BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

A SOCIO-ECONOMIC INTEGRATION STRATEGY FOR YOUNG ADULTS DISCHARGED FROM RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES IN ZIMBABWE. A CASE STUDY OF HIGHFIELD DISTRICT, HARARE.

BY

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE HONORS DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK.

I, Leeroy Kudzai Manyembere B201429B, do hereby that this project work titled "**A SOCIO-ECONOMIC INTEGRATION STRATEGY FOR YOUNG ADULTS DISCHARGED FROM RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES. A CASE STUDY OF HIGHFIELD DISTRICT,** HARARE" is a record of my original work conducted under the supervision of Mrs. Chigondo and is thus submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the award of Bachelor of Science (Honours) Degree in Social Work.

I also declare that all academic sources cited in the project have been properly cited and this project has not been previously submitted to any other institution.

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APPROVAL FORM

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CHAIRPERSON OF THE DEPARTMENT BOARD OF EXAMINERS

The Department Board of Examiners is satisfied that this dissertation report meets the examination requirements and therefore I recommend to Bindura University of Science Education to accept this research project by Manyembere Leeroy Kudzai titled: **A socio-economic integration strategy for young adults discharged from residential care facilities. A case study of Highfield District,** in partial fulfillment of the Bachelor of Science, (Honors) Degree in Social work.

Chairperson

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DEDICATION

To my little brother, Leonel, whom I have witnessed horror and sunshine with.

PLAGIARISM REPORT

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ABSTRACT

The study focuses on the formulation of a socioeconomic integration strategy for young adults discharged from residential care facilities in Highfield District, Harare. The study objectives were identifying problems faced by youth care leavers, assessing existing transition and adaption programs aimed at reducing challenges faced by youths, formulating a simple strategy that addresses the primary needs of young adults, developing a policy formulation by stakeholders within government and non-governmental sector and improving outcomes for youths and reduce poverty. The research was informed by a background of transitional challenges faced by youths as they exit care. These challenges include economic poverty, poor employment opportunities, housing challenges, social exclusion, survival crime and sexual exploitation. Borrowing insights from Schlossberg's transition theory, the study employs qualitative research methodology to examine the lived experiences of young people released from care centers and systemic constraints that hinder their integration with the outside communities. The research gathered data through semi-structured interview guides and prompt narrative notes with eighteen (18) youths, care leavers from the age of eighteen (18) to twenty five (25). Information gathered from care leavers was consolidated with institutional knowledge from five key informants who included social development officers from the department of social development under the Ministry of Public Service, Labor and Social Welfare, superintendents of residential care facilities and community stakeholders. Through thematic analysis, the researcher focused on identifying key patterns and analyzing institutional support related youth welfare. Findings proved that transition out of care is marred by inadequate planning, poor supportive infrastructure and limited socioeconomic resources. The study recommended collaborative action from state and civic society entities which focus on youth development. This was corroborated by a model for practical integration of youths through the support of the state, non-governmental society and the community.

ABBREVIATIONS

AU – African Union

SADC – Southern African Development Community

KI – Key informant

YA – Young Adult

UN – United Nations

UNICEF – United Nations International Children's Fund

VFU – Victim Friendly Unit

ZRP – Zimbabwe Republic Police

SOS – Societas Socialis

BEAM - Basic Education Allowance Module

NGO – non-governmental organization

PA – Public Assistance

PVO – Private Voluntary Organization

MoPSLSW – Ministry of Public Service, Labor and Social Welfare

AMTO – Assisted Medical Treatment Order

GoZ – Government of Zimbabwe

HSCT – Harmonised Social Cash Transfer

MoHCC – Ministry of Health and Childcare

DSDO – Department of Social Development Officer

RCF – Residential Care Facilities

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Young adults who are discharged from residential care facilities often face challenges related to settling and integration with outside communities. Change of environment has an effect on now they interact with societies outside institutions. These challenges are mostly attributed to the social and economic conditions prevalent in the Zimbabwean landscape. For example, issues such as violence, drug and substance abuse, social degeneracy and unemployment. Without proper training and empowerment, young adults have been at the mercy of a biting socio economic system. In line with this, the research aims to study and proffer solutions related to empowerment, skills training and development to young adults who transition out of residential care facilities. It is important to note that empowerment is an ongoing process which would be effectively implemented before children in residential care facilities are discharged at the age of eighteen years.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

 Many youths released from care facilities face a plethora of challenges as they transition out of care centers and adapt to the outside world. According to Del Valle et al (2020), care centers are meant to provide social services, education, shelter and temporary protection to children who are in need of care after being abused, neglected or left unattended. These children are discharged from care centers when they are regarded as young adults from the age of eighteen (18). In most cases they are discharged to go into society without adequate preparation, lack of adequate resources, poor support networks and limited skills training (Stein and Munro, 2022). Young people transitioning out of institutional care encounter diverse social and economic constraints. Courtney et al (2020) state that youths without traceable family lack social support which causes structural vulnerability leading to them being left out of traditional economy and society.

Globally, young people encounter constraints such as housing and accommodation challenges, lack of social capital, unemployment, mental health problems and social stereotyping. According to Dworsky et al (2020), young people who age out of care centers from the age of eighteen (18) in the United States of America are vulnerable to homelessness, mental illness, unemployment and lack financial support. Almost similar circumstances occur in the United Kingdom as youths who leave care encounter adult responsibilities without adequate support and preparation (Stein and Ward, 2021). Most of youth care leavers experience accommodation challenges and end up living in unsuitable environments in the United Kingdom (Samuels and Pryce, 2021). Courtney and

Okpych (2020) argue that young people with care backgrounds have less opportunities to proceed with higher education or attain vocational training in the UK and US. Research findings from the USA and the United Kingdom show that there are high rates of trauma, anxiety and depression amongst youths with care backgrounds (Mendes and Rogers, 2020; Braciszewski et al., 2021). Therefore, poor mental health is a huge challenge for youths discharged from care institutions. Muir and Munro (2020) outline that many youths who leave care go on to rely on state welfare programs because of constraints in securing employment or lack of financial support. Additionally, there are poor social networks for most of care leavers (Ellis and Johnson, 2020). According to Hook and Courtney (2021), youths who transition out of care are highly susceptible to criminal involvement, substance abuse and exploitation.

Regionally, youths released from care facilities encounter diverse problems which span social, psychological, emotional, structural and economic domains. In many African nations, care facilities discharge young people when they reach the age of eighteen (18) without giving relevant skills, adequate preparation or connection to important services (Maguire-Jack et al, 2021). According to Theron and Ungar (2020), discharges are done abruptly and create a lot of cases of homelessness and increase in poverty. This is line with Main and Murungi (2020) who argue that youths who exit from care face discrimination in the employment sector because of their backgrounds in care. Additionally, most of care centers spread across South Africa lack highly trained teaching staff and career supportive professionals (Mathews and Osei-Hwedie, 2020). This leads to academic and career underachievement. Eke and Okechukwu (2021) highlight that young adults who leave are perceived with lenses of pity or suspicion which affect their social inclusion and integration. Across the nation of South Africa, care leavers without traceable relatives face challenges in getting their identity documentations and participating in community activities (Makusha et al, 2020). Crime is also a challenge amongst care leavers. According to Tanga and Manyeli (2020), housing and financial challenges force youths released from care into transitional sex which is deemed illegal by law. Similarly, Kagotho and Ssewamala (2021) report that several orphaned youths in Kenya and Uganda participate in reckless sexual behaviors and criminal acts when they released from care. Challenges faced by youths are proliferated by inadequate policy across African nations. Child protection and welfare systems in Africa target intake into residential care whilst ignoring exit and social integration strategies (Delap and Melville, 2020). There is a gap in delivery of aftercare support to young people.

Locally, Zimbabwe does not a properly formalized program for aftercare. Chikadzi (2021) states that youths are typically discharged when they turn eighteen (18) without employment opportunities, housing plans or social networks in Zimbabwe. Subsequently, youths end up in cesspools of poverty, homelessness and crime. According to Chitiyo and Chitiyo (2020), lack of transition plans and poor case management strain the reintegration process of youths without traceable families in the community. The economic crisis in Zimbabwe severely affects youths from care who might not have adequate support from the society. Chiyaka and Chinyemba (2021) state that lack of economic support or empowerment programs by the state push care leavers into begging, informal work or rely on handouts. This perspective is in line with Mutanana and Gasva (2020) who argue that youths from care share common problems which are informal jobs, underpayment and exploitation.

According to Mabhanda and Motsi (2022), most of the children placed in residential care centers are given access to basic education, their exposure to tertiary education or vocational training is limited. This is caused by financial challenges and lack of supportive infrastructure. Young people who leave care in Zimbabwe find it hard to reintegrate with the outside world because of social and psychological conditions prevalent in care facilities. Tirivangani and Mapuranga (2022) expose that unstable environments and conditions of trauma negatively impact cognitive development and inspiration for concentration and learning. These challenges further lead to development of mental challenges after they are discharged from institutions. Anxiety, depression and poor self-esteem are common amongst care leavers who rarely get psychological support (Mukwesha, 2020). Therefore, the local context highlights a gap in transition programs which leave youths vulnerable to educational, economic and social exclusion.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Ideally, residential care facilities should provide support and provide developmental opportunities for youths. Care systems are expected to offer holistic and well planned discharge programs for young adults which focus on training, mentorship, skills development and education, psychosocial support and various aftercare services (Courtney and Heuring, 2020). This helps ensures that youths released from care transition well into young adulthood. Young adults leaving care must achieve self-reliance, social participation, emotional well-being and stability. However, the reality of the Zimbabwean context is widely contrasted from the ideal expectations. Chikadzi (2021) states that young people are released from care facilities at eighteen (18) without adequate support

or preparation. This is in line with Mandoga and Manyati (2021) who argue that youth care leavers are vulnerable individuals exposed to poverty, crime and unemployment. Young adults are stuck in a biting reality of social and economic constraints. According to Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (2023), more than thirty (30%) of young adults from eighteen (18) years to twenty four (24) years are unemployed and lack vocational qualifications. These statistics tally with multiple indicator cluster survey conducted by the agency in 2020 showing that approximately twenty (24%) of children in Zimbabwe fall into the category of orphans and vulnerable children. These children go on to become untrained or unsupported youths once they leave care (Chitiyo, 2020). Overall, there is a dichotomy between the ideal and reality of welfare for care leavers. Young adults are leaving care facilities without efficient life skills and preparation and they fall into poverty, deterioration of mental well-being and social degeneration (Chigwanda, 2021). With this knowledge, the research seeks to design strategies that help alleviate vulnerability and marginalization of youths who transition out of care. This is in line with the goal of social work of unlocking dormant potentialities and promoting human development.

1.3. AIM OF THE STUDY
The study aims design and implement a holistic socio-economic integration strategy for young people as they transition from residential care facilities.

1.4 OBJECTIVES
1. To identify problems faced by youths discharged from residential care facilities in Highfield District of Southerton, Harare.

2. To assess existing transition and adaption programs aimed at reducing challenges faced by young adults.

3. To formulate a simple strategy that addresses the primary needs of young adults.

4. To put forward a recommendation for policy formulation by stakeholders within government and non-governmental sector.

5. To improve outcomes for youths and reduce poverty.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS
1. What are the problems faced by youths after they discharged from care facilities in Highfield District?

2. What transitional and adaptation programs in Zimbabwe are aimed at reducing challenges faced by young adults?

3. What strategy can be used to meet and address the primary needs of young adults?

4. What recommendations can be put forward for policy formulation by stakeholders within government and non-governmental sector?

5. What can be done to improve outcomes for youths and reduce poverty?

1.6. JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

This study is important because it helps formulate strategies that help youths solve the problems they are facing in their day to day lives. The study clearly outlines the origin of the problems, how they are affecting young people and how they can be solved. This provides a professional trajectory of any empowerment or development initiative. According to United Nations Development Programme (2022), affairs of the young people have been overlooked in the past because of the lack of consideration of youth efforts to national development. Young people provide labor, active minds and strength for major activities that occur in the country of Zimbabwe. Empowering the young adults helps achieve sustainable development and reach the goal of uplifting Zimbabwe to an upper middle income economy by the year 2030.

According to pillar 4 of the National Development Strategy 1, helping youths solve their own problems promotes national development. Young people are the bedrock of strength, they provide the greatest resource for development which is human capital (Maguire and Mourshed, 2021). According to Amagoh (2020), proper management of human resources aims to help people realize their strengths and opportunities in particular to their social settings. This study is also important because it helps achieve sustainable development goals. For example, SDG 1 which aims to end poverty, SDG 2 which aims to reach zero hunger and SDG 8 which promotes decent work and economic growth. Helping young adults achieve their potential and favorable lives promotes their basic human rights and safety.

It is important to understand that most of the children placed at residential care facilities are from backgrounds of neglect, abuse and exploitation (Delap and Wedge, 2020). They easily fall back into poverty after being discharged from residential care facilities (Morantz and Heymann, 2022). Thus, this study helps reduce the continuation of human suffering and exploitation in the society.

Helping youths overcome the effects of their poor backgrounds creates a viable society which promotes the needs of its own people (UNESCO, 2021). It is an attempt to achieve social justice, equity and equality through youth empowerment. At university level, the study will help provide a body of knowledge which teaches developmental model of social work.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

According to Delap (2020) a residential care facility is defined as a place or institution where children are legally detained and taken care of by professionals and not their biological families. They will be taken care of under the supervision and monitoring of care givers, matrons and social workers (Courtney and Heerde, 2022). A child's stay at a residential care facility in Zimbabwe is determined by the Children's Act (Chapter 5: 06) which outlines care needs of children and relevant court orders. The first placement of a child in a care facility is done through opening of an Inquiry Order through the Magistrate's Court in terms of Section 19 of the Children's Act (Chapter 5: 06).

A discharge order is a court order that is issued for the removal of young adults who have turned eighteen years from residential care facilities (Stein, 2020). In Zimbabwe, discharge orders are issued through the Department of Social Development and the Magistrate Court. This is done line with Section 24 of the Children's Act (Chapter 5: 06). Discharged orders are also regulated by Section 8 of the Children's Act Regulation of 1972. Social workers at the Department of Social Department conduct background study, social analysis and prepare a discharge report/plan. The Magistrate at the Children's Court has authority to approve or disapprove a discharge.

Young adulthood refers to a phase which falls between adolescence and adulthood, which falls between eighteen (18) and twenty nine (29) years (Arnett, 2022). It is a period of development which involves growing from adolescence to self-sustenance across emotional, economic and social domains (Sawyer et al, 2021). According to Section 81(1) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Act (20) of 2013, a person reaches young adulthood at the age of eighteen (18) years. The Children's Act (Chapter 5:06) outlines that adulthood is legally recognized from the age of eighteen (18). This is corroborated by Article 1 of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1981) anyone below the age of eighteen (18) years is regarded as a child.

1.8 DISSERTATION OUTLINE

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter outlines that young people face challenges as they transition and move out of residential care facilities. These challenges are attributed to prevailing social and economic conditions in their communities and the rest of the country. This has caused a surge in illegal activities such as stealing, drug and substance abuse and exploitation. The problem at hand is to be approached with the aim of formulating strategies that promote personal development and national growth. The study explores the conditions within the African region and international community with the understanding that development is a global initiative. This research shall be undertaken in Highfield District, Southerton in Harare. The next chapter will bring forward the literature review.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Young adults experience life changing developments as they move out of residential care facilities. Transition brings change in one's environment, relationships and situations. In a developing country like Zimbabwe, transition is marred by widespread poverty, systemic inequality, unemployment, criminal activity and accommodation challenges. These challenges affect the welfare of young people who are moving out of care institutions and settling in the uncharted outside society. The political context of the nation of Zimbabwe affects the socio-economic distribution of the land and how young people fit into the social fabric. This chapter brings forward an academic but practical synthesis of social and economic frameworks aimed at studying, understanding and analyzing post-discharge experiences of young people.

2.1.1 THEORECTAL FRAMEWORK

Transition Theory by Schlossberg

Schlossberg theory states that transition can be described as change that is caused by an event or non-events. This change affects a person's roles, relationships, routines, assumptions and approaches to daily life (Walker and Horner, 2024). According to Krzaklewska et al (2023) education in institutions, labor markets and greater society affect how young people transition to autonomy. Transition has a crucial impact on the lifestyle that is followed by a person or a group. The theory outlines that there are social, psychological and economic drivers of transition and these affect each other. For every transition that occurs, human behavior and action is bound to be affected. Change affects how a person relates and adapts to his or her environment (Fermani et al., 2023). According to Rae (2024) transition is specific to particular settings, circumstances and needs in that determines how one moves and participates even if they are living with disabilities.

