CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, a report is given of the research design and methodology used in the empirical phase of this study. The empirical phase involved the researcher in entering the field of out-of-school youth to answer the main research question: 'What are out-of-school youths' experiences in dropping into the education and training system, and/or entering the job market, and the factors influencing their transition between school and the labour market?'

This chapter provides an account of the research paradigm and design. It also provides an account of the research methods adopted. These methods include a study sampling frame, data collection methods and data processing techniques, ethical considerations and the measures adopted to ensure the trustworthiness of the investigation.

Qualitative methods were used to investigate the major issues. Participants were selected through purposive sampling methods, which included snowballing, to provide an in-depth account of the experiences of the youth within a particular context after dropping out of school. The chapter commences with a description of the research paradigm.

4.2. RESEARCH PARADIGM

This research was aimed at gaining an understanding of the relevant social phenomenon, which is the experiences of out-of-school youths' entry or re-entry attempts to the education system and/or the labour market. Interpretive researchers are interested in the meaning that people give to phenomena. The phenomena considered in this study were the out-of-school experiences of the youth and the

perspectives of school principals regarding dropping out. The study attempted to look at the pathways that the youth follow.

Kelly, Terre Blanche and Durheim (2006) explain that an interpretive paradigm involves taking people's subjective experiences seriously as the essence of what is real for them (the ontology), making sense of people's experiences by interpreting with them and listening carefully to what they know, tell us and believe (the epistemology), and making use of qualitative research techniques to collect and analyse information (the methodology). This view of the interpretative paradigm guided this investigation.

The interpretative paradigm involves qualitative research. Qualitative research is concerned with the investigation of small, distinct groups (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993:375), and aims to generate information that is useful in certain contexts (Kelly, 2006:287), rather than information which can be generalised to a whole population (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993:375). In this study, the aim is *inter alia* to generate information enabling us to understand the out-of-school experiences of the youth about dropping into the ETD system or entering the job market.

In this paradigm, the researcher interprets the social environment and looks at human behaviour (Fien, 1992). Through this paradigm, it is possible to get a rich, in-depth understanding of the 'lived experiences' of participants. The qualitative approach allows one to enter the participants' life-worlds and study their lived-experiences (de Vos, 1998). This means that the dynamic, holistic and individual aspects of the experiences of the youth could be captured. The researcher was keen to capture this holistic aspect in its entirety, within the context of the out-of-school youth who experienced it.

4.3. RESEARCH DESIGN

A number of research designs fall within the interpretative paradigm. Saunders *et al* (2003:125) indicate that the research design chosen must suit the nature of the research being undertaken. Since the purpose of this study is to understand the

unique phenomenon of the re-entry of out-of-school youth into the school system or the job market, a case-study design was deemed suitable.

Yin distinguishes between a single-case strategy and a multiple-case strategy by noting that whereas in a single-case strategy a unique phenomenon is studied, in a multiple-case strategy more than one case is studied. The multiple case approach allows the researcher to establish if the findings of one case occur in other cases (Yin, 2002). This study adopts a multiple case design approach since each participant is treated as a case. The multiple-case approach provided the flexibility to study the cases in depth. Furthermore, the main logic behind choosing the multiple-case design and working qualitatively in this study was its nature of exploratory discovery and inductive logic (Creswell, 2003). It is a pertinent design to provide detail and insights into participants' experiences of the contexts, and thus create meaningful accounts of their experiences of school-to-work transitions.

4.4. METHODS

4.4.1. Sample and sampling

The sample consisted of fourteen out-of-school youths. Individual interviews were held with six of the youths - three males and three females - and the focus group interviews were held with eight of the youths. Three of the six youth participants in the individual interviews were also among the eight focus-group participants. During the conceptualisation of the study, ten participants were envisaged for individual interviews. Consideration was later given to the desirability of conducting both individual interviews and a focus-group interview. All participants were aged between 21 and 34 years. The National Youth Policy (1996) defines the youth as being between 14 and 35 years. The participants dropped out of school between Grade 1 and 11. All lived in the Folweni district in KwaZulu-Natal province. The sample also included three principals.

Purposive sampling was used in this study. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method (Saunders *et al,* 2003). In purposive sampling, personal judgement

is used to decide on the selection of participants. This is to ensure that participants deemed information-rich are selected (Saunders *et al*, 2003). The idea of key informants is supported by Morgan (in Smith, 1995:45), who advises researchers to concentrate on those population segments that can provide the most meaningful information. This notion of information-richness guided my decision in this investigation. The participants were chosen based on their having dropped out of school and their attempts to re-enter the ETD system or the labour market.

