age/gender/location affecting your access to education, employment, or training?
- How has COVID-19 restrictions affected your access to resources and services relating to EET?

Socio-economic opportunities

- How has a lack of education, employment or training negatively affected your life?
- How does accessing EET (education, employment, or training) resources and services affect you financially?
- How has COVID-19 affected opportunities relating to EET?

Protective security

- Are your basic needs met?
- Do you access the COVID-19 relief grant?
- Do you have savings for education or training?

Transparency and Trust in the System

- Do you feel confident that you are receiving the best possible services from the government regarding education, employment, and training?
- Were pandemic emergency processes transparent (funds, allocations, and access)?
- Do you find services user-friendly? Please explain further.
- What suggestions do you have for improving services and information that is available towards helping youth to achieve EET?
-

Political participation

- Have you received a grant from the government relating to COVID-19?

- Do you feel the government is playing its role on NEET youth issues?
- Does being NEET affect your political participation? Voting?

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM TEMPLATE



**University of Cape Town
Department of Social Development**

¹CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Exploring Challenges Facing the youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) under the Restrictions of the COVID-19 Pandemic: The case study of Khayelitsha Township.

name of principal researcher(s):

Linda Bathembu

Department/research group:

Social Development

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Name of participant

Nature of the research:

This qualitative research is aimed at exploring challenges facing the youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET). The objective of this study is to explore personal and structural challenges young people face under the restrictions of the coronavirus pandemic in Khayelitsha. Focusing on how they navigate through the restrictions, the aim is to understand those personal and structural challenges.

Participant’s involvement:

- I agree to participate in this project.
- I have read this consent form and the Information Sheet and had the opportunity to ask questions about them.
- I agree to these results being used for education and research on condition my privacy is respected.
- I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this project and that a decision not to participate.
- I understand I have the right to withdraw from this project at any stage.

Signature of Participant/ or Guardian (if under age 18):.....

Name of Participant/Guardian:

Signature of person who sought consent:.....

Name of person who sought consent:

Signature of Project directors: a).....

b)..... Date:....

APPENDIX D: DEMOGRAPHIC SHEET

Respondent	Age	Gender	Education	Last time in EET?	Longest time employed in months?	Dependents	Applied for COVID Relief grand?	Received COVID Relief Grant?	Marital Status
1	25	F	B-Tech	2021	24	0	No	No	Single
2	23	F	Grade 12	2018	12	0	Yes	Yes	Single
3	24	F	Grade 12	2019	6	4	Yes	Yes	Single
4	24	F	Degree	2021	3	0	No	No	Single
5	23	M	Level 4	2020	12	0	Yes	No	Single
6	30	F	Grade 11	2010	6	1	Yes	Yes	Single
7	26	M	Grade 12	2021	24	2	Yes	No	Single
8	27	F	Grade 11	2016	8	1	Yes	No	Single
9	32	F	Grade 12	2021	36	2	No	Yes	Single
10	22	M	Grade 12	2020	12	0	Yes	Yes	Single
11	24	M	Grade 10	2015	2	0	Yes	Yes	Single
12	29	M	Grade 12	2020	12	1	Yes	No	Single
13	30	M	Grade 11	2018	48	2	Yes	No	Single
14	21	F	Grade 12	2019	0	0	Yes	Yes	Single
15	21	F	Grade 11	2022	0	1	Yes	Yes	Single
16	30	M	Grade 12	2020	48	0	Yes	No	Single
17	29	M	Grade 12	2020	72	0	No	No	Single
18	22	M	Grade 12	2020	0	1	Yes	Yes	Single
19	18	M	Grade 10	2021	0	0	Yes	Yes	Single
20	30	M	Grade 11	2020	8	2	No	No	Married