The theory's insight uses psychological expertise which outlined that perception is important in properly understanding the concept of transition. Meanings that individuals attach to events or non-events determine how they are affected by transition (Ruthven, 2022). According to Hicks (2021) individuals are affected by transition because of meanings related to context, types of transitions and behaviors involved. There are different types of transitions. Anticipated transitions entail those that occur with a definite prediction, a change which people often look upto. For example, graduation or a wedding ceremony. This type of transition often has a positive

psychological impact on people because it planned and if there are related challenges, they are prepared for beforehand (Wilson and Given, 2020).

According to Bingham et al (2024) closely related to anticipated transitions are their contrary, unanticipated transitions. They are changes that are sudden and unpredictable. Changes that happen without the direct intention of the people involved. For example, a divorce, death or failing a final exam. Unanticipated transitions cause psychological and social disturbances (Taylor and McPherson, 2021). They bring forward shocks to human welfare. They can be likened to accidents which are unpredictable yet cause havoc to human safety. According to Brennan and Ortiz (2024) transitions that occur without planning affect how the social mobility and resources are distributed amongst all society members. In some instances, they cause inequalities.

Another type of transition is a non-event. These refer to transitions which are anticipated to take place but are stopped by failures or incapacity (Thompson, 2024). For example, failure to pass a medical exam, a sudden cancellation of a wedding or missing a plane to a dream vacation. Harper and Lawson (2021) states that non-events occur as a result inadequacy or human error. Some can be caused by natural causes like failure to yield a good harvest because of flooding or pest attacks on crops. Schlossberg stated that they are different types of non-event transitions. Lee and Daniels (2022) concur that there is a personal non-event which is embedded in aspirations and desires of a single individual. Personal non-event transitions often cause problems which affect individual needs and not group interests or society affairs.

Ngwenya and Patel (2021) state that ripple non-event transition occurs when an individual experiences a change caused by another's non-event. This is caused by the influence of another person whose actions have a direct or indirect impact on the welfare on an individual (Brown and Shapiro, 2023). Events play a crucial role in transition (Krause and Linden, 2022). Schlossberg's transition theory states that individuals might experience a delayed non-event which occurs when they expect that an event will occur in future. Information surrounding different types of transition outlines that changes are unique to individual or group experiences. These experiences are met with different interpretations and meanings. Thus, people react differently to change.

For every transition, there is a specific coping mechanisms by a person. Barlow and Chen (2022) opine that the transition theory is based on four main domains which affect copying mechanisms. These are a) self, b) situation, c) support and d) strategy.

A) Self

This explains that personal identity and self-worth affects how a person views or responds to changes that occur in his or her life (Roger and Adeyemi, 2023). Every person has characteristics that are subject to his or her social circumstances. For example, gender, social and economic status, stage of life, age, health and ethnicity. According to Kaur and Mitchell (2021) personal response to transition is also affected by an individual's psychological and intellectual resources such as values, morals, ego and motivation. How a person responds to change is informed and affected by social, economic and psychological resources he or she possesses.

B) Situation

Situation considers different components of a transition and what necessitated it (Murphy and Hall, 2023). It explains the trigger factor, this refers the cause of the change. It delineates whether the change was anticipated or unanticipated. The nature of a trigger heavily influences its impact on a person (Taylor and Mensah, 2022). There is also timing as a factor. This examines and explains if change was in line with a person's social clock. Transition is either on time or off time. Time is a vehicle of change, it influences all forms of changes which people go through.

Control is a subcomponent of situation. It seeks juxtaposes change and individual capabilities of a person. Control critics the ability of a person to exert influence as he or she goes through a transition process. A person's ability to control change determines if he or she maintains roles which were important before the change process began. Transition as a situation has a duration in every person's life. Duration refers to the period during which a person experiences change. Change can be temporary, permanent or uncertain. The availability of material, intellectual and psychological resources affects how a person withstands a period of change.

Schlossberg argues that every individual possesses a certain ability to self-evaluate and explain how they were affected by transition. This allows for external support and assistance. In some instances, transition follows another similar transition and this creates experiences for a person. Previous experiences inform a person's copying mechanisms and influences how a person may develop solutions to meet problems created a current transition. They also allow for examining the stressing factors that might be borrowed from previous transitional problems.

C) Support

This aspect entails who a person handles transition in relation to his or her support system. Singh and Adewale (2021) state that the support that youths get plays an important role in handling disturbances, problems and opportunities caused by transition. Support is commonly obtained from family members, intimate partners, communities, institutions and sometimes, national support systems. The availability of material and resource for supportive infrastructure is key to an individual or group ability to sustain transition and its effects.

D) Strategy

When a person experiences transition, strategy is crucial as a means to deal with the change. Strategy has three categories. Strategy can be formulated as a way of changing the situation in which transition occurs (Kendall and Fletcher, 2020). It can also be a way to control the problem and meanings attached to it. According to Morgan and Duarte (2021) strategy can also be developed as a way of addressing stressing that occurs after a transition. Thus, strategy can be explained as human effort to copy and adapt to the demands, problems and opportunities surrounding transition.

Lawrence and Mushtaq (2023) state that Schlossberg's transition theory is helpful in addressing key elements to change and human behavior amongst youths experiencing transition. These are crisis, stress, adaptation and copying. These influence how people are involved in new locations, situations, relationships, behaviors, perceptions and habits. Individual capabilities and external developments correlate for occurrence of change (Miller and Kin, 2020). According to Riley and Dawson (2023), transitions can occur in a sequential and non-sequential order. Social systems in any given society produce the effects of change for all members of that particular society (Fraser and Khan, 2021). If the systems are complex, the person or people involved are bound to experience dire effects of transition. This is because they will be not be adequate informed of their environment and social circumstance.

The theory of transition pays particular attention to environments. There are pre-transition and post transition environments. These two are imperative in understanding how human welfare and security are interconnected components in social systems (Jameson and Ellis, 2021). Every time human welfare is challenged or disturbed, human security is compromised. This affects distribution of resources and materials that are critical in empowering individuals, communities and nations. Campbell and Zhou (2020) argue that pre-transition systems affect stability and

instability of individuals in environments they settle after transition. Thus, the environmental aspect of transition is key to human adaptation.

This theory is very important in understanding two critical aspects that are related to transition which are chaos and new organization (Browne and Peters, 2022). At the beginning of transition, a crisis occurs. This causes chaos in the life of a person. In some instances, chaos might have permanent effects or claim the lives of people involved. Crisis causes stress, tension and grief. However, the end of transition brings forward new organization. This might give a person a new identity. Langston and Mbatha (2021) state that new organization instils new beliefs, experiences and perceptions in an individual. Arguably, transition has a dual role of causing chaos and new organization.

2.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THEORY TO STUDY

The study is focused on understanding challenges that are faced by young adults who are discharged from residential care facilities whilst simultaneously formulating strategies that foist a comprehensive socio-economic framework. This framework would help them realize their full potentialities, promote human security and unlock several opportunities. Parker and Crabtree (2020) state that development into adulthood is a challenging concept which requires a lot of support, infrastructure and safe social systems. Schlossberg theory of transition outlines the underlying structures and systems which are pivotal human adaption after transition from one situation to another. In this study the theory integrates lived experiences and solutions through relatable terms and these are *transition, adaptation, crisis, stress and copying.*

This theory is relevant to the study because of its focus on geographical movement of the young adults as they are discharged from residential care facilities. According to Cook (2020), life within residential care facilities is usually overprotected by monitoring authority of the state, department of social development and personnel at institutions. Transition from institutions is marked by a change of activities, establishment of new relationships, new behaviors and new means of survival (Rokach & Clayton, 2023). The change is quite troublesome due to complex systems in the society. Mozes (2022) states that youths without proper mentorship and grooming suffer the challenges as they interact with the outside world, primarily because of poor economics, inadequate social integration and political polarization in the country.

The theory of transition views life as a sequential development circle (Chambers and Riley, 2021). Individuals move from one stage to another. This occurs through a process of change. According to Chirkov (2024), human beings exchange different languages, cultures, behaviors and beliefs at every level of human interaction. These exchanges determine how people adapt to their environments and develop skills which are relevant for survival or success. There are skills which are developed as a means of establishing dominance, building wealth or achieving self-actualization (Dolan, 2024). This is line with Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs which stipulates that human behavior is embedded in safety, protection and self needs (Maslow, 2013). At this point it is vital to state that youths discharged from residential care facilities undergo these stages as they seek to meet and address their needs.

Schlossberg's theory is significant to this study because of its focus on psychosocial transition. According to Lopez and Mitchell (2022) psychosocial transition relates to change that affects a person's identity, beliefs and assumptions of their society. It influences a person to get rid of old beliefs and meanings of past life and adopt new assumptions of a new life (Kaur and Daniels, 2021). In relation to this study, the authorization of a discharged court order by the Magistrate's court makes a turning point in the lives of youths from residential care facilities. This introduces the aspect of developmental change. New developments manifest in a youth's life either rapidly or gradually depending on the nature of the discharge plan and its execution. The transition theory outlines that there are consequences to every form of transition.

Donovan and Harper (2022) argue that there are positive and negative consequences to transition. Personal or relational changes caused by a discharge order can weigh down or promote welfare of involved youths (Rokach and Clayton, 2023). Tension or opportunities can manifest in their lives. Consequences of transition are determined by supporting systems, external stakeholders and primary personal assumptions of change. Derenne and Chan (2021) state that youths discharged from residential care facilities are mostly presented with change that has two primary psychosocial effects. These are threat of psychological deterioration and opportunity for psychological development. Currently, the social welfare system still lags behind in terms of promoting after care for youths who are released from residential care facilities. Mupedziswa and Mawadza (2022) highlight that there is lack of fully functional partnerships between the Department of Social

Development, residential care facilities, the receiving community and the youths themselves. This helps address the ambivalent nature and effects of discharges.

The theory is very important to the study because it states the need for adaptation to change. Adaptation is the process by which a youth shifts from being preoccupied with transition to integrating the change into his or her life and develop favorable assumptions (Harms, 2021). Education about a transition plays a key role in determining how an individual views, interprets and prepares for transformative transition (Mutepfa and Marovah, 2023). This is important because it allows juveniles in residential care facilities to be trained, educated and prepared before they reach the stipulated age of discharge. According to Stein (2020), preparation is essential for skills development and adaptation mechanisms before discharge. In this regard, social workers in the field of child welfare can partner the Department of Social Development and community leaders to help in training youths before their discharge.

Further, this theory is important because it seeks to achieve homeostasis of two environments experienced by the youths (Mavhudzi and Chikadzi, 2021). These are the internal residential care facility environment and external environment. In Zimbabwe, residential care facilities are monitored and supervised using a set of principles and rules agreed upon by responsible child protection officers, child welfare stakeholders and the state. This helps promote child protection and safety. However, this is different from the outside world. Outside communities which are marred by uncontrolled human behavior, radical changes and developments which affect the society (Mavhudzi and Moyo, 2022). A youth moving from a controlled environment might fail to adapt well to the uncontrolled external environment where law enforcement fails to create a complete state of peace and social cohesion. Thus, the theory of transition seeks to create a balance and safe zone of interaction between the internal environments within residential care facilities and outside community.

 The theory is important because it outlines the importance of resources for a successful transition. The quality of a transition is subject to resources and community support structures (Mendes and Rogers, 2020). The resources can be material, intellectual, social and psychological (Lee and Greeno, 2023). Youths need skills that will help them once they leave residential care facilities. They need education on the meaning of a discharge, their basic rights and the law. They also need social integration to ensure that they are not alienated from important social movements and

development in the communities they settle in. Youths need counselling during their pre-discharge phase. Youths are an active group of human labor which needs to be appreciated and utilized for personal, community and national development (UNDP, 2023). Resources are vital in controlling the degree of stress which affects young people. They promote efficient social adjustment which is key for proper integration.

Additionally, the transition theory highlights the importance of interpersonal and intrapersonal support systems. According to Muturi (2021), providing an individual with advice, support, information and protection reinforces his or her sense of worth. Social support improves stability and adequacy of well-being (Dlamini and Moyo, 2022). It ensures that individuals realize their capabilities and perform important social roles. In regard to the youths, social support can be ushered through their traceable relatives, religious groups, support groups, friends, network of stakeholders and the state. The support can also be given through political groups since Zimbabwe is identified as a democratic nation wherein every individual has freedom of affiliation. However, this can cause due to the predominant political polarization in the country. The underlying factor is support systems youth integration.

The transition theory is important because it analyses the relationship between sex and adaption to change. Traditionally, females are given freedom to explore and express their feelings whilst men are programmed to hide their emotions and feelings (Gunderson and Lee, 2021). This is common in Zimbabwe which has a background of patriarch. Due to the freedom of expression given to women, female youths might have opportunities to voice out challenges and grievances met through transition. On the other hand, male youths might develop mental health problems when they are faced with negative consequences of transition. According to Khumalo and Banda (2022), differences between socialization of boys and girls affects how they adapt to social phenomena prevalent in communities they settle after leaving care. In communities where cases of sexual harassment are high female youths are more vulnerable than their male counterparts. They might also be victims of gender stereotypes which assert male dominance. Understanding sex role dynamics in transition is important in creating equitable systems of intervention and support.

Closely related to sex role dynamics of transition is health. Health is a huge determinant of how youths are affected by transition (Barnard et al, 2023). The state of a person's health influences his or her ability to adapt to a change process and the final environment of settlement. Whilst in

residential care facilities juveniles have their medical needs covered by assisted medical treatment orders (AMTOs) issued by the department of social development (DSD). This medical assistance ensures that children are treated by state health facilities and in case of complicated illness requiring foreign assistance, special AMTOs are issued.

However, this medical assistance is revoked once a juvenile reaches the age of eighteen (18) and is discharged from a residential care facility. According to Henderson (2023), youths with low health states face challenges as in their post-discharge phase, these include worsening illness or death. Those with disabilities acquired through diseases might face discrimination and exclusion from community based programs. This perspective is important because it highlights the need to mainstream health needs of youths being released from institutions.

2.4. ANSWERING OBJECTIVES

2.4.1 PROBLEMS FACED BY THE YOUTHS

Social Isolation

According to Stubbs et al (2023), youths discharged from residential care facilities often face a challenge of social isolation. Isolation is a pervasive aspect associated with movement out of residential care facilities. Transitioning youths are recognized globally as a vulnerable group (van Breda et al., 2020). Isolation triggers mental health challenges for young people such as depression and anxiety. Faced with social isolation, young adults might develop maladaptive habits that further exacerbate their vulnerability. Social isolation is prevalent amongst youths who do not have traceable relatives. Lack of family networks and kinship support is detrimental to young people who leave care centers.

Unemployment

Unemployment is a troubling issue amongst youths who leave care institutions. Glynn (2023) states that youths who grow out of state care lack adequate identity development and support which are the basis for moderate economic outcomes. Structural elements in care affect how young people adapt to life outside care facilities (OECD, 2024). According to Dhludhlu (2024), there is a case conducted in Tshwane District Municipality in Gauteng Province, South Africa examining the problems faced by youths leaving care. The study showed that youths face financial problems related to unemployment and economic exploitation. This is in line with Hlungwani and van Breda

(2022) who state that care leavers encounter challenges in securing jobs and meeting their daily needs. McGhee and Deeley (2022) concur that several young adults leaving care struggle to find employment and many end up in crime or delinquency. Locally, lack of family support and opportunities worsen financial challenges for youths (Gwenzi, 2023). Hence, it can be noted that young adults who leave residential care facilities are affected by unemployment.

Criminalization

Branston et al (2024) define criminalization as the process wherein youths who leave care are unjustly arrested, policed and imprisoned because of systemic biases and inadequate social support. Closely related to criminalization is survival crime (Brierley, 2021). Survival crime are illegal activities that are done to address problems of poverty or lack of options for example sex work, theft or gang involvement. These are caused by structural neglect and institutional abandonment. Poor after care plans force youths to look for risky and sometimes illegal survival strategies. For example in Zimbabwe and South Africa, many youths are discharged at the age of eighteen (18) without specialized aftercare plans, housing arrangements and social support.