Given the particular nature of the investigation, it was anticipated that locating participants would pose a challenge. The purposive sampling technique of snowballing was therefore adopted. A participant with the particular attributes (dropping out, youth and location) was identified and then asked to identify others, a method recommended by Saunders *et al* (2003). They then led the researcher to other potential participants. In other words, the sample was selected by starting with one person and asking him/her for further contacts. Although this method would hardly lead to country-wide representivity, it was chosen because of its potential to reach a research population that was hard to find

4.4.2. Access to the research site and participants

During the research, the local schools offering Grades 1 to 11 in the Folweni area were visited and the research was discussed with the school principals. Efforts had been made to get permission to access the schools via the District Office but these efforts had proved futile. The school principals were therefore contacted directly. One agreement reached with them was that official documents would not be divulged. The principals gave the researcher access to a list of learners who had dropped out of school. These individuals were then tracked down in the Folweni community. They were then asked to participate in the research, and some of them agreed to do so. This was a voluntary decision. A consent letter which was translated into Zulu and back to English (see appendix A) was read to the participants. They were given a chance to ask questions. Those who agreed to participate met the researcher, the research was discussed with them individually, and an interview date was arranged.

All of the participants were over the age of 21, and parental consent was therefore deemed unnecessary.

4.4.3. Data collection

4.4.3.1.   *The researcher as instrument*

The researcher acted as an instrument in that the responses given by participants were solicited, collated and analysed by the researcher herself. In order to prevent interpretations being influenced by subjective understanding, two measures employed by Sherrard (1998:253) to counter such biases were used. Firstly, close attention was given to the participants' own words. Secondly, such biases were countered by maintaining an awareness of where the researcher was situated according to relevant dimensions of the participants' life-worlds (Sherrard, 1998:253). For this study, the researcher perceived herself to be close to the participants as an educator and a parent. At the same time, there was a distance in respect of the family circumstances of the participants and the difference in age.

Sherrard (1998:253) maintains that awareness of researcher-respondent distance serves as a strength in qualitative research, rather than simply as a means of countering bias. Perceptiveness is increased by finding the 'dimensions of researcher-respondent difference and similarity' (Sherrard, 1998:254).

4.4.3.2.   *Focus group*

One focus group interview was conducted. This was done to answer the research question: What are the youths' experiences as they try to (a) drop into the education and training system, and (b) possibly enter the job market (see Table 2 below)? The researcher chose to use a focus group for various reasons. Firstly, Schulze & Lessing (2002:3) suggest that this technique is the best way to research experience; secondly, because focus group interviews would give the young participants an environment in which they could interact and extend their ideas through such interaction without

the domination of the researcher, and, lastly, the presence of the researcher would be less threatening in as group setting than in an individual interview.

An interview guide was used during the focus group session to ensure consistent focusing on the main issues captured in each research question. The researcher had developed the guide after an analysis of the literature and from personal experience. The themes covered in the interview guide included the following: demographic characteristics; reasons for dropping out; attempts at getting back into the system; reasons for attempting to drop in; what guided the attempts to re-enter; and the participants' personal experiences in each of the above. Other themes included: school-to-work transition experiences; and experiences in accessing different career destinations.

Although these themes were identified prior to the meeting of the focus group, during the focus group interview the natural flow of conversation was followed. The themes were used as prompts, as and when necessary, to explore the full meanings and experiences of participants. The focus group meeting lasted approximately 60 minutes. The interview was conducted in Zulu and the session was tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interview was held at a local youth centre in Folweni.

4.4.3.3.   Individual interviews

- Out-of-school youth

Follow-up individual interviews were also conducted with the youth. This was in order to clarify the points of view expressed in the focus group meeting. They were used also to facilitate the gathering of data to answer research questions two and three (see Table 2). All of the participants were interviewed individually.

Table 2:   Research questions and data processes

Research questions	Data source	Data collection
Which factors influence the out-of-school youths' transition between high school and the labour market?	The youth	Individual interview
What are the characteristics of successful career destinations for the youths who attempt re-entry?	The youth	Individual interview

- Principals

In addition, three school principals were interviewed to gain insight into the following research question: 'What role does policy play in assisting the youth to get back to the education and training system, and into the labour market thereafter?' The themes covered in this interview were as follows: general destinations for these youth; policy implications; possible advice they give to these youths in re-entrance; perceived pathways for the youth; and the role of education policy and the system in assisting out-of-school youth. An additional aspect covered in the interview was that of the possible reasons for learners 'dropping out' and 'dropping in' to school, the potential activities that these members of the youth embark on after dropping out, and what the school's experiences are in relation to the youth who have dropped in. This was to corroborate the responses to similar questions posed in the interviews with the out-of-school youths.

Both the principals and the out-of-school youths were interviewed in a convenient place. The principals were interviewed in their offices at school, while the youths were interviewed at the local youth centre. Each interview lasted about 60 minutes, and was tape-recorded. This was done with their permission.

4.4.4. Data analysis

Constant comparative analysis was employed. This is a cyclical process in which data are collected, read and re-read, categorised, coded, and then analysed and compared (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The focus group and phenomenological interviews were

conducted in the Zulu language as people in the Folweni district are largely Zulu speaking. Before the data were analysed, they were translated into the English language.

In the analysis, the data were divided according to each research question (cf. Chapter One). Data pertaining to each question were then analysed in the following way (Johnson & Christensen, 2000:426):

- *Segmenting*

Segmenting involved dividing the data into meaningful analytical units. The researcher did this by carefully reading the transcribed data, one line at a time, and asking: is there a segment of text that is important for this research? Does it differ in any way from the text that precedes or follows it? Where does the segment begin and end? Such segments often included words, and/or one or more sentences. Once identified, segments were bracketed in order to indicate where they began and ended.

- *Coding*

The segments of data were identified by means of category names and symbols. For example, *poverty factor* was indicated by PF; *struggle* by S; and *conflict* by C. In addition to these, face-sheet codes which applied to single complete transcripts were given to each transcript to enable the researcher to search for group differences. For example, each PF in the three school principals' transcript was coded P1, P2, and P3 respectively.

- *Compiling of a master list*

All of the category names developed, along with their symbolic codes, were placed on a master list. These codes were reapplied to new sections of text, and each time appropriate sections of text were discovered. New categories and codes were added to the master list as necessary.

- *Checking for inter-coder and intra-coder reliability*

In order to address intercoder reliability, the researcher checked for consistency in the appropriate codes between herself and an assigned external analyst. The external analyst also checked the researcher's analysis for intracoder reliability. This assisted in ensuring that the researcher's coding was consistent.

- *Enumeration*

The frequency with which observations were made was noted in order to help the researcher identify important ideas and prominent themes occurring in the research group as a whole or between different sub-groups.

- *Showing relationships among categories*

Spradley's (in Johnson & Christensen, 2000) summary of nine possible relationships in the text in a data set was used as a guide to find relationships between categories. These included (a) means-end (X is a way to do Y); (b) rationale (X is a reason for doing Y), and so on. Following the analysis of the data, the researcher commenced with writing up the arguments and themes.

4.5. MEASURES TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS

De Vos (2005) argues that the verifiability of qualitative research is accurately assessed according to its trustworthiness. In this study, Lincoln and Guba's model for ensuring the trustworthiness of qualitative data was employed (De Vos, 2005:346). In accordance with this model, four criteria are used to ensure trustworthiness. These are truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality. The tactics employed in each of these criteria are as follows:

- Making the sampling decisions carefully;
- Circulating the findings to the participants to ensure that their views were correctly reflected;
- Using a tape recorder and making verbatim transcriptions of each group interviewed (five individual interviews with the youth participants, one focus group and three individual interviews with the principals, one of which was later withdrawn);

- Obtaining feedback from participants when unsure about the meaning of their statements;

- Asking other out-of-school youth participants in the focus group if they could identify with, or recognise the experiences of their counterparts. Their identification with the experiences would improve the credibility of the results;

- Data triangulation; that is, comparison of the empirical findings with other research findings studied in the literature, and with each other; and

- Having the supervisor check the analysis to ensure that there is agreement regarding the interpretations made and the meanings given to the raw data.

The use of these strategies ensured that truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality were achieved.

4.5.1. Research context

Out-of-school youth and principals of schools in the District of Folweni participated in the empirical investigation. Folweni is located in the heart of Umbumbulu, on the South Coast of Durban, in the KwaZulu-Natal province. Folweni was known during the 1980s as a violence-stricken area, with a lot of fatalities as a result of the political conflict between the African National Congress and Inkatha Freedom Party.