2.4.2 EXISTING TRANSITION AND ADAPTION PROGRAMS

Zimbabwe Care Leavers Network (ZCLN)

This is an advocacy and support agency which is led by care-experienced personnel to challenge and address systemic gaps and neglect in post-care transitions. The organization was registered in 2018 as a private voluntary organization 98/20 under the Ministry of Public Service, Labor and Social Welfare. The organization advocates against unplanned discharges and it lobbies for policy change to improve employment, housing and education opportunities for care leavers. ZCLN conducts case studies and research which are used for policy recommendation. The agency also partners care leavers through vocational training, peer mentorship and counselling. However, the organization is poorly funded to help all care leavers. The organization mainly focuses on care leavers in urban areas such Harare and the recommended Aftercare Act has not been rectified.

Vocational Training

In Harare, there are vocational training programs which are led by non-governmental organizations. These include welding, carpentry, culinary arts and performing arts. For Kuda Vana Youth Transition Program. This organization aims to provide vocational training and psychosocial support. It also focuses on building youth careers in nursing and psychology related fields. The organization brings together youths to share skills, undergo apprenticeships and job referrals.

However, the organization is limited due to small scale funding. The number of care leavers needing help and support strains the organization's limited supportive infrastructure. Thus, many youths do not receive adequate help.

Regional Model

There is an extended care model in South Africa. This was enacted through the Children's Amendment Act (2020) which youths to remain in care till the age of 21. This provides support to youths who do not have traceable relatives and adequate social support. The model also aims to give youths grants for tertiary education and housing support. This goes in line with a cash transfer program launched by Kenya. It helps youths with money on a monthly basis till they reach the age of twenty five (25). These programs have been instrumental in reducing survival crime involving care leavers. However, these programs lack comprehensive support due to inconsistent government support and diverse social distribution.

2.4.3 A STRATERY FOR PRIMARY NEEDS FOR YOUTHS

Skills Development and Empowerment

Youths released from care institutions require skills development and economic empowerment. According to Van Breda (2023), skills development entails offering opportunities to learn social, intellectual and practical skills for daily life, work and innovation. This is crucial for youthful care leavers. Greeson et al (2021) state that care leavers who have relevant skills and vocational training experience positive outcomes related to health, housing, work and independence. According to Bakketeig and Backe-Hansen (2023), youths from care centers face employment challenges leading to poverty in the absence of investment. In this regard, skills development and empowerment are vital in addressing primary needs of youths.

Community support and integration

Montserrat et al (2022) discovered that youths released from care centers in Europe struggled with poor esteem, lack of belonging and loneliness. This is caused by poor community networks. According to Pinkerton (2021) states that lack of community integration causes crime, drug abuse and poor mental health. There is need for young adults to be taught how to integrate with the external world. Delap (2020) opines that care reform should focus on building bridges between care facilities and communities. This helps in upholding community collaboration and shared sense of belonging.

Health

Health is a primary need for youths released from care institutions. According to Greenson et al (2021), young adults leaving care lack adequate education relating to sexual education and access to contraceptives. In Zimbabwe, many youths face stigma relating to mental and reproductive health (Mutambo and Hlongwana, 2021). According to Maringwa and Dzingirai (2021), there is a gap between youth welfare and public health system. Health assistance should be part of discharge plan before young adults are released from care facilities. This can be done through partnerships between the Ministry of Health and Childcare and Ministry of Public Service, Labor and Social Welfare. Upholding the health of young adults can also be promoted through health workers in the community.

2.4.4 A RECOMMENDATION FOR POLICY FORMULATION

Addressing these different challenges require evidence-backed and informed interventions and policy reforms. According to Stein (2020), youths leaving care lack adequate institutional support, safety nets and family connections. Policy should be developed as a way of empowering youths after they are discharged. Courtney et al (2022), policymaking should be informed by developmental approaches. Youth development should be at the center of policy and framework (Paulsen and Sorbo, 2021). Intervention strategies should focus on building resilience and re-marginalization of youth care leaver (Schelbe and Geiger, 2020). According to Mendes and Rogers (2020), rights of care leavers are often neglected. In this regard, there should be a rights based approach to policy which aims to uplift young people.

2.4.5 OUTCOMES FOR YOUTHS AND POVERTY REDUCTION

Day et al (2020) state that inconsistence in services and care exacerbates poverty faced by young adults. Care leavers face extreme forms of poverty during their transitions in low and middle income countries (Manful and Kwayie, 2021). According to McNamara et al (2023), youths can escape poverty through housing support, jobs and psychological security. This can be achieved through holistic interventions through partnership of different sectors and stakeholders. For example, harmonized cash transfer in Zimbabwe through DSD. Smith and Ben-David (2022) argue that financial assistance is vital for vulnerable young adults. Linking vocational training and labor market reduces economic poverty youths (Havlicek and Lin 2021). According to Goodkind and

Thomas (2022), socioeconomic empowerment for youths should focus on digital inclusion. Thus, reducing poverty requires youth focused approaches which promote development and collaborative effort.

2.5 LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

Zimbabwean Constitution

There are legal frameworks which affect the welfare of children and youths and they are operate at three levels. These are local, regional and international. These frameworks are affected by geopolitics, culture, human rights movement and welfare systems. Locally, the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) is key framework. It clearly stipulates that any person below the age of eighteen (18) is a child. This creates a basis for all efforts to ensure that juveniles are well taken of, providing with basis needs, promote their safety, protection and general welfare. This warrants the role of the government in taking care of children through the Department of Social Development under the Ministry of Labor, Public Service and Social Welfare.

Children's Act (Chapter 5: 06)

The constitution of Zimbabwe mothered another critical legal framework which is the Children's Act (Chapter 5: 06). The first draft of the act was done and published in colonial Rhodesia in 1972. The act was meant to ensure that protection of children and uphold their welfare. However, it was biased toward the children of white settlers. Children's courts were predominantly diversified across racial lines, they opposed the rights of the children of black folks. After independence in 1980, the children's act has gone through different amendments. Latest to these amendments is the 2023 Amendment Act which was published in the month of July 2023. The goal of this latest amendment was to promote rights of children and improve the child welfare system.

The Children's Act (2023) plays a key role in the release of children from residential care facilities. It follows the regulations of the Zimbabwean constitution that a person is recognized as an adult when they reach the age of 18. Subsequently, Section 24 of the Children's Act (Chapter 5: 06) talks of the discharge of youths aged eighteen (18) and above. When a juvenile turns 18 he or she is now regarded as an adult and the responsible social worker writes a discharged report to the Children's Court where a Magistrate authorizes the release and issues a discharge court order. Before authorizing a discharge, a study of the youth's circumstances are analyzed. The

circumstances pay attention to background information narrating how he or she was primary found in need of care, family composition, health, education, social visits and a discharge plan.

According to Baidawi and Mendes (2021), a comprehensive discharge plan is supposed to precede the issuance of a discharge order. This highlights the interaction between the social welfare and judiciary system. They work in tandem to ensure that the rights of youths are upheld before, during and after their release. This legal interaction of social welfare and judiciary outlines the important role of legal frameworks in maintaining and upholding safety and protection needs of young people.

The African Youth Charter

Regionally, the African Youth Charter is a very important framework on child protection and welfare (Johnson & Nielson, 2020). The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) emphasizes care and protection of children. It states that governments amongst other stakeholders have primal roles in taking care of persons below the age of eighteen (18). Primarily, the charter identifies a child as anyone below the age of eighteen (18). Thus, state players have important obligations to provide protection, adequate care and promote development. In this regard, it regulates how governments direct social welfare to meet the needs and demands of young people. The African Charter is an important tool to this study because of its focus on the needs of children and the youths.

African Youth Charter (2006) states that individuals who are between fifteen (15) and thirty-five (35) years are identified as youths. It provides a recommendation and framework for promoting youth development, transformation and empowerment across the African continent (Bouchard and Omaji, 2021). This ensures that young adults discharged from residential care facilities are partnered with other youths in youth empowerment projects. Kiai and Wamue-Ngare (2022) agree that youth empowerment can be achieved through various strategies such as active participation, providing education, skills development and employment to youths. This key aspect of youth empowerment by the African Charter is very important in formulating a socio-economic strategy for young adults released from care homes.

It helps in indigenizing regional African initiatives to address local problems. Importantly, the regional framework ensures that efforts within the country and others on the African continent are well informed by principles of Ubuntu and communalism which are central to African livelihoods.

This is important in reducing the overwhelming influx of global approaches which might not recognize local ideas of development and emancipation.

United Nations policy

On a global level, there are international frameworks that govern the welfare of young people. Primarily, the United Nations plays an important role in guiding alternative care distribution for children (Cantwell, 2020). Its regulation provides the basis for the placement of children in institutions in that it advocates for protection, care and safeguarding of children in residential settings (O'Halloran, 2023). This has overtime necessitated the creation of residential care facilities. Care, support and protection are core to the function and operation of the international organization. It is a key player in child welfare systems across the world. Even more important is its role in the release of children once when they become young adults from residential care facilities.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is important in understanding care systems for the children and their continuation after they are discharged from institutions (Fallon et al., 2021). In particular, Article 20 states that there is need for a young person to be provided with continual support in relation to his or her bringing and valuing his or her social background. This recognizes religion, culture and language. This ensures that when support is being given to young people it is done so in a culturally competent manner. In relation to this study, the socio-economic integration strategy must be designed in a way that recognizes the social diversity of the youths and the communities they settle in (Shung-King et al, 2021). It must recognize the multi-pluralism of culture and values.

Recognizing the UNCRC is imperative in that it helps design a strategy that upholds equitable distribution of economic resources and alignment of social values and backgrounds (Mokomane, 2020). This ensures that the integration strategy does not overwhelm the youth, rather it opens them up to realistic and practical opportunities present in their communities. It is a way of unlocking dormant potentialities that have made youths stagnant. The United Nations is also important for its focus on aftercare support for youths.

Weems et al (2024) define aftercare systems as planned, structured and designed programs that are meant to provide ongoing guidance, resources and assistance to people who are transitioning from a controlled environment to an external environment. In this case, these are the youths who are

transitioning from residential care facilities. According to Del Valle and Bravo (2021), aftercare systems for the youths seek to promote stability, security and meet all social and psychological needs. They are practical ways of achieving social integration and development. The United Nations is focused on solving the day to day challenges of youths who settle in uncontrolled environments such as high density areas in low and middle income countries globally.

These challenges are related to accommodation, health care, employment and education. They can be solved through youth development funding, incorporating youths in affordable housing programs, supported educational activities and state assisted medical services. These initiatives are very important because they reduce systemic inequalities and social barriers. They reinforce resilience and independence. Eze (2024) states that the United Nations is important because it outlines the power of integration of economic and social systems to promote the welfare of youths.

These legal frameworks which operate at local, regional and international levels have been put in place by various policies and in recognition of different constitutions. Generally, security, safety and emancipation of youth people are at the core mandates. Recognizing these frameworks is instrumental in designing practical solutions to problems faced by youths released from residential care facilities in their daily lives. Youths often face high risks of homelessness, poor health care serviced delivery and unemployment (Hampton, 2023; Smyth, 2023). In view of their real life problems, integration of local, regional and international frameworks helps address and solve interconnected needs.

Integration of different frameworks helps in designing practical transitional care models. These will ensure that young adults are discharged from care facilities after proper planning of discharge strategies, stakeholders are well-informed, continuation of education and linkage with opportunities. Integration is also important for strengthening and harnessing social capital. Social capital amongst the youths is important in community engagement and valuable connections (World Bank, 2023). Youths can be assisted with functional civic and community engagement, this foists cohesion and collaborative effort for youth empowerment. Integration is also vital for reducing cases of mental health challenges amongst the youths such as anxiety and depression.

Sustainable Development Goals

Leveraging on social capital amongst the youths can promote innovation, engagement and active participation which are key in achieving universal development plans (Shen et al., 2024). Universal

development plans are focused on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals. According to Niklasson (2020), sustainable development goals seek to eradicate poverty, address social problems caused by inequality and injustice. Sustainable development goal 17 is focused on strengthening and promoting partnerships at global level to share ideas, knowledge and cooperation. Partnerships can be done to promote the interests of the youths, they provide primary human capital which is a tool for universal development.

Nelson (2021) states that sustainable development goals are vital because of their focus on promoting human development of all individuals including the youth. For example, SDG 3 good health and well-being and SDG 1, no poverty. The SDGs are important for youths because they attract new opportunities, they give young people mentorship and sense of purpose in their day to day lives (Singh, 2024). This is important in reducing the negative challenges that arise from transitioning out of institutions. Bankekas and Seatzu (2023) opine that integration of international frameworks can be done as a way of raising global awareness on youth empowerment. Thus, frameworks play an important in shaping ideas and strategies that favor the welfare of young people.

2.6 RESEARCH GAPS
It has been noted that transitioning from residential care facilities presents a myriad of challenges for young adults. However, the existing literatures has gaps which affect the interaction of theoretical framework and practical initiatives. There is need for further investigation and study into different areas to ensure that the needs of the young adults are fully met and addressed. Here are some of the factors that need consideration in addressing literature gaps:

2.6.1 PARTICIPATION
Young adults are not fully incorporated in discharge planning (Alves et al., 2025). They are mostly stand as the recipients of the activities that result in their discharge. This is primarily because responsible social workers are given a state mandated role to monitor and supervision of activities to any designated residential care facility. The youths are not fully active in the decision making processes because the law limits their decisions and insight considering that discharge plans are done when they are still below eighteen (18), not yet adults according to the Zimbabwean Constitution and the African Charter. There is inadequate utilization of strategies and approaches

that fully incorporate the juveniles from early life in residential care facilities to their post-discharge lives in the world.

There is another research gap related to the handling of social activities in residential care facilities. Social settings in residential care facilities affect how young adults adapt to the outside world after they are discharged. The type of socialization and interaction patterns in residential care facilities play crucial roles in shaping the copying mechanisms of young people. They inform their decision making skills and adaption to power dynamics in the society. Thus, research must be conducted to design and develop strategies that recognize the importance of active participation and interaction of young people with their social settings and resources.

2.6.2 MENTAL HEALTH

According to Phillips et al (2024), there is limited research in studies related to the mental health support systems for young adults. There is lack of adequate support for continuity in their post-discharge phase. The available research highlights that mental health problems are on the rise amongst young adults caused by problems they encounter whilst transitioning out of residential care facilities. Despite noting the mental challenges amongst the youths, the research is limited on addressing barriers and challenge to treatment methods for youths outside residential care facilities, developing safe transitional models that safeguard mental health and therapeutic care for efficient adherence to transitioning.

2.6.3 SOCIAL SUPPORT

Okland and Oterholm (2022) state that care leavers receive significantly low social support compared to other youths. There is limited research relating to social networks in relation to transition. Research has neglected the importance of technology as a source of empowerment in this digital age (Taylor et al., 2021). Research is also limited because it does not pay attention to strategies that enhance community engagements and connects during transitional phase. These connections help facilitate better settlement and adaptation to the outside world. Further, research gap exists in relation to how residential care facilities affect the supply and distribution of social capital for the young people and receiving communities.

2.6.3 HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES

Due to the politicization of economic resources in the developing region of Africa, there is poor research to fully address how economic reforms are crucial for empowerment of young people (Gapa et al, 2024). There is close intersection of economics and welfare of young people (Hlungwani et al., 2021). These two are vital in developing strategies that promote safety and development which is inclusive of the youths. Research is also limited in terms of its focus on housing for young people. There is need to develop housing-focused approaches for young adults who are discharged from residential care facilities. The researcher also discovered that employment and accommodation affect each other amongst the youths, thus more research needs to be conducted in that area.

2.6.4 METHODOLOGICAL GAPS

The existing literature is marred by methodological gaps. There is too much reliance on cross sectional designs in transition, this affects how stakeholders and resources are combined and distributed for the benefit of the youths. Voices of young adults who left residential care facilities is not being fully presented in research designs and strategies. There is underrepresentation of the experiences and knowledge of young people yet they are the ones who are affected by transitional problems. Existing research is limited in its recognition of social factors that integrate to affect lives of the youths. These include gender, race, disability and culture. Failure to address the aforementioned gaps makes research measurement biased and liable to cause more problems for young people.

The above mentioned research gaps need to be addressed to help develop evidence-based policies that enhance the movement of youths from residential care facilities. Addressing limitations informs practical interventions for young adults before and after being discharged. It is crucial to design models that make transition a form of development from one stage of life to another instead of making it a mere release from an institution. It should be seen as a form of independence for the young adults. Further research should be focused on participatory activities, practical methodologies, contribution of leaver experiences and collective planning for youth welfare.