Since the 1980s, on any given weekday Folweni roads are generally busy, as the youth, who are largely unemployed, roam the streets freely. In 2001 the unemployment rate stood at 47% (Census, 2001). The youth make up 42% of Folweni's unemployed community members (Census, 2001). Given the downturn in the economic situation in the country since 2007, the unemployment rate in Folweni today is assumed to be much higher.

Folweni is a semi-rural township. The area has a local councillor. The community and the councillor tend to know the activities of the locals. The community has eight primary schools, three combined schools, and six secondary schools. One Further Education and Training College is located in the proximity of the area (about 20km

from the township). The nearest university is about 30km away. In terms of commercial activities, the community is supported mainly by informal businesses, which include family-run small shops and unskilled employment.

Access to quality education is restricted for most of the learners attending school in Folweni by the fact that most parents are unemployed or are unskilled labourers, and as a result cannot afford to send their children to the 'better' schools.

These factors made Folweni a suitable site for this investigation.

4.6.   ETHICAL MEASURES

The ethical measures undertaken, which served as guiding principles throughout the empirical investigation, were as follows:

4.6.1. Informed consent

The researcher undertook to obtain informed consent from all participants by means of engaging in a dialogue, during which each participant was informed of the purpose of the study and assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Informed consent ensures that participants are provided with adequate information regarding (a) the researcher's credibility as a researcher, (b) the procedures to be followed during the research, (c) the goal of the investigation, and (d) the possible advantages and disadvantages of participating.

Furthermore, the researcher had to ensure that participants were competent to give their consent, and had to make them aware that they were free to withdraw from the investigation at any time. The participants were able to make voluntary decisions to participate or not.

4.6.2. Anonymity and confidentiality

The participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. The specific settings and participants' identity would not be revealed or be identifiable in print. Code

names for people and places were to be used to ensure anonymity (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993).

4.6.3. Deception and privacy

The researcher undertook to avoid deception through obtaining informed consent, and through protecting the privacy of participants. The taping of focus group and individual interviews proceeded only with the knowledge and consent of the participants. The participants were assured that they had the right to refuse to respond to certain questions, and to decide what sort of information they wanted to disclose.

4.6.4. The researcher's competence

The researcher recognised the importance of ensuring that the research was conducted in a competent manner. In order to do this, the researcher undertook, as proposed by Strydom (2006:63), (a) to accept the ethical responsibility to ensure that she was adequately skilled to conduct the investigation; (b) to remain sensitive to the needs of the participants in the study; and (c) to refrain from making value judgements about the points of view of the participants.

4.7. METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES AND LIMITATIONS

The study was an intergenerational study. The age of the adult researcher would inevitably have impacted on the findings in some ways. However, the researcher attempted to minimise this limitation by privileging the voices of the participants throughout the study.

The focus group interview allowed space for interaction between the participants and for the researcher to fade into the background. After the initial questioning, the participants tended to take over the discussion and even to respond to their peer contributions and challenge one another's views.

4.8. SUMMARY

The methodology employed in the investigation has been described in this chapter. The findings arising from this investigation are reported in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1.   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, an account is provided of the findings of the empirical investigation. The chapter begins with a discussion on the composition of the research sample, which takes the form of a description of the focus group and individual interview participants that were involved in the investigation. The findings presented are an outcome of both kinds of interviews.

5.2.   COMPOSITION   OF   FOCUS   GROUP   AND   INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

There were fourteen youth participants in total and three school principals. Six out-of-school youth participants were interviewed individually and eight were part of the focus group. Three school principals were interviewed and one later withdrew. Of the eight youth participants (in the focus group), three had participated in individual interviews. The three school principals were interviewed individually.

5.2.1. Out-of-school youth

The out-of-school youths participated in both the focus group and the individual interviews. Of the six youths (n=6) who made up the individual interviews (some of whom participated in the focus group), three were male and three were female. The three females were between 24 and 26 years of age. The males were aged between 22 and 27 years. The participants had been out of school for a number of years. The three females had been out of the school system for an average of six years. One male had spent three years out of school, while the other males had been out of school for between four and eight years. All of the participants had made attempts to drop back

into the school system, as well as to enter the job market. A summary of the participants' demographic and secondary school characteristics is shown in Table 3.