SUMMARY

This chapter reviewed literatures relating to challenges faced by young adults as they move out of residential care facilities. The objectives outlined sought to establish basis for socioeconomic strategy for the youths. The chapter discussed their primary needs and strategies for effective aftercare. Insights borrowed from local and international frameworks outlined the needs for collaborative effort between the state, civic society and communities for empowerment of young people. Literature review set guidelines for policy making and establishment of support networks for socio-economic integration. The following chapter (3) discuss the research methodology.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This section focuses on the study that was carried in Highfield District, Harare. The research was undertaken used a qualitative research approach because of the focus on transition from residential from residential care facilities. Phenomenology was employed to deeply analyze information from real life experiences. Youths discharged from residential care facilities are a hard to reach group, thus the researcher used snowballing on a sample size of twenty (20) participants. The researcher used two types of data collection techniques: in-depth interview guide and narrative prompt. There were two types of in-depth interview guides, one for the key informant used to interview for professional information and expertise and another one for youths who were research participants.

3.1 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

Interpretivism was utilized in this study. This was important because interpretivism views reality as subjective and socially coined (Yu, 2020). Henderson (2023) states that young people with history in care have experiences which are often overgeneralized. In order to fully capture their unique experiences, there was need to employ interpretivism. Socioeconomic support is influenced by context wherein people operate and their livelihoods are based (Case, 2025). Thus, interpretivism was relevant in the study because it paid attention to cultural norms, attitudes and institutional operations in Highfield district, Harare. Interpretivism was also important because it gives voice to youths and promote formulation of informed strategies. Wang (2021) opines that interpretivism promotes the participation of the researcher. This is crucial in obtaining unfiltered first-hand information.

3.2 RESEARH APPROACH

The study employed qualitative research approach. Tenny et al (2022) state that qualitative approach is important because it offers deep insights and detailed perspectives which transcend beyond numbers and general data. Qualitative approach captures changing and developing attitudes and behaviors within a target group (Oranga and Matere, 2023). Hence, this approach was crucial in explaining unique experiences, challenges and norms of youths released from residential care facilities.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research used phenomenology. It focused on pre-discharge and post-discharge experiences of young adults from residential care facilities. According to Ruthven (2022), there are transitions

which are more difficult than others. Hicks (2021) supports the notion that transitions are personal and context-based. Youths face a myriad of challenges when they are moving out of residential care facilities. These challenges create complex experiences which might not be fully understood through arbitrary study (Cleverley, 2020). Complete understanding of the experiences requires a certain level of phenomenology which recognizes that reality, experiences and meaning are socially constructed (Glynn, 2021). Utilization of phenomenology was crucial in capturing experiences of the youth and alluding each experience to professional insight (Cadigan et al, 2021). Hence, phenomenology was relevant in the study.

3.4 STUDY SETTING

The research was undertaken Highfield District. This is a high density area located in Southerton in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe. There is a social welfare office run by the Department of Social Development in Highfield. It covers operates as Highfield District with a jurisdiction of many high density areas such as Machipisa, Budiriro, Glen View, Glen Norah, Mufakose, Hopley, Ushe Wokunze, Eye Court and Amsterdam. The jurisdiction also included the suburb of Waterfalls. The urban district is marred by a lot of political, social and economic problems. These form systemic constraints and challenges for young people moving out of residential care facilities.

The urban district of Highfield was relevant to the research of its demography and geography. The Ministry of Labor, Public Service and Social Welfare through the Department of Social Development mandated Highfield District office with the bureaucratic authority to cover several surrounding high density areas. According to Makombe (2021), high density areas in Zimbabwe are affected by poverty, limited resources, poor housing, poor sanitation and unfair distribution of community resources. The district is commonplace to case of child neglect and abuse. Thus, there are many residential care facilities in the district for placement of children the department of social development (DSD). The availability of residential care facilities and the office of social welfare was relevant because it outlined concentration of child support systems and youth development through the state and non-governmental stakeholders (Ndlovu and Tigere, 2022).

The social setting of Highfield district was important to the research because the social and economic challenges affect the post-discharge experiences of young adults. The high density environment is overcrowded and hence, efforts by the state and civic society have been overwhelmed. Thus, exacerbating the challenges faced by children and young adults. Conducting

a study in this area was crucial because it explored systemic failures, social corruption and economic turmoil. Social cracks in the district were also caused by political polarization. Populations in this district have been exposed to limited resources, inadequate opportunities and crime as a means of survival.

3.5 TARGET POPULATION
There were two groups of focus and these were primary target population and secondary target population. The primary were youths discharged from care centers and key informants were the secondary target population:

3.5.1 Youths
Young adults released from care facilities were the primary population. The demographics of this group consisted of young adults from 18 years to 25 years, both male and females. Many youths lack community resources and strong web of family support to help their transition to adult lives (Adams et al., 2021). The demography of the target was selected with the understanding that transition from dependence to independence occurs between eighteen (18) and twenty five (25) years. In this view, the study used phenomenology to capture experiences of these young adults.

3.5.2 Key Informants
The secondary population group was made up of key informants. Key informants are an integral part of investigation and methods of investigation (Islam et al., 2022). They act as expert sources of knowledge, ideas and insight. According to Pahwa et al (2023), key informants are vital in describing social change and complex social phenomena in research. They were five (5) key informants. Two (2) were superintendents of residential care facilities. Two were child protection and social development officers working with the Department of Social Development (DSD). One key informant was a social worker in the non-governmental sector. All the social workers involved were registered and approved by Social Workers Act (Chapter 27: 21).

3. 6 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE
The study made use of snowballing sampling. According to Etikan (2021) snowballing is a technique found in non-probability sampling and works well with qualitative research. Snowballing was appropriate for this study because the youths are a hard to reach group. When young adults are discharged from care, they go and settle in different locations as they seek establish new lives (Tyler and Schmitz, 2022). Highfield district is a high density area with widely

spread suburbs such as Machipisa, Old Highfield, Budiriro, Mufakose, Glen Norah, Glen View, Ushe Wokunze and Hopley. A traditional random technique of sampling was not effective and thus, the researcher had to rely on referrals. Another justification of snowballing was that the residential care facilities in Highfield District do not have an effective modern filing system. The care facilities also did not have the power and resources to do follow ups of discharged youths and create a database containing information of their whereabouts. Snowballing was also crucial in attaining the trust of the participants (Dempsey et al, 2022). Most of the youths from care had backgrounds of neglect, trauma and poverty which withdrew them from revealing sensitive information. Referrals from their peers was crucial because it instill a sense of trust to reveal their sensitive information. This fostered participation.

3.6.1 SAMPLE SIZE

The study made use of twenty (20) participants and five (5) key informants. The selection of these participants is justified by the need to obtain detailed responses. Experiences that are incurred before and after discharge have unique meanings and interpretations by those who are affected by them. Thus, having twenty (20) youths was instrumental in providing unique experiences and knowledge. Primarily, phenomenology places much importance on depth of information. According to Creswell (2013) that phenomenology prioritizes depth of knowledge which is obtained from a wider participant groups. In this view, the target population is line with phenomenological studies requirements.

The target population provides gender balance which aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 5: gender equality and balance. The researcher selected ten (10) male and ten (10) female youths. Such a selection criteria is crucial in regaining information which focuses on gender experiences. For example, female youths are susceptible to sexual exploitation after their discharge from residential care facilities. Their male counterparts are highly liable to be involved in criminal activities when faced by economic challenges such as unemployment. A gender balance was achieved through the target population and it reduced the likelihood of bias which feeds into the traditional narrative of men and women in society.

Traditionally, Zimbabwe used to be a patriarchal society (2021). Men and boys got better opportunities over their female counterparts. This research sought to follow recommendations of the National Gender policy which equally places the needs of women to those of men. The study

was a way of constructing a positive gender perspective. Integration of twenty (20) participants, ten (10) male and ten (10) female and five (5) key informants was essential for achieving holistic meaning of pre and post discharge experiences. The information provided by the youths was informed by individual experiences whilst the key informants were informed by structural causes and legal mandates. This was crucial for balancing micro, meso and macro perspectives. Thus, improving the credulity of information. Overall, the integration of youths' experiences and key informant knowledge was vital for thematic expression and policy implementation in child welfare and youth development.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES AND TOOLS
DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES
In-Depth Interviews

These interviews were instrumental in understanding how young adults have lived their lives since being discharged from residential care facilities. Focus was on perceptions, beliefs and feelings associated to different experiences by each participant. Interviews were conducted with professionals from residential care facilities, they were responsible for providing expert knowledge. Expert knowledge was vital for bridging the gap between experiences of the participating youths and professional approaches to solving problems encountered.

Narrative Inquiry
This method was simple and important in obtaining information from young adults. It focused on personal stories told by the participants. They narrated how they lived in institutions and transitioned going outside. Narrative inquiry was important as it allowed participants to note important moments during their transitions (Clandinin, 2021). It also allowed them to fully communicate other experiences which were not outlined on interview guides.

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS
In-depth Interview Guide
This was the primary tool for data collection. It rightly aligned with phenomenology in its documentation of deeper details of lived experiences of the participants (Sundler et al., 2020). There were two types of in-depth interview guides;

1. The first interview guide was for the young adults released from residential care facilities. The guide had 3 sections. These are: a) Pre-discharge – this section focused on grooming and nurturing

experiences of children before they were discharged. b) During discharge – this section focused on experiences of what happened during the discharge and transition. It outlined all the procedures the young adults went through. c) Post discharge – experiences encountered as they adapted to the outside environment.

2. The second interview guide was for professionals involved in care, child protection services and youth development. These were social workers, social development officers at the department of social development (DSD) and care givers at residential care facilities. The interview guide had 4 sections: a) section 1 focused on discharge plans, b) section two focused on supportive infrastructure for socio-economic integration, c) section 3 focused on efforts stakeholders undertake after young adults are discharged into the society, d) this section outlined the challenges encountered and recommendations for each problem.

Narrative Inquiry Prompt

This was a non-structured tool, it sought to ask stories using an open ended approach. Kim (2021) argues that narrative inquiry prompt gives participants freedom to reflect and tell their experiences. For example, asking a young adult to narrate how they transitioned from a residential care facilities to living an independent life. The researcher noted the steps, concerns, fears and challenges faced during the transition.

3.8 RESEARCH PROCEDURE

Upon receiving an accompanying letter from the Chairperson of the Department of Social Work under the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, the researcher approached the Ministry of Public Service, Labor and Social Welfare. Its headquarters are located at Compensation, Cnr S.V Muzenda and Central Avenue in Harare. The researcher submitted the research proposal, accompanying letter and research tools to the office of the Director of Social Development. After three days, the researcher was given authorization through a signed letter allowing him to visit Highfield District. The letter identified the research question and its relevance to the academic discipline and profession of social work.

Thereafter, the researcher approached the office of Department of Social Development in Highfield District. At the department, he conducted key informant interviews with two social development officers. After the interviews, he was authorized by the Social Development Officer (SDO) to visit residential care facilities and high density areas under the department jurisdiction.

He proceeded to visit three residential care facilities and these were Hupenyu Children's Home in Highfield, Chinyaradzo Children's Home in Southerton and Newstart Children's Home is Amalinda, Waterfalls. At these residential care facilities, the researcher conducted interviews with superintendents and care givers.

Personnel at these institutions maintained communication with some of the youths that were discharged before through basic communication and a database. This helped the researcher reach some of the youths. In the same line, he used the snowballing techniques wherein some of the youths reached first direct the researcher to others. The sample size was supposed to be twenty (20) youths, ten (10) male and ten (10) female. However, he managed to reach eighteen (18) youths. Nine of those being females. After successfully gathering raw data from the youths and key informants, the researcher sat down with research supervising authority and was given go ahead to proceed with the report.

3.9 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Validity and reliability of the findings were achieved through techniques such as prolonged engagement, member checking, triangulation and purposive sampling. Credibility entails confidence and accuracy of the research outcomes from the participants' and researcher's perspectives (Creswell and Poth, 2021). The researcher spent a significant amount of time in Highfield district building rapport with the youths who were participants. He conducted interviews in free and familiar situations which promoted participants freedom of expression. The researcher exchanged primary findings with the youths to confirm their experiences and interpretations. This was ideal in checking their validity of their history and identity.

The researcher used triangulation. He added together different perspectives of different youths and key informants through interviews, analysis of documents and field notes. The participants selected were from a diverse background, each having a unique experience of discharge. Basic ethical considerations such as informed consent and confidentiality were used during the process of collecting and gathering data. These factors enhanced the validity and reliability of data gathered and how it can be shared for academic research or professional engagements.

3.10 DATA ANALYSIS

The study employed thematic analysis of data. According to Braun and Clarke (2021), thematic analysis is crucial in analyzing and interpretation of consistent themes and recurring patterns

amongst participant. This was construed by the themes in the narratives of the participants. Data collected through interviews included emotional cues and writing memos. In this regard, thematic analysis made it possible for exploration and examining of data whilst defining themes relevant to the study. Throne (2024) states that triangulation of information consolidates individual blame and systemic challenges in qualitative research. The research made use of three types of data triangulation which fall in line thematic analysis. These were time, setting and data source triangulation (Noble and Heale, 2021).

Time triangulation was important in capturing changes which are experiences by youths as they leave care facilities, for example the initial discharge phase and six (6) months after. Setting triangulation was vital because it allowed the researcher to collect data from youths gathered in different locations and consolidate the differences in areas covered by Highfield District. For example, Budiriro, Waterfalls, Mufakose and Hopley. Further, there was data source triangulation. This allowed the researcher note institutional insight from key informants and compare it to relevant policy documents. It also allowed for examination of reintegration initiatives within the social welfare department.

3.11 LIMITATIONS
(i) **Sampling Bias**

The research used snowballing sampling technique. Many youths referred their peers who had the likely experiences. Their experiences contained some similarities. This led to potential homogenization of data (Noy, 2020). Thus, the research findings might over present some experiences whilst neglecting others. However, this can be solved by seeking different approaches. For example, combining snowball sampling and theoretical sampling. Instead of relying of contacts provided by peers, partnerships can be done with independent social welfare players to help youths who left residential care facilities in an isolated manner.

(ii) **Sample Size**

Despite the qualitative preference of depth above breath, the recommended sample size of twenty (20) participants might not full present adequate diversity in experiences. The sampling size was also cause by lack of adequate resources to reach out to youths during the study. Some minority

groups might be left behind. For example, discharged youth with disabilities. This limitation can be solved by focusing on underrepresented and vulnerable groups. In future, there is need to expand sampling size, for example fifty (50) participants.

(iii) Limited Transferability

Some of the challenges encountered by the youths in Highfield are specific to that district. The district has a wide population base marred by different challenges such as social degeneracy, high crime rate and different institutions. If the data collected is transferred to another region for further research, it might not be fully applicable. Thus, the data might be less transferable. This can be solved through utilization of thick description and analysis (Creswell and Poth, 2021). This helps clarity contextual boundaries for readers and further studies. The study can also be replicated in different regions and the data compared for professional engagement.

(iv) Bias of Self-Reports

Clandinin and Cave (2020) state that in-depth interviews are premised on temporal experiences of the participants. Time and memory of the youths informed their narration. This might make the data subject to bias. Due to the high crime rate in Highfield district, some youths might underreport their experience or participation in illegal activities due to fear of prosecution. Such biased reports deter the accurate estimation of crime rates and their effect on discharged youths. However, this can be solved comparing with police reports and client reports from the Department of Social Development.

3.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter highlighted the research design and methodology utilized in the study. The researcher employed qualitative research paradigm which was crucial in capturing and understanding lived experiences of young adults, the challenges they face and copying strategies as they grow out of care facilities. The researcher collected data through in-depth interviews and narrative prompts, the information obtained from the youths was consolidated using institutional insight from key informants. The methodological integrity achieved through this chapter laid the foundation for discussion and analysis of data findings to be done in Chapter 4.

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents findings from a research conducted in Highfield District. Highfield district is a high risk environment which makes life difficult for youths who are discharged from residential care facilities. The goal of this chapter is to present and analyze research features such as demographics and emerging themes. The study was informed by phenomenology exploring the lived experiences of young adults between eighteen (18) and twenty five (25) and expert knowledge from key informants. The proposed sample size was twenty (20) participants with a gender distribution of ten (10) males and ten (10) females. However, the researcher managed to reached eighteen (18) participants due to logistical and communication challenges. Ten (10) were male and eight (8) were female, one of those eight females was a person with a disability (PWD). Saturation of themes was achieved and enabled a concise compilation of useable data.