Table 3   Participants' demographic and secondary school characteristics

Participants (pseudonyms)	Gender	Age (in years)	Grade of drop-out	No. of School drop-in attempts
Maz (P1)	Female	24	9	1
Shorty (P2)	Female	26	11	3
Moon lady (P3)	Female	22	9	2
Armani (P4)	Male	27	11	4
Lk (P5)	Male	22	11	2
Westy (P6)	Male	23	11	1

There were no married participants in the group. All of the participants indicated that they were single and unmarried. At the same time, all of the female participants acknowledged that they were parents. Female participant 1 (P1) was mother to a child who died after a short illness. She gave birth to the child during her teenage years (age 15) while in school. Participant 1 lived with her mother, older sister, brother, a niece and two nephews.

The other two female participants (i.e. P2 and P3) each had daughters, with P2 having one and P3 having two living daughters. P2 had a 10-year-old daughter, born while the mother was in grade 11. In contrast, the daughters of P3 were aged five and seven. These children were born after the mother (P3) had dropped out of school. Both of these female participants lived with their parents, children, and other siblings.

Of the three male participants that made up the focus group, one (P4) was a parent. This father participant, who has two sisters and a brother and lives with his

grandmother, has a three-year old son. Like most participants in the study, he dropped out of school in Grade 11 (aged 16). The other two male participants were not fathers. All lived with their parents within the Folweni area.

5.2.2. Principals

Three school principals (n=3) were interviewed separately. All but one of these participants was female. Their average age was 45 years. The participants were principals of secondary schools and had been working as school heads (principals or acting principals) for an average of 18 years.

5.3. FINDINGS

The findings have been presented in accordance with the four research questions posed. These questions were: (i) What are the experiences of the youth as they try to (a) drop into the ETD system, and (b) possibly enter the job market? (ii) Which factors influence the out-of-school transition of the youth between high school and the labour market? (iii) What are the characteristics of the career pathways taken by the youth who drop out of or after drop-out drop into the ETD system? (iv) What are school managers' (principals') views regarding youth drop-out and possible drop into the ETD system, and into the labour market thereafter?

The findings relating to each of the four research questions are outlined in the sections that follow.

5.3.1 *Research question 1:* What are the experiences of the youth as they try (a) to drop into the ETD system, and (b) possibly enter the job market?

5.3.1.1 Recognised valuing of education by the youth

The youth acknowledged the importance and value of schooling. However, schooling was viewed as valuable for extrinsic, instrumental reasons. In all of their

commentaries the young participants expressed little or no concern for or interest in schooling for its intrinsic benefits. In other words, there was an obvious absence of intrinsic valuing of education by participants. This point was openly made by all of the out-of-school youths. A typical comment was:

> We need to finish school so we can find good jobs; and take care of our family. Educated people have good jobs. Look at you [referring to the interviewer]; you have a new car every year and you take care of your whole family. All educated people get good jobs – even if they do not drive good cars, they still make enough money to get everything that they want. [P2]

The association of formal schooling to access to jobs reflects an extrinsic, instrumental valuing of education. The out-of-school youth associated the result of schooling with getting a qualification and improving one's chance of getting employment. They all wanted to drop into the ETD system. The reason they wanted to do this was to get a qualification that they perceived would assist them to get a job.

There was a clear indication that the participants attached great importance to education. It seems that much of this came as a result of their out-of-school experiences. They held a distinct recognition of the value of education outside school. A common experience which brought participants to further internalise the significance of schooling was:

> When you seek a job, you are asked for qualification... everything you do you are asked to produce matric certificate. You can see from this that education means a lot. [P3]

The youth also valued schooling for its development of personal awareness, but it seems that this awareness was not appreciated for its own sake. Rather it was for being in a better position to survive socially. There was agreement in the group that:

> People without matric [a person completing his/her grade 12 level education] can't think... just listen to them... I often listen to them when they come to my salon business. You can't even have a chat about current affairs; they don't know what is going on around them, compared to a person in school or one with matric. [P4]

These youth evidently placed more value on the formal schooling processes than on informal processes of socialisation. There is a belief, it seems, among these youth that by being socially aware, one stood a greater chance *inter alia* to exploit opportunities in their environment. Such a perception implicitly suggests that a person completing grade 12 has a better chance to do so.

5.3.1.2 Experiences leading to youth exit from school

But while the youth valued schooling, it was pertinent to understand what in their experiences caused them to drop out. For the female participants, the underlying causes were their pregnancy and financial instability. Relevant statements made by the females were:

> …I mean, I don't know why I left school; I got pregnant and I didn't have money for me and my child. I dropped out of school as I could not manage. [P2].