4.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

This section is focused on breaking down the characteristics of the study demographics.

Table 4.1.1

ID	Gender	Traceable Relatives	Employment	Challenges
YA1, aged 19	Female	None	Unemployed	Sexual Exploitation
YA2, aged 24	Male	None	Unemployed	depression
YA3, aged 20	Male	Present	Formal employment	Low wages
YA4, aged 24	Female	None	Sex work	Sexual exploitation
YA5, aged 22	Female	None	Vending	Hunger
YA6, aged 25	Male	Present	Carpenter	Inflation
YA7, aged 21	Male	Present	Student	Tuition funding
YA8, aged 22	Female	None	House-help	Low salary
YA9, aged 19	Male	None	Unemployed	Drug abuse

YA10, aged 20	Male	None	Unemployed	Homelessness
YA11, aged 25	Female	None	Vending	Poverty
YA12, aged 23	Female	Present	Shop assistant	Alienation
YA13, aged 24	Female	Present	Teacher	Poor remuneration
YA14, aged 25	Male	None	Begging	Stigma
YA15, aged 19	Male	None	Student	Lack of sponsorship
YA16, aged 22	Male	Present	Vendor	Council arrests
YA17, aged 21	Female	None	Vendor	Harassment
YA18, aged 25	Male	Present	Bank teller	Sickness

Response Rate

Table 4.1.1 shows that eighteen (18) young adults successfully partook in the research. They all described their lived experiences, from transition to settling outside residential care facilities. The research proposal had a target of twenty (20) participants, proposed to be ten (10) male and ten (10) female for gender balance. However, only eighteen (18) partook in the study. This was caused participant withdrawal, poor communication with discharged youths and lack of adequate logistical support. As shown on the table, there was a low turnout of female participants compared to male participants. Out of the proposed ten (10) female participants, only eight successfully participated in the research. When the researcher went to Highfield District he met three participants who refused to participant in the research. Below are their negative responses:

Negative Response 1: The first refusal came from a young lady perceived to be in her early twenties, her pseudonym was Chiedza. She said,

> '*Ini handina nguva yezvi research zvenyu, tonongoshandiswa pasina help yatinozowana.*'
> [Translation: I don't have time for your research, we have been used (for research before) without retaining any help].

Chiedza (pseudonym) lamented that she and others have participated in social research before and did not get any help, their lives did not change despite the proposed positive research outcomes.

Arguably, Chiedza's experiences came from the fact that she might not have received feedback or benefits from previous social researches she partook of. Considering that youths discharged from residential care facilities face challenges in meeting their basic, she felt the need to retain some livelihood benefits from research.

Negative Response 2: The research was directed to another female lady who was discharged from Newstart Children's Home in November 2022. For confidentiality, she was given a pseudonym Grace. Grace refused to participate in the research. This was her response,

> 'I don't want to be victimized for saying challenges I have faced to due to the politics of this land. My son needs a mother, *haangazogare ku* children's home *sezvandakaita.*'

Grace was carrying a baby boy on her back. She refused to participate in the research because she felt her response would probably attract political victimization. She needed to take care of her baby boy and ensure that he does not live in a children's home like she did.

Negative Response 3: Another withdrawal came from a female participant who was with Grace, the lady with the second response. She said,

> 'I don't want to talk to students who do research for marks only. *Hapana zvine musoro zvamunozoita.*'

She withdrew from the research because she said students only do research to gain final year marks. She refuted that nothing positive could be achieved from the research. Her sentiments showed that past encounters with researchers failed to yield positive result and change her social and economic status. Thus, her withdrawal was informed by a past research participation she perceived to be non-beneficial to her life.

After getting these turndowns, the researcher tried to reach out to four more female participants. Unfortunately, logistical constraints limited the outcome. Two of them were now living in South Africa working as house helps. Though they didn't participate in the research, they said that they were working in South Africa without proper legal documents and would risk deportation if immigration officers found out. They had used fake passports to get into South Africa. One of two females in South Africa said she feared she would lose her life if xenophobic attacks manifested. Locally, one young lady said she started living in Chinhoyi after being discharged from Hupenyu

children's home in Southerton. Another was now living in Marondera. They refused to participate virtually, they did not have faith in the confidentiality of the research.

These responses highlight why there was a low participation of female compared to their male counterparts. It was observed that female youths become victims of sexual exploitation, poverty and gender discrimination once they transition out of residential care facilities. These challenges exacerbate themselves because they are no protective structures for young people, especially young women. The turn downs revealed that prevailing social problems discourage the participation of women in social research because the findings from past researches have been merely theoretical and not yielding practical solutions.

Arnadottir (2023) stated that there is limited literature on how to increase the participation of young people in research. Some of the youth consider participation as non-beneficial. The researcher found out that there is need to provide immediate solutions and opportunities for these young adults. For example, providing shelter, employment and providing grants to meet their daily needs. Institutional insight from key informants that there is also need to allow voices of young adults into policy recommendations and submission. This would help mitigate the challenges they face and promote more participation. Informed participation in further research would help distribute philosophical material and economic resources for the benefit of young adults and the rest of the community.

While approaching participants in Highfield district, the researcher also encountered gender oriented hesitations. These are informed by the cultural and social web in the district. For example, young adults discharged from residential care facilities may feel discouraged to talk about sexual activity which impacted their post-discharged livelihoods. This is because the society still has a negative outlook of sexual activity by people outside of a marriage set-up. Additionally, some of the negative sexual experiences faced young women were perpetrated by authoritative figures in the community. Thus, culture has been a stumbling block to overcoming gender-specific restrains.

Despite the withdrawals from prospective participants, the researcher managed to identify eighteen (18) participants. Snowballing helped the researcher weave through the clustered social space of Highfield district. This district is predominantly diverse, its social distribution is complex. It was favorable for use because each participant referred the next participant. Subsequently, a positive response of eighteen participant was achieved. The responses given by the research participants

provided detailed information relating to the challenges which are incurred by young adults after release from institutions. These challenges are embedded in the social, political and economic distribution of the district and beyond. The district is affected by developments which occur in the metropolitan, Harare. Thus, some of the responses in this section referred to socio-economic activities of the city of Harare.

4.1.2 Pie Chart: Education

EDUCATION

- ORDINARY LEVEL
- ADVANCED LEVEL
- VOCATIONAL TRAINING
- UNIVERSITY
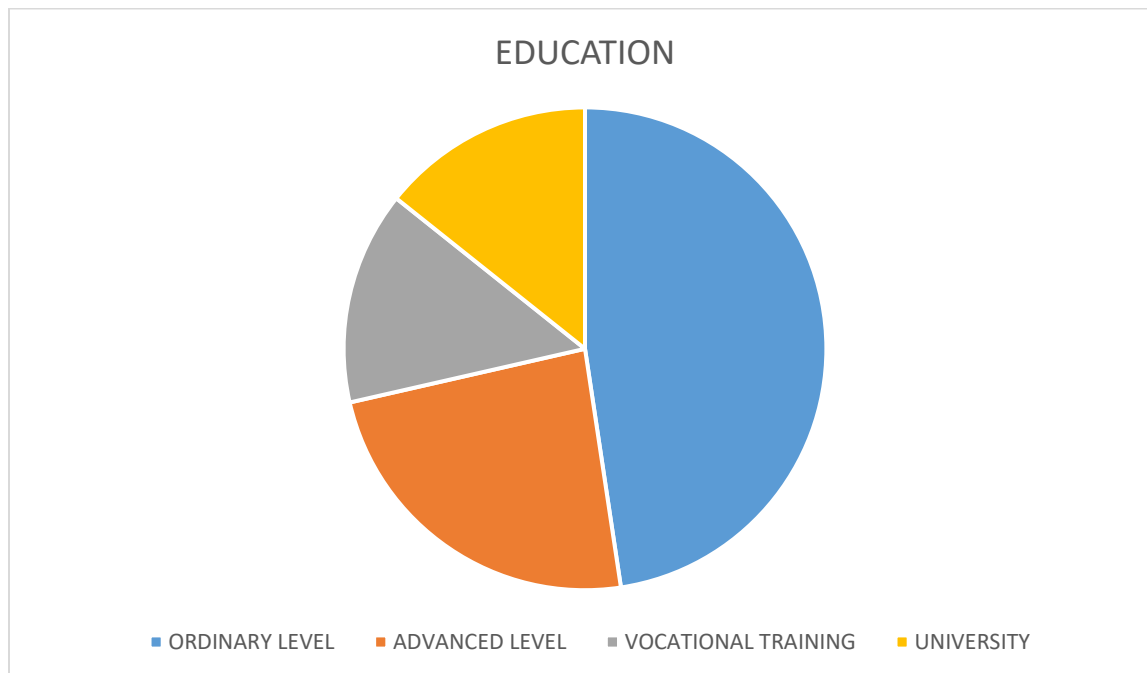
Fig 4.1.2

The above pie chart, Fig 4.1.2, highlights the education of the research participants. A total number of eighteen (18) youths managed to participate in the research. All eighteen wrote their Ordinary exams but only ten (10) had five (5) passes including Mathematics, Science and English. As they proceeded to advanced level education, five (5) managed to come out with two passes or better in various combinations including Sciences, Commercials and Humanities. Three (3) youths managed to proceed to university to pursue undergrad education and three (3) went for vocational training.

4.1.3 Key Informant Table

Code	Occupation	Organization	Knowledge Area	Contribution
KI - 1	Social Development Officer	Department of Social Development	Youth welfare	Youth policy
KI - 2	Child Protection Officer	Department of Social Development	Child protection services	Knowledge in discharge procedures.
K1-3	Superintendent of a Residential Care Facility	Hupenyu Hutsva Children's Home	Institutional Care, support and management	Insight in discharge, policy and gaps in after care.
KI – 4	Superintendent	Chinyaradzo C/H	Care	Discharge planning and transition insight.
KI – 5	Social worker	Civic society organization	Child welfare, youth advocacy	Aftercare gaps and community integration

Contribution of key informants

These key informants played a critical roles in providing institutional insight and cross validation of information gathered from the young adults. They were informed voices in explaining the execution of discharge orders, transition process and gaps in aftercare. It should be noted that only five key informants were selected to participate due to insight saturation. There were no new themes which emerged after KI – 5. This highlighted a holistic coverage of all themes related to needs and challenges of young adults released from residential care facilities. However, the knowledge provided by these key informants might have limitations because a majority of them are partnered or work directly with the state. Thus, they might have downplayed their failures of the state and its stakeholders.

4.2. IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS FACED BY YOUTHS DISCHARGED FROM RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES IN HIGHFIELD DISTRICT OF SOUTHERTON, HARARE.

The first objective of this this study was to identify the problems faced by young adults after they are released from residential care facilities. This arose from a theoretical background of information stating that transition causes a lot of social, economic and psychological changes. These changes directly and indirectly affect the quality lived by youths in the community. To fully grasp the thematic presentation of the information gathered, it is crucial to understand the existence of two environments. These are the controlled environment which exists in a residential care facilities and an uncontrolled environment in the outside community. There is a sharp contrast between these environments because of the operational rules, laws, stakeholder involvement and social activity.

The researcher went into Highfield with the goal of getting informed on the challenges faced by youths who grew out of institutions. Fortunately, he managed to employ snowballing and contacted different youths in the district. These youths had lived in residential care facilities across Highfield district such as Hupenyu Hutsva Children's Home, Chinyaradzo Children's Home and Newstart Children's Home and most of them were settled in the same district. The problems faced by the wider population in the district affected them. The social circumstances of the youths who participated in the research were affected by the social and economic developments of the metropolitan, Harare. The capital city is widespread across different economic sectors, formal and informal activities which create unequal distribution of resources.

4.2.1 Lack of Integration

After being discharged, integration into the external society is a huge challenge. This is because of existence of predominant social cultures which the youths might fail to relate to. Every society has a unique social web, adaptation to it requires a great deal of patience, active participation and support. Some of the youths who are discharged from residential care facilities fail to be properly integrated because institutionalization is a form of social withdrawal. This is because when they are placed in institutions in terms of Section 19 of the Children's Act (Chapter 5: 06) or any relevant law, they are withdrawn from the outside. There is limited to no interaction with the

outside society. This affects the awareness of youths with social developments. The researcher interviewed who stated that they felt they had no place in the outside society after being discharged.

YA-2: A male youth, aged twenty four (24), given a pseudonym Trymore. He said;

> "Leaving the home was challenging for me. I did not have relatives waiting for me outside. When I got out, everyone seemed to be minding their own business and they had no time to welcome me or introduce me into the important sections of the community. I felt so abandoned. And I ended up living with a group that survived on illegal activities such as selling drugs and sometimes stealing."

The above response shows the challenge faced by a youth who was discharged from a residential care facility and settled in Highfield district. The outside society seemed preoccupied with its own business and thus, had no time to properly welcome or integrate him into their society. The response also shows that the youth faced financial challenges as he ended up being involved with a group whose survival was derived from illegal activities. The youth was faced by a social vulnerability coupled with economic impediments related to finance. Arguably, the society failed to properly integrated him because of the overly focus on survival by people in the area. Highfield district is affected by poverty, this might reduce the extent to which community leaders put in effort to welcome young people who settle into it.

The same sentiments of lack of integration and feelings of loneliness were shared by another youth, **YA11.** This one was a young lady aged twenty five (25), she said:

> "The life that I was exposed to at Newstart Children's Home is completely different to what I experience daily in the outside world. At the home, I lived like I was in bubble. Now, it feels like I am in a jungle. Everyone is focusing on bread and butter issues, no one stops to care about your own affair. *Inonzi* survival of the fittest."

The participant lamented the wild set up of the outside experience, comparing it to a jungle where survival is for the fittest. These sentiments prove that integration is a challenge for young adults who transition out of residential care facilities. The social set-up of a community affects how people live on a daily basis. Important to this study is the participant's comparison of life in an institution and outside. She compared the residential care facility to a bubble whereas likening the outside community to a jungle. This brings an important analogy examining the conditions of life

prevalent in residential care facilities and society. Residential care facilities operate within a set of operational guidelines, laws and policies which are derived from the Children's Act (Chapter 5:06), the constitution and various stakeholder support aimed at putting the best interests of child.

This creates an existential illusion to juveniles in residential care facilities who might be misled to thinking that life outside is the same. This affects how they settle as they suffer shock and social disturbance. The Children's Act (Chapter 5: 06) stipulates that the economic support that is given to juveniles in institutions through the state and civic society is only given till they reach the age of 18. It is not carried forward when they leave residential care facilities. Thus, most of the research participants lamented economic challenges such as poverty, unemployment and limited financial support. These challenges impede their independent lives and decreases their well-being.

4.2.2 Unemployment

Young adults discharged from residential care facilities bemoaned lack of employment opportunities. Most of the research participants stated that they did not find employment after being discharged because of the prevailing economic challenges in country and lack of skills for employment.

Below are five responses by five young adults citing economic challenges in their post-discharge phase:

(NB: All participants were given pseudonyms for confidentiality and privacy)

YA22: A young man aged twenty two (22), living in Parktown, Waterfalls. He said,

> "I failed to find employment after I left the home. All my hopes to continue with education faded away because I had no money and I could not secure a scholarship. I started working as a gardener in Parktown, Waterfalls. I recently got a class 4 driver's license. I waiting to turn twenty five (25) years and acquire a class 1 clearance so I can venture into public transport driving."

YA17: A young female aged twenty one (22). She lamented economic challenges,

> *"Ini ndanga ndisina pekutangira, ndakamboita basa remumba asi ndaipihwa $60 kuOld Highfield uko. Ndakazoenda kunogara kumba kwe friend yangu kuHopley, ndokwandakazotanga kuita sex work. Tinombosungwa but tikadii munyika isina mabasa?"*

[Translation: I had no nowhere to start (after being discharged), I worked as a house help in Old Highfield where I was paid a measly $60. I later left and went to live with my friend in Hopley Zone 6 where I ventured into sex work. We are often arrested but what else can we do in a jobless country?]

YA13: A young lady aged twenty four (24), living in Lusaka, Highfield. She said,

> "The wellwisher who had promised to pay for my university did not honor his promise. Out of desperation, I became an agent for a false 'Rent to Buy' car group which stole defrauded money from people who wanted to buy cars in instalments. I was arrested three weeks after I joined. I served five months in prison whilst others faced jail sentences upto five years."