> My experience is that I left school in Grade 9… I dropped out because I was pregnant (in 2000); I was also sick; I had an eye problem; when I exercise or read, my eyes became red and tears just kept running out. I still have that problem today but it is not like before. The doctors told me that I developed some allergy with a type of tree. [P3].

> I dropped out of school in 2000. It's… I got a baby. I was pregnant. I stopped at grade 11. After that I was home. [P1].

Motherhood and its associated responsibilities evidently accounted for initially pushing the females out of secondary school. The male participants had very different experiences.

For the male participants, drug use, pilfering, and parents' financial instability pushed them out of secondary school. This is illustrated in the following quotes:

My experience is that I dropped out of school at grade 11... I had no uniform and no school fee... the principal was giving me problems and my parents were not paying so I stayed at home. My father worked as a machine driver but he used to say he did not have enough money to pay yet he drank a lot of alcohol [P5].

The love of money caused me to drop-out... I got caught up with the wrong people.... I thought I would make a lot of money stealing, me and my friend... we influenced each other. At my home, there was no one working to pay for my schooling [P5].

In general, as one male participant explained, boys used drugs and smoked dagga. As a result, these youths end up not studying, and used alcohol instead: '...you see here when people are supposed to be at school they are busy with these things and at the end they fail their subjects and lose hope of ever trying again. Sometimes it's stupidity; people fail until they are helpless and end up throwing the towel in when it's time to write exams'.

These observations offer some insights into the reasons for the participants dropping out of school. Many of these were corroborated in the views on the issue shared by the school principals, where the following, for instance, had been noted:

Many of the youth use the school as a hiding place, hiding from the cops and anything wrong they have done out there in the wider community... Many of these youth enrol in school at the beginning of the year, not because they want to be educated but because they are hiding from the police. You see they commit crimes, and then enrol at school just so that when their cases are heard or they are arrested, the school can give them letters to say that they are high school students. Once that 'cloud blows' over they go back to where they belong: in groups and gangs, which pinched them out of school, especially boys. In most cases, they leave the school within three months [PRINCIPAL A].

Also, many of the students in the school are from broken families and do not get much support from their families. Of course, some of them drop out because they are pregnant – these learners are not even scared: some die from AIDS, and the HIV/AIDS prevalence is very

high. Some drop out because they are poor or orphans [PRINCIPAL A].

The principals raised one pertinent issue that was not mentioned in the focus group. That is, some youth use the school as a cover for their criminal behaviour. This implies that what is termed drop-out may for these individuals in fact be exiting from a hideout, as they may have had no desire to be in school. This underlines the complex nature of the reasons for some youths' dropping out of school.

5.3.1.3 *Youth out-of-school experiences*

(a) Experiences from dropping into the ETD system

Both male and female participants attempted to drop into the ETD system. Participants attempted to drop in along two pathways: (a) via the formal school system, and (b) via the non-formal school system. In terms of the formal system, some participants attempted to drop into secondary school, technikon, and university. But via the non-formal pathway some tried to gain access to unaccredited short training courses to develop specific skills (these courses do not provide them with any credits). Examples of participants' comments in this regard were:

> I dropped out of secondary school then I went back... from there I tried my luck at the technikon [P4].

> I gave birth and I went back to [secondary] school after a year [P2].

Other participants noted:

> After dropping out of secondary school, I did not try to go back. I made one attempt instead to do a short (10 days) course at one college to learn how to compile a business plan [P1].

> I tried to go back to secondary school but I discovered it was difficult. So now, in town, I was going to try and study for a certificate... at one Shoprite store they said they wanted a certificate for being a teller so I am trying to get that [P3].

As participants made attempts to drop into the ETD system, many recounted difference experiences. These dropin experiences fit into two categories, namely: (i) constraining experiences on dropping-into school, and (ii) rewarding experiences in school drop-in.

(I) Constraining experiences in dropping into the school system

- Financial challenges

Participants spoke about finances as a constraint in their experience of dropping into the ETD system. A lack of financial support inhibited their drop-in attempts as well as their attempts to complete their schooling after drop-in. Some typical comments of participants were:

> We tried to go back [to school]... the reason I am not continuing with school is that there is no one working at home. There is no one who can pay for my schooling... is just sitting here with the sorrow of not completing school. I'm just on the streets [P5].

> I left secondary school at Standard 9 [grade 11]... that was in 2000, and I did not go back. We didn't have money and I had to take care of my baby. Unfortunately, my child died in 2001... I was devastated [by this incident] [P1].

The lack of