YA14: A young man with a disability, aged twenty five (25). The researcher met him at High Glen road where he was begging at a robot. He said,

> "I use a wheel chair so I cannot do hard jobs that others can do. I applied for assistance from the social welfare department but I have not received it. So I am here asking for help from motorists. I get a few dollars so I don't starve."

YA10: A young man aged 20 participated in the research. He lamented the recruitment by the Zimbabwe National Army and Zimbabwe Republic Police;

> "I have no traceable relatives so I was given a half birth certificate. The ZNA and ZRP do not recruit people with those kinds of birth certificates. I was so disappointed and heartbreak. I also failed to secure apprenticeship at Zimbabwe Electrical Distribution Company (ZETDC). I am currently not employed."

These responses provide a clear understanding of economic challenges faced by young adults released from residential care facilities. Unemployment, lack of adequate financial support and poor skills training are affecting their welfare of the youths. Despite having a Disabled Persons Act (Chapter 17: 01) in Zimbabwe, there are some youths in Highfield district who are excluded from community participation. There is no adequate support being distributed to meet their needs and demands for capable youths and those with disabilities. Economic challenges faced by youths in Highfield district are not isolated, economic developments in the area are affected by factors in

the metropolitan and rest of the country. The country is experiencing currency volatility and market fall which has caused widespread poverty.

4.2.3 Administrative barriers

Insight obtained through a key informant revealed that a lot of opportunities and development interventions evade young adults because of administrative barriers. These are informed by legal constraints. For example, proper identity documents which are recognized by the state and civic society. Most of the youths who do not have traceable relatives are given semi-birth certificates which are different from normal birth certificates.

KI-1, a key informant working as social development officer at the Department of Social Development explained this legal barrier. She said,

> "The dilemma is that the state and welfare system is legally biased against young people from residential care facilities. If they have no traceable relatives available or willing to help birth certificates, the Registrar issues them semi-birth certificates. Those half birth certificates which are not accepted by recruitment officials at ZNA (Zimbabwe National Army), Zimbabwe Republic Police or basic admission into civil service."

This puts forward a troubling reality for young people who do not traceable relatives. This is a legal cum administrative constraint which affects how youths are accorded opportunities into civil service. Three youths stated the challenges they faced whilst trying to venture into the civil service sector. Below are their responses;

YA5; A young lady aged 22, pseudonym – Tariro said,

> "I had highs hopes when I was released from residential care facilities. Unfortunately, they were shattered because I was rejected by ZPCS. They said I could not be recruited because of my birth certificates. I tried to reason with them with the help of a social worker but it was fruitless."

YA16 stated the same challenge. This participant was a young man aged 24, living in Lusaka, Highfield,

> *"Ndine 5 O' levels, ese ma subjects akakosha seEnglish, Maths ne Science aripo asi kumapurisa ndakatadza kupinda. Problem yanga iri ma documents angu, haadiwe ikoko."*

[Translation: I have five (5) Ordinary Level passes including English, Mathematics and Science. However I could not be recruited into the police force because of identity documents, they were not accepted.]

YA8 was a female youth aged 22. The researcher gave her a pseudonym, Chiedza. Her response was emotional, it revealed her heartbreaking experiences whilst trying to join the Zimbabwe Republic Police. She said,

> *"Pekutanga ndakatadza kupinda nekuti vakati birth certificate rangu iHalf. Ndakatrya futi following year ndichifunga kuti pamwe system yachinja. Zvakaramba. Ndakasangana nemumwe mupurisa akati anokwanisa kundipinza neback door. Ndanga ndiri desperate saka ndakamupa ma sexual favors aaida. In the end, ndakashaya mukana wacho plus akandipa chirwere. Ndaida ku reporta asi yakatsikwa tsikwa nyaya yacho."*

[Translation: I failed to be admitted into the police force because of my half birth certificate. I tried again the following year. I was turned down again. I met a police officer who said he could get me recruited through back door (illicitly). He demanded sexual favors which I yielded to. In the end, he did not get me into the police force and he infected me with HIV. I tried to report the matter but it was thrown under the carpet.]

These response highlight that a serious administrative barrier related to the issuing of birth certificates by the registrar's office. Birth certificates are issues in terms of the Births and Deaths Registration Act (Chapter 5: 02). In the absence of traceable relatives, a social worker produced BD1 forms, sociological and police reports highlighting the social circumstances of the concerned child. Subsequently, the registrar authorizes and issues birth certificates which are medium sized. Anyone with such kind of birth certificate cannot be recruited into the security force. Entry into civil service is also limited. This a shortfall of the administration of state entities. Thus, young adults are faced with administrative and legal constraints.

4.3 ASSESSING EXISTING TRANSITION PROGRAMS

Key informants involved in the research played important roles in assessing existing programs related to transition and adaptation. These professionals analyzed the social welfare delivery system and how it affects the welfare of young. The key informants were interviewed using in-

depth interview guides which were divided into three sections which looked at the professional outlook of child and youth welfare at three levels which are pre-discharge, transition process and post-discharge phases. These were complementary to those used on participants. The study was segmented into insights by key informants and lived experiences by young adults. This balanced institutional knowledge with young people's narratives.

4.3.1 Department of Social Development Transition System

The study revealed that the country does not have an adequate support system for young adults who are discharged from residential care facilities. However, the department of social development has a system which oversees the transition of youths from care. The department tries to offer educational support as a pre-transition emancipation tool. This is done through BEAM. Children in institutions are given free education through Basic Education Allowance Module (BEAM). The state sometimes provides vocational training, however this is restrained by limited resources. Institutional knowledge showed that residential care facilities are limited in how they monitor and oversee social and economic conditions in areas where youths settle after they leave institutions.

KI-5, a professional from civic society group working in Highfield District said,

> "The aftercare program has not been efficient implemented in the district. Professionals from residential care facilities are limited in terms of how they create a social and economic setting oversight for youths after they leave institutions."

Similar institutional insight was reiterated by **KI-3,** a Superintendent of a care institution in Southerton. She said,

> "The discharge of young people from residential care facilities is still mere release from institutions. There is no functional system of support which overlooks the welfare of youths outside institutions. Transition is viewed with specs of release rather than implementing measures of safety, support and development for young people."

These sentiments provided institutional view of transition. There is lack of practical programs that make transition easy and supportive for young adults in Zimbabwe. There are young adults who are discharged without any contactable traceable relative, they become highly susceptible to exploitation because there are no effective transitional programs. The researcher discovered that there is need for the Department of Social Development (DSD) to partner various state and civic

society stakeholders for implementation of functional transition and adaptation programs. This will ease transition for young adults.

4.3.2 SOS Youth Empowerment Programme

This is a non-governmental program which was implemented SOS Children's Villages Zimbabwe. This transitional program aims to empower youths who are exiting care. The program focuses on youths who transition out of SOS children's villages. It focuses on young adults from eighteen (18) years and above as a way of helping them achieve independence and live in accordance to their relevant skills. Programs on offer under this model are life skills training, educational aid, vocational mentorship and psychosocial support. However, the system is limited because it focuses only on youths who were raised by SOS residential care centers. It is also affected by poor funding because the donor assistance can meet the various needs and demands of young people who leave care. Institutional insight also revealed that there has not been an effective partnership between SOS and the Department of Social Development in delivering aftercare. Thus, aftercare support is still limited in Zimbabwe.

4.4 ADDRESSING PRIMARY NEEDS OF YOUNG ADULTS

Young adults discharged from residential care facilities in Hughfield district have various primary needs which should be identified and addressed. Kelly et al (2021) state that addressing primary needs of young people ensures that the youths have safe and efficient transition into their independent lives. The scholars further argue that adversities faced by young people worsen due to pandemics or outbreaks in the human society. In the case of Highfield district, areas such as Budiriro, Glen View and Mufakose are often hit by Cholera and floods during the rainy season. These affects the welfare of young adults and rest of the society. Additionally, the needs of young adults include education and skills training, economic emancipation, mental health support and healthcare services. These needs play significant roles in influencing the welfare in young people.

4.4.1 Education

Article 11(2) of the African Charter presents education as an important tool for fundamental freedom and human development. Subsequently, education is a primary need for young adults moving out of residential care facilities. It affects how they acquire, develop independent lifestyles and fight for their human rights. Education determines how young people participate in social action and community development.   According to Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council

(2025), the ordinary level pass is slightly above thirty (30) percent. This entails that the country's literacy is still below average. Thus, revealing that a lot of young people do not possess academic qualifications which meet the global demand for literacy.

Some of the young adults who are released from institutions do not have the basic required education. Those that have basic academic qualifications such as Ordinary and Advanced level are fully sponsored to pursue tertiary education.

YA12 said,

> "I wanted to go to University of Zimbabwe to study law. The school wanted 15 points but I had 13 points. I tried to apply for scholarships but failed to get any. Without financial support, I could not go further with my education so I ended up working as a shop assistant."

The participant who said this was a young lady aged twenty three years. She lived in a residential care facility since birth, she was left unattended at a maternal ward at Sally Mugabe Central Hospital. Her mother could not be traced, the Department of Social Development (DSD) failed to trace any relative and thus, she was placed in a residential care facility till discharged. Her discharged occurred a year later because of institutional delays at DSD. She failed to go forward with her education because of lack of sponsorship. Thus, education as a need must be addressed to achieve empowerment of young people.

4.4.2 Economic Emancipation

Economic empowerment is of key importance to the welfare of people. It is a primary to youth development. Young adults should be empowered to make decisions that promote their independence and promote self-awareness, this is achievable if there are economic resources to support their decisions. A lot of youths released from care experience limited economic opportunities which hinder their development and forces them to be involved in criminal activities.

YA4 narrated her need for economic emancipation. She said,

> *"Ini handina kumbobvira ndawana mukana wekuzvishandira. Tinongotsikirirwa, topedzisira tava kutorara nevarume vane zvigaro kuti tiwane mukana."*

[Translation: "I have never gotten opportunities of decent work. We are oppressed and forced to sleep with men in authority to access opportunities."]

The above response shows that economic emancipation is an important topic in youth development. This is in line with the United Nations Strategy (Youth 2030), this was propounded in 2018 to emphasize the need for international effort toward promoting decent work and giving opportunities to youths. This is in line with Sustainable Development Goal number 8 which promotes decent work and economic growth. Thus, economic emancipation is a primary need amongst young people released from care facilities.

4.4.3 Mental Healthcare Service

Poor mental health is a challenge amongst young people who leave. This is primarily caused by the changes in environment, cessation of support provided by the care fraternity and preexisting conditions in the communities that the youth settle in. Through observation, the researcher noted emotional cues which exposed that a lot of youths face psychological challenges in their post discharge phases. For example, **YA10** displayed a lot of sudden mood swings. He shifted from a state of calmness to an anger outburst whilst narrating his departure from a care facility in Highfield district. Similarly, there were negative emotional cues displayed by **YA5** as she narrated how she suffered depression because of poverty and unemployment. Another youth, **YA17** avoided making eye contact during the interview and cried towards the end of the interview. This pointed to underlying depression and trauma. Therefore, mental healthcare support is imperative amongst young people.

4.5 RECOMMENDATION FOR POLICY FORMULATION

4.5.1 Local Policy

The United Nations Development Programme emphasizes that policy is a driver of youth empowerment. It affects the distribution of resources across different elements of life. Initially, it is child policy that determines how a child is placed in a residential care facility. For example the Children's Act (Chapter 5: 06), this legislative framework impacts how placement of children in institution is done and their release. Policy is important because it attracts stakeholders with interests in child sensitivity and youth development. It also impacts how the civic society partners

with the state. However, the existing policies might not be able to address all the challenges faced by young people.

This is caused by gaps in the formulation and implementation of policy, the country has been constantly faced by resource constraints wherein it is not adequately capacitated. Due to political polarization prevalent in the nation, coordination of stakeholders and partnerships between the state and private sector have been limited. Coordination is a challenge in Zimbabwe and thus, the impact of efforts is limited. However, these challenges can be solved by improving the engagement of stakeholders. A lot of research has been done related to the affairs of young people, information gathered from research can be used for evidence based approaches. There is need for supportive infrastructure as it determines the success or failure of policies.

The Social Development Officer (SDO) from the Department of Social Development, Highfield said;

"Policy is a real problem in this country. The problem manifests in the implementation of policy, more recommendations and drafts of youth friendly policies are made regularly but there is lack of practicality. This is because policy is not adequately recognizing dynamic movement of life caused by technology,"

This institutional insight falls in line with sentiments made by a civic society professional focused on orphan and vulnerable children (OVC). He said;

"There is policy for orphans and vulnerable children who are somehow abandoned when they reach the age of 18. They are pampered within a bubble of protection but left to cater for themselves as young adults. Policy for young adults is not fully practical to their needs in society."

There are policy gaps in the Zimbabwean youth welfare landscape. These are a result of systemic failures that are caused by corruption, inadequate resources and poor institutional support. As a result, many young adults have reported mental health problems, vulnerability to exploitation by industry leaders, liable to vagrancy caused by accommodation problems and exclusion out of community programs. In 2022, Zimbabwe Care Leavers Network in partnership with SOS Children's Home managed to lobby for care reforms and policy recommendation to support successful transition. The director of the network, Gift Dzorai, stated that care leavers fail to become independent adults without support and adequate resources.

The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Public Service, Labor and Social Welfare was featured in a Herald publication in November 2024 and stated that a lot still needs to be done in terms of implementing systems that promote youth development. This is in tandem with the United Nations World Program of Action for Youth (WPAY). This policy is focused on mainstreaming the needs of young people across the globe with priorities placed on education, employment, poverty alleviation, reducing violence and promoting active participation. Local policy should be informed by sustainable development goals.

4.5.2 Regional Policy

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2020) published that child welfare and youth development sectors are changing due to global developments, political and social movements and technology. The needs and affairs of young people are changing gradually. Policy formulation should must recognize and accommodate change that affect the welfare of young people. For example, in Africa there is the African Union Agenda 2063 and Southern Africa Development Community Youth Development Policy Framework. These first policy aims at promoting continental development through incorporation of youths across Africa. The second policy encourages partnerships and engagements in Southern Africa.

Integration of these regional policies into local contexts provides solutions to challenges faced by young people. This makes policy practical in addressing important issues such as transition of young adults from residential care facilities. Policy should be implemented as a way of recognizing the strengths of young adults who can provide human resources in form of labor for community development and national transformation.

4.5.3 International Policy

The researcher discovered that globalization has been a key factor in determining the general welfare of young people across the globe. In this respect, it is a critical determinant of youth policy. For example, the United Nations Women's Youth Strategy. This policy is aimed at reducing problems that are arise due to gender discrimination and stereotypes. Adopting such a policy using a grassroots approach ensures that there is inclusion of young women from vulnerable backgrounds. For example, young women who were released from residential care facilities in Highfield District. The research conducted in this district showed that more five of the female

participants were directly or indirectly affected by sexual harassment. Thus, foreign policy provides lenses for viewing and addressing gender problems with a widely informed perspective.

4.6 IMPROVING OUTCOMES AND REDUCING POVERTY

4.6.1 Social Support

Youths discharged from residential care facilities need a social support. From an African perspective, family is a powerful institution which can impact the welfare of both young and old people. In this view, young adults with traceable relatives should be reunified with their families. This helps them psychologically and socially in making transition and outside settlement successful. Community based support or care is important for youths without traceable relatives soon after they are discharged from residential care facilities. This ensures that youths are integrated into cultural ties of the community they settle in. Integration promotes awareness, identity and active participation which inspire individual development and community change.

Eight (8) of the participants of this study stated that they felt left of community activities because of stigma. The stigma associated with experiences from residential care facilities negatively affects how they related with the outside world. Removal of stigma promotes participatory and inclusive approaches to addresses problems caused by poverty in young people. In this view, young adults need to be given access to resources within their setting, in this case Highfield District. Investments within the district should be equitably distributed for harnessing potential of young people. This creates a basis for cost-effective economic integration as resources will be utilized for affairs of young people and the rest of the community.

Nearly ten (10) youths without traceable relatives bemoaned housing challenges in their post discharge phase. There is need for the state to establish a housing program that temporarily shelters young people as they move out residential care facilities. This helps address accommodation problems for youths who might not have traceable relatives who are ready to receive them. Additionally, Highfield District is marred by a lot of housing problems. This is caused by poor town planning and illegal settlements in the metropolitan, Harare. Thus, it is crucial for the state to establish a strong housing plan for the youths and the surrounding community through the council.

4.6.2 Housing Programs

Youths that leave face accommodation challenges. A lot of young adults discharged from care facilities in Highfield District reported that they encountered housing crisis. This was caused by expensive rents which are required to hire houses in the district. This is also caused by overpopulation in the high density district. This challenge can be addressed through the Ministry of National Housing and Social Amenities. There is need to partner the Ministry of Youths Empowerment, Development and Training. In the past there has not been effective work in mapping trajectories of development to be undertaken for emancipation of young people.

4.6.3 Poverty Reduction

Poverty reduction amongst the youths can be achieved through improving employment avenues. Highfield district is widely spread area offering different opportunities in welding, carpentry, enterprising through buying and selling. Young people should be provided with relevant funding and resource allocation to ensure they realize their potentialities. This is a key driver of participation and inclusion in development. This can be enhanced through mentorship by established local entrepreneurs and the civic society. Young people should also be legally empowered to initiate social action as a call for change and transformation of their local communities.

4.7 Research Findings and Schlossberg Theory Alignment

The theory of transition by Schlossberg states that movements is successful and progressive if four aspects are properly outlined and these are; self, strategy, situation and support. These fundamentals determine the quality of release and welfare of young adults. This is practical in relation to the research study conducted in Highfield District, Harare. Schlossberg's theory placed value on the situation and this is practical in that analyzing the context in which a discharge order is executed.

Schlossberg et al (2006) stated that transitions should be executed after proper planning. Poorly planned release affects the youth psychologically, socially and affects their economic viability. This was construed by the testimony of a youth and insight of a social development professional;

YA2 said,

"Ndakagara muHome kusvika ndaane 19 years. Ndakazobviswa zviri fast ndichinzi ndapfurikidza time. Hapana planning yakaitika."

[I stayed in a home till the age of 19. I was abruptly removed when they said I overstayed. No proper planning was done.]

This testimony of a poorly executed discharge order brings forward evidence of mishandling of duty by professionals working in residential care facilities. This is caused by lack of professional conduct, exercising of due conduct and inadequate resources to support the active professionals. Thus, professionals are overwhelmed and end up delivering sub-standard work at residential care facilities and the Department Of Social Development which authorizes the release of young adults. **KI-2**, a child protection officer stated that there department of social development is overwhelmed as an institute due to inadequate support infrastructure and brain drain.

He said,

> "A lot of social workers are resigning from the Department of Social Development and going abroad. There is brain drain in the department. Those that remain are overwhelmed, that's why there is poor case resolution in child welfare (and adult welfare) in the department."

The above institutional knowledge explains the reality behind poor handling of discharge orders. The department of social development (DSD) has the ultimate prerogative in determining when young adults who reach the age of 18 are discharged. Overwhelming of the human resources and infrastructure affects the recipients of care and welfare who are institutionalized at various residential care facilities. In relation to Schlossberg theory, it is critical that the human capital and economic contexts within DSD be understood to improve the quality of transition of youths.

The theory also focuses on the self, the personal abilities of a person. Young adults discharged from residential care facilities need to have a wide range of personal capabilities and resources. For example, education, training of skills and vocational mentorship. Strategy is also a key factor. The community should be an important entity is influencing survival strategies of young people. This would help reduce the incidence of survival crime such as stealing food or money for rent. The theory also outlines the importance of support. Movement of young people out of care

facilities is ease and progressive when there are support networks. Setting systems that promote interests of youths through institutional collaboration, community and peer networks is crucial.

4.3.1 Dominant Patterns and Outliers

Emerging Patterns:

4.3.1.2 Abandonment

Out of the eighteen (18) participants, thirteen (13) revealed that they did not receive adequate support during and after their release. The youths reported that Department of Social Development did not give them economic support to meet the expenses of their lives outside institutions. This points out abandonment by institutions. This knowledge is important because it exposes institutional shortcomings in the social welfare sector in Zimbabwe. Institutional abandonment was discussed by Muguwe (2019) who stated that the government support for care leavers is limited because the care is required by other thousands of children. Thus, the study findings go in line with the literature review documenting institutional abandonment faced by young people released from residential care facilities. Noting this shortcoming can be basis for favorable policy recommendation and attract support from non-state stakeholders.

4.3.1.3 Survival

More than ten (10) youths reported that they involved themselves in indecent work as a way of seeking survival. For example, sex work, stealing, fraud or begging in Ushewokunze, Budiriro, Mufakose, Glen View and Old Highfield. Youths were forced to break the law to meet their day to day needs. Thus, survival was a dominant pattern amongst the youths. Addressing this pattern is crucial because it falls in line with Sustainable Development 8 which promotes decent work. The researcher find out that support is critical for youths. Young people should be supported by the state to address economic problems, unemployment and live through decent means in Zimbabwe.

4.3.1.4 Resilience

Resilience emerged as a key aspect amongst the youth. Thirteen (13) young adults without traceable relatives stated that they received support from well-wishers and friends for social support and basic sustenance. This clearly highlights failure by the state and its partners in care to provide sufficient after care for young people. Such institutional shortfall should be addressed to

solve problems faced by young people after they are discharged. This also falls in line with the 'support' factor outlined by Schlossberg's theory of transition.

Outliers

4.3.1.5 Family Reunification

However, there were a few youths who experienced positive transition and established decent lives outside residential care facilities. Five (5) youths managed to reconnect with their relatives and were integrated into their natural families. They did not experience homelessness or abandonment. This demography with positive experience is blatantly contrasted to a group of youths who reported abandonment and accommodation problems. Family reunification is a key factor in youth welfare because it reduces crime amongst young people, provide psychological support and financial support (Geiger and Schelbe, 2021). Youths must be supported by the state to reconnect with their families after leaving care facilities. Hence, family support is a key factor in positive integration of youths outside institutions.

4.3.1.6 Employment

Only four (4) out of eighteen (18) participants stated that managed to find formal employment. These management find stable work with decent remuneration in public and private sector. The private sector played an important role in providing economic support for the few young people. This is a positive development which aligns with SDG number 8 of decent work. Employment emerged as a positive outlier because it provides economic stability and reduces the rate of exploitation and crime among young people. This also helps young people address their basic needs. In this view, the Schlossberg transition theory's focus on strategy and support aligns with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. This is because employment provides security, solving daily problems and improves self-esteem of young people.

4.3.2 Discussing findings and Literature review

The findings from the research study conducted in Highfield District, Harare were diverse. Some of the findings were in line with the past reviewed literature whilst other findings were contrary to information provided by other scholars. For example, the researched conducted by Emely Muguwe in 2019 titled 'Challenges faced by youths in Institutional Care Centers in Their Transition to adulthood: a case of one child care institution in Zimbabwe.' The study showed that a large majority of youths failed to adapt to transition as a gradual process and led terrible lives outside

care facilities. Muguwe (2019) borrowed Erikson's classic theory which spoke of different stages of human development and challenges attributed to each phase. This falls in line with the research findings as most youths are faced with problems of alienation, poverty, unemployment, mental challenges and hunger.

Kelly (2023) stated that a lot of young people who leave institutions of care often partake of reactive agency and involve themselves in illegal activities. The scholar argued that agency is a copying mechanism used by young people as a way of facing the challenges they face daily. This is relatable to the case of Highfield district, a lot of youths reported that they were involved in crime such as fraud, robbery and stealing to address help them establish lifestyles. Some were motivated by the need to cope with the dynamic society which is marred by a myriad of social and economic challenges. The researcher discovered that youths in Africa struggle to establish independent lives after leaving care facilities because of the economic and political landscape of the region.

The researcher discovered justice is a key aspect in lives of youths after leaving care institutions. Most of female youths released from residential care facilities Dhludhlu (2024) stated that youths encounter a lot of sexual challenges such as rape, prostitution and limited access to reproductive health services. The scholar also stated these challenges can be addressed by creating safety nets for young people who are released from residential care facilities. This perspective is relatable to the case of Highfield, the district is assoiled by social degeneracy which swallows female youths who leave care centers. They end up involved in sex work or face sexual harassment regularly. Research findings from Highfield district are not isolated from past studies. This presents a saturation of problematic experiences faced by young people. Thus, past literature can be useful formulating new strategies and solutions.

However, some of the findings were contrary to past studies. There are some youths who managed to proceed with their higher education and went for undergrad education. Others managed to secure formal employment with decent remuneration. Nguyen (2022) conducted a systematic analysis and review of experiences of twenty five (25) youths who left care centers and discovered that support is a key factor in adjusting and adaptation. The scholar discovered support systems and pre-admission experience were great influences of young people who had successful transitions.

Similar to Highfield district, there are youths who managed to transition successfully because they managed to trace and connect with their relatives and learnt relevant skills for formal employment.

4.3.2.1 Limitations of study
Sample Size

The study proposed to reach twenty (20) young adults are research participants. However, only eighteen (18) youths successfully participated. Denscombe (2018) stated that a small sample size might not bring forward a comprehensive analysis and study of a particular topic. In this view, the study findings from the district might not fully capture the various experiences of young people discharged from residential care facilities. Highfield district is a widely spread social space with various social groups, communities and livelihoods. The experiences of the eighteen (18) young people might not fully capture the diversity of the Highfield society. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies should consider a large sample size to suit the diversity of the overpopulated district of Highfield.

Bias on Sampling

The researcher used snowballing technique. Peer referrals might have created a homogeneous narrative. This is because the participants often referred their friends whose experiences were similar to theirs. This might have exaggerated certain experiences which might not the applicable to all youths who are released from residential care facilities. Hence, it is recommended that future studies should partner with stakeholders such as the civic to contact youths who are hard to reach.

Context

The situation of the study might have affected its findings. Highfield District is a high density area which is marred by high crime rates. The district is affected by a wide range of economic and social problems, for example unemployment, stealing, fraud, sexual exploitation, social degeneracy and political polarization. These problems might be specific to this district and not all areas of the metropolitan, Harare and rest of the country. Therefore, future work should focus on holistic analysis of the context findings.

4.3.2.2 Areas of future study

The study was conducted through socio-economic lens. This confined research to discovering, gathering and analyzing experiences of young people within social and economic paradigms. The study was focused on how young people can be socially trained and economically empowered to adjust, adapt to and connect with outside society. The researcher discovered that there is little research on psychosocial integration of young people in society after leaving care centers. Thus, work can also be conducted to development a framework for the non-governmental society and youth welfare in relation to the state imposed limitation of non-state stakeholders.

4.4 Chapter Summary

The chapter focused on presenting findings of a research conducted in Highfield District, Harare. It featured eighteen (18) young adults, ten (10) males and eight (8) females. The study documented, analyzed and discussed their challenges, survival strategies and systemic barriers. This was done through qualitative approach which featured interviews, narrative prompts and key informant insights. Dominant themes which emerged included institutional abandonment, resilience and copying mechanisms for survival. These aligned with the reviewed literature. However, there were other contrary discoveries which featured youths who managed to reintegrate with their families, proceed to higher education and secure formal employment. All these findings aligned with Schlossberg's theory of transition. The researcher discovered that there is need for policy change for supported transition and economic support after leaving care centers. The following chapter (5) will feature summary, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

This chapter brings forward findings and insights from the study conducted in Highfield District, Harare. This was premised on a socio-economic intervention strategy for young adults discharged from residential care facilities. Conclusions to be presented in this chapter were informed by experiences of young adults and professional who participated in the research. The researcher focused on synthesizing knowledge from lived experiences and institutional insight. All these were related to the reviewed literature and theoretical perspective. Data presented in the previous chapter paved way for practical frameworks, recommendations and strategies to promote positive outcomes of young adults released from care centers and ameliorate poverty among youths. Empirical data gathered from Highfield district shall thus be summarized and integrated with youth welfare practices in Zimbabwe.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

The research unearthed that youths released from care facilities are susceptible to five (5) troubles. These include, institutional abandonment, social isolation, education challenges, crime and unemployment.

5.1.1 Institutional Abandonment

Lack of support during transition was a key issue amongst the youths. They bemoaned abrupt release when they reached the age of eighteen (18) without proper planning. The researcher discovered that the Children's Act (Chapter 5: 06) mainly focuses on children in care below the age of eighteen. It is limited in providing provisions and support for aftercare. Institutional insight revealed that the proposed aftercare system has not been successfully implemented as compared to South Africa aftercare system which extends to the age of twenty one (21). The reasons being lack of supportive infrastructure, incoherent policies and the unequal distribution of social resources in the country.

5.1.2 Social Isolation

Isolation emerged as a troubling factor for the young adults. While in institutions, young people are offered care, support and protection which instill a sense of love and belonging. This is done to ensure that they are molded into sociable human beings. However, many reported that they struggled to socialize and integrate with the outside society. This was true amongst youths without traceable relatives. Lack of family supported been noted as a problem in social integration. It

makes young people susceptible to exploitation by other members of the community or develop alcoholism as a copying mechanism.

5.1.3 Education challenges
Education was a troubling factor amongst the youths. Most of the young people featured failed to continue with higher and tertiary education due to financial challenges. Some said that they also couldn't find sponsorship for vocational training or mentorship. Educational challenges affected how their economic viability because educational qualifications are prerequisites into formal employment. Subsequently, most of the youths were involved in informal work.

5.1.4 Crime
Highfield district emerged as a hotspot for illegal activities. Crime is commonplace in the district. The incidence of crime among the young has been attributed to two main reasons which are social degeneracy and survival mechanism. The district is marred by social degeneracy which cascade from surrounding communities within the metropolitan. The researched discovered that Harare has developed into a multicultural social place wherein different behaviors and ideations are exchanged daily. Unfortunately, this has led to lot of crime. Crime amongst young adults is also a survival mechanism. Lack of formal occupation, youths are forced into sex work, thieving or fraud to help with their daily needs.

5.1.5 Unemployment
The researcher discovered that unemployment affects the welfare of young people. This is caused by the economic turmoil prevalent in Zimbabwe. ZimStat (2025) revealed that more than sixty (60%) of the locals are not formally employment. Many young people released from care centers struggle to secure formal employment. This is also attributed to lack of educational qualifications and limited skills training. Institutional insight showed that the state is not doing effective vocational training for young people before they are discharged from institutions. Thus, unemployment is a challenge among young people.

5.2 Conclusions
The study has obtained a knowledge into the welfare of youths through lived experiences. Institutional insight was crucial in delineating the role of the state and stakeholders within the social development sector. The study confirmed that young people who leave care facilities are faced with challenges which are embedded in structural weakness, lack of extended support and

inefficient integration models. The findings showed that a large of numbers of youths are released from care without adequate preparation for adult life. This is because the traditional welfare system focuses mainly on intake of children into care facilities whilst ignoring their exit plans. Youths are oft discharged abruptly when they reach eighteen (18) without important skills such as financial literacy, social connections and emotional stability.

Additionally, the study concluded that there is a gap in delivery of aftercare support in Zimbabwe. This was informed by both the young adults and key informants. The young adults reported that the care system abandoned them after they were released from care. No follow-ups were conducted to ensure they settled and adapted well to with outside community. Subsequently, they failed to be properly reintegrated with the society. Institutional insight obtained through key informants showed that the department of social development (DSD) lacks structural support and infrastructure to deliver effective aftercare. It was revealed that transition out of care facilities is challenging because of absence of policies and legal frameworks mainstream the needs of young people. The policies and frameworks already existing in Zimbabwe are poorly implemented and fragmented such that primary needs of young people are overlooked and left unattended to.

The study also identified that youths were resilient in face of social and economic challenges caused by transition. Resilience was noted amongst the youths and it was attributed to individual capabilities. For example, youths being involved informal support systems and establishing their own networks. However, most of them did not manage to achieve utmost development because their resilience lacked support. For better outcomes, systemic support and institutional collaborations are needed to ensure further development of young people. Institutional collaborations should involve the state, civic society and private entities. The study showed that voices of youths are being ignored in youth policy design. To this end, voices of young people must be incorporated in policy formulation and design of service delivery systems for youth empowerment.

5.2.1 IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

The study findings have implications for social work profession in that they inform education, practice, policy and advocacy. The study there is a gap between care and independence. In this regard, social workers are important in bridging that gap and developing systems that connect youths to opportunities when they leave care. Early planning of aftercare should be a social

worker's prerogative. Social workers should facilitate the removal of the abrupt discharge system by developing gradual transition processes. This can be done through offering social and psychological support to those that leave care and doing case follow ups after they are discharged from care. Such initiatives would help reduce case of emotional vulnerability, homelessness, unemployment and economic poverty prompting involvement in criminal activities.

Social workers should operate as advocates of policy change. This is in response to the discovery that there is lack of effective policies and frameworks to support aftercare and emancipation of youths in Zimbabwe. Social workers should advocate for and mainstream rights of youths with care backgrounds. This would ensure that the youths are included in housing programs, public education initiatives and are active in community support groups. Social workers can utilized their professional expertise to lobby for inclusion which sees resource allocations for vulnerable and attract grants from the local government and donor community. Partnerships between local civic society and international welfare entities such as the United Nations Youth Development Program can be achieved through engagements by social workers.

Needs of young adults who transition out of care are diverse, they strengths-based and comprehensive approaches. Social workers provide the cultural competence required to meet and address the multifarious needs of young people. This can be addressed through challenging social stigma and exploitation through community education. For example social workers at the department of social development can recruit and train members of the community to work as community care workers. This ensures a grassroots approach to challenging problems hampering youth safety and development. Training community care workers can also be as a way of integrating aftercare into community development. This is a community based way of proliferating resilience amongst youths who settle in widely spread communities.

The study findings showed that structural and systemic inequalities worsen problems encountered by youths as they leave care. Social workers are important in promoting social justice. This can be done through identifying drivers of economic marginalization. Social workers should provide key insight that challenges institutional biases that overlook the needs of care leavers. They also should be involved in gender based exclusion which hamper positive outcomes for youths, especially female youths. The involvement of social workers at micro and macro level strategy formulation is crucial for promoting youth development. Conclusively, the study provides an evidence based

call for paradigm shift in the profession of social work. The traditional welfare system should focus on developing long-term plans for youth development rather than just discharging youths from care.

5.3 Recommendations
5.3.1 Legislative Reform
Aftercare Act

Currently, there is limited aftercare in Zimbabwe. There is need for a legislative reform which extends support for young people who were traditionally discharged at the age of eighteen (18) years. For example, Zimbabwe can borrow from the South African aftercare model. This model regulates the state to provide care and support to young people up to twenty one years (21) and beyond. This strengthens young people as they transition out of care institutions. It improves their adaptation skills and improve their economic activity. Through aftercare program, Zimbabwe will improve outcomes for young people and help reduce poverty. This can also be done through establish microfinance institutions which favor investment into projects by care leavers and provide funding.

5.3.2 Systemic Support
Ministerial partnership

Considering the different social and economic challenges faced by young people, there is need for ministerial partnership. This will ensure that different ministries and stakeholders partner and collaborate for positive outcomes of young people. Youths will be provided with medical support and reproductive health assistance. This will be instrumental in dealing with poor health and sickness amongst young people. Young people will also connect with state resources and industrial leaders in various careers of their choice. Ministerial will favor investment in education and entrepreneurship of young people. Holistic approaches will improve for youth welfare through collaboration of different ministries such as the Ministry of Finance and Investment Promotion, Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education and Youth Development.

Care leavers network

There is need for the Ministry of Labor, Public Service and Social Welfare to establish a national support base for care leavers through the Department of Social Development. Currently, the care leavers' network in the country is sponsored by SOS Children's Village which is a non-governmental entity. Its operation are limited because of lack of supportive infrastructure and state restrictions of NGOs. There state needs to set-up a network which monitors young people who are discharged from residential care facilities. This helps in identifying their challenges and help address their problems. Monitoring youths will also be important in identifying areas needing investment.

Proposed Interventions

Most of the challenges revealed by the study were caused by poorly executed discharge plans. There is need for the state to construct transitional homes for young people to reduce homelessness. Young people can be assisted with accommodation for a specific period such as a six months until they are able to find their own accommodation. The Presidential Scholarship Program in Zimbabwe should be favor young people who are released from care centers because they mostly lack family support and sponsorship. Additionally, social workers at the Department of Social Development (DSD) should be trained in aftercare and provide with tools to help the youths.

5.4.1 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

- The study was conducted in Highfield, a high density area which is marred by widespread violence, crime, poverty and social degeneracy. These factors might have affected the experiences of young people in the district and might not relate to all challenges faced youths in other areas in the country. The sample size was small and thus, study findings are limited in how they relate other experiences.
- The study left out complex trauma experiences of young adults. Transitioning out of care institutions often encounter diverse traumatic situations such as sexual abuse, persecution and political violence. Due to limited resources and suitable professional guidance, the researcher could not delve deeper into complex trauma informed experiences. Some of the youths discharged in 2023 stated that they were subjected to political violence related to the 2023 Presidential Elections. However, there could not be adequate study into this due to political polarization.
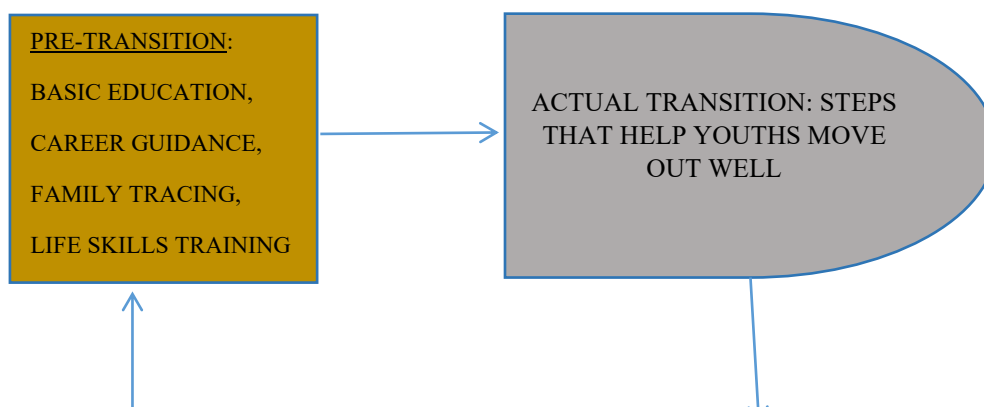
5.4.2 AREAS FOR FUTURE STUDY

- Future studies should develop domains for skills of independence. Young people should be empowered to live their independent lives through support from the state and civic society stakeholders. Studies should be conducted to assess and evaluate ways through which emancipation can be achieved for young people.

- Future study should combine different research methods. For example, quantitative combined with qualitative approaches. Combining different approaches and techniques should be utilized to develop comprehensive framework to empower young people. This helps address the different challenges affecting young people released from residential care facilities.

- There is need for studies to focus on psychosocial integration of youths as they move out of care centers. This will help address the mental health challenges in young people. For example studying the effectiveness of cognitive behavioral therapy among young adults released from young people. Addressing psychosocial challenges faced by young people helps their active participation in their respective communities.

5. 4. 3 Layer Model for Youths

In a bid to propose a practical framework suitable for socioeconomic integration of youths discharged from residential care institutions, the researcher develop a model. The model provides a unique, context-based and structured framework to guides efforts that enhance the wellbeing of young people. It outlines initiatives that can be undertaken in three phases which are pre-discharge, actual discharge and post-discharge.

Below is the visual representation of the model:

3 LAYER INTEGRATION MODEL

```
        ┌──────────────┐
        │  COLLABO     │
        │  RATION:     │
        │  3 Keys      │
        │  Entities    │
        └──────────────┘
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```
┌───────────────────────┐
│   CIVIC SOCIETY:       │
│                        │
│ 1. UN agencies such as │
│    UN development      │
│    program.            │
│                        │
│ 2. ILO for youth       │
│    employment          │
│                        │
│ 3. Local NGO           │
│    community           │
└───────────────────────┘
```
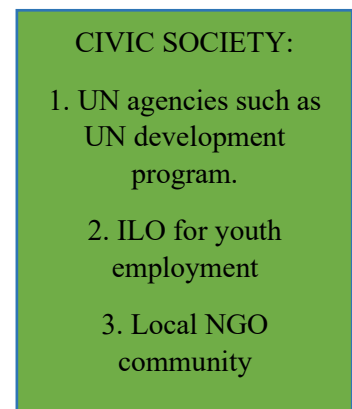
Explanation of the Model

The model outlines the need for comprehensive planning and collective before young people are released from care facilities. Firstly, there is the pre-discharge phase which focuses on young people in care from the ages of fifteen (15) to seventeen (17). They should be support with educational opportunities such as Ordinary level teaching, registration and career guidance. Family tracing should be done to help connect them with their families who will

prepare to release them when they are released. There should be creation of personal exit plans for each youth by care professionals. For example, discharge plans which begin a year before the actual release. This helps reduce incidents of abrupt discharges which are detrimental to youth welfare. Secondly, there is the actual transition. Young people should be provided with discharge packages to help them settle well outside. Formal meetings should be done with care givers and other personnel to provide psychosocial support. If family tracing was successful, families should be present.

Thirdly, the model outlines what can be done after the discharge. There are three institutions which can foster successful reintegration of youths from care. These are the community, the state and civic society. 1) The community has three key fraternities which are families to provide family based after care, faith based groups to provide religious support and integration and youth/peer groups which are gateways to teamwork, volunteering and youth mentorship. 2) The state has various key fraternities. The Department of Social Development is important in structuring the whole youth welfare program within the state and can partner other non-state stakeholders. The state can provide vocational training for young people to reduce unemployment and economic poverty. The law enforcement, ZRP, is instrumental in providing legal referrals to youths who can sexual exploitation after being discharge through the VFU, Victim Friendly Unit. It also helps reduce survival crime.

The state also plays an important role in providing educational support to youths who want to further their education through the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development. Young people can be provided access to university education, college learning and polytechnic mentorship. The state can provide student grants and loans through Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund, ZIMDEF. The state can collaborate with youth support camps to provide them with medical and mental health rehabilitation through the ministry of Health and Childcare. 3) The civic society is also important. It can help improve outcomes for youths by fostering youth participation in science, technology and entrepreneurship. For example, United Nations Development Programme. Youth employment can be improved through the international labor organization which advocates for decent work for young people. There is need for partnerships between these international civic entities and the local NGO community. This helps indigenize development

frameworks for young adults. Thus, effective socioeconomic support and integration of young adults is possible through collaborative effort.

5.5 Chapter Summary

Chapter five (5) brought forward a thorough synthesis of findings and data analysis obtained from a study focused on young adults released from care facilities. The researcher presented recommendations which are aimed at the socio-economic integration of youths as they settle in the outside world. The study showed that youths who leave care face challenges such as emotional instability, unemployment, poor skills training and lack of higher educational prospects. Institutional insight revealed that the present care system is limited in that it does not provide adequate aftercare support. This chapter brought forward practical recommendations such as mentorship, skills training, partnership between the state and the civic society which enhance social integration and economic development. Research limitations were also featured in this chapter with a section of areas of future studies to ensure that gaps left by the study can be further studied. Overall, the chapter consolidated research findings with institutional insight and recommendations to improve outcomes for young people released from care facilities and empower to be socially and economically viable in their communities.

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INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear participant,

My name is Leeroy Kudzai Manyembere, I am a student social worker from Bindura University of Science Education. I am carrying out a study on "**A socioeconomic integration strategy for young adults discharged from residential care facilities. A case study of Highfield District.**"

Thank you for accepting to take part in this study. Before we begin, I would like to state that your contribution is completely voluntary. Again, you may find some questions to be emotionally frustrating and if that happens, you are free not to answer. You are equally free to leave if need be. In observance to the ethics of research, the information given will be kept confidential considering that no personal details or physical addresses will be required. If you have understood and agree to participate in this study you may proceed to sign this consent form.

Participant's Signature: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: __/___/_____

Researcher's Name:

First Name(s): _____ Surname: _____

Key Informant's Details

First Name(s):_____ Surname: _____

Sex: Male ⬚   Female ⬚

Occupation: _____   Institution: _____

Signature: _____

Reason for Inquiry: Understanding the professional insight into ideal strategies of intervention.

(All information to be provided shall be kept confidential and only for research.)

0. Background Information

1. How long have you worked with issues related to child welfare and youth protection?

2. What position do you occupy?

Section 1: Pre-discharge

3. What determines how long a juvenile lives in a residential care facility?

4. In your experience, what conditions or factors mainly affect the lives of juveniles in residential care facilities?

5. What are three major challenges that are faced by children living in residential care facilities?

6. When dealing with children with traceable relatives, how do you partner with family members? For example, contribution order, visits or leave of absence?

7. How do you think education can be used before and after discharge as a socioeconomic tool for empowerment?

8. What would be the impact of giving career guidance and skills training to youths before they are discharged from residential care facilities?

9. Kindly explain the legal and professional implication of a trained professional (such as a social worker or matron) creating a discharge plan for a juvenile before turning 18?

Section 2: Transition Process

10. What is the professional way of handling a discharge court order?

11. Are professionals in residential care facilities responsible for creating a social and economic setting oversight for youths as they leave institutions?

12. In case of traceable relatives, what kind of partnerships are done to help the family and youth adjust to the new life?

13. What formalities determine a good discharge? If not achieved, what challenges might occur?

Section 3: Post-discharge

14. Which kind of support systems or resources would leverage the social and economic empowerment of young adults discharged from residential care facilities?

15. What can be done to promote the safety and security of youths who settled in areas predominantly affect by crime and violence?

16. What social, economic and political issues do you consider as impediments to the lives of young adults after they are discharged?

17. What manner of policy change would you advocate for in relation to young empowerment?

18. As a professional, what indicators do you use to measure the success or failure youth efforts?

19. What strategies could be used to achieve effective socio-economic integration for the youths?

20. What recommendations for institutional and supportive infrastructure would favor the youths in your area?

Researcher's Name:

First Name(s): _____ Surname: _____

Informant's Details

Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

Age: _____ Signature: _____

Reason for Inquiry: Understanding the experiences of young adults before, during and after their discharge for residential care facilities.

(All information to be provided shall be kept confidential and only for research.)

Section 1: Pre-discharge

1. How long did you live in a residential care facility?

2. How would you describe the life you lived in the residential care facility?

3. What challenges did you face whilst at the institution?

4. Did you have any traceable relatives? If yes, did they support or visit you?

5. How often did you leave the institution on a 'Leave of Absence' basis? E.g school holiday, home visit or trip.

6. Did you attend school on a regular basis whilst living at the institution? Highlight the highest level of education reached.

7. Did you receive any career guidance or skill training before being discharged?

8. Did the social worker or matron responsible discuss a discharge plan before being discharged?

Section 2: Transition Process

9. What was the experience of leaving the residential care facility?

10. What expectations did you have about life outside the residential care facility?

11. Did you reunite with your relatives after being discharged? Applicable to those with traceable relatives

12. Were you formally discharged with the support of a social worker or you were just told to leave the institution with any formality?

Section 3: Post-Discharge

13. Describe area you are currently living in?

14. Do you feel secure and safe in your current location?

15. What criminal activities are most common in your area?

16. After being discharged, did you face any challenge securing accommodation?

17. Are you employed? How long did it take to find a job?

18. What opportunities for development exist in your area?

19. Explain all the challenges that you have faced since you were discharged?

20. Do you welcome or isolated in your community?

21. What are your recommendations for your own community leadership?

Informant's Details

Name: (withheld for confidentiality)   Date: __/__/__

Sex: Male ☐   Female ☐

Age: _____

(All information to be provided shall be kept confidential and only for research.)

Title: Understanding the experiences of young adults before, during and after their discharge for residential care facilities.

[Directions: Respond to each section by writing your own story.]

Section 1: Describe your experiences living at a residential care facility.

Section 2: Narrate what happened as you were leaving the residential care facility

Section 3: Write on your life experiences outside the residential care facility.

**Official communications should
Not be addressed to individuals**

Telephone: 703711 / 790721-4
Harare

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL
WELFARE
Compensation House

Cnr S.V Muzenda and Central Avenue
HARARE

ZIMBABWE

19 March 2025
Leeroy K. Manyembere (B201429B)
Bindura University of Science

**REF: A SOCIO-ECONOMIC INTEGRATION STRATEGY FOR YOUNG
ADULTS DISCHARGED FROM RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES. A
CASE STUDY OF HIGHFIELD DISTRICT**

Receipt of your letter with the above mentioned matter is acknowledged.

Please be advised that permission is hereby granted for you to carry out research
titled **"A socio-economic integration strategy for young adults discharged
from residential care facilities. A case study of Highfield district"**

Permission is granted **STRICTLY** on condition that the research is for academic
purposes only in pursuit of your Bachelors of Science Honours Degree in Social
Work. The data collected should not be shared to third party (3rd).

You are requested to submit a copy of your final research documents to the
Department of Social Development upon completion as your research has a bearing
on the Department's mandate.

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR
AND SOCIAL WELFARE
SOCIAL WELFARE REGISTRY

1 9 MAR 2025

P.O. BOX CY 429, CAUSEWAY
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Director Social Development.
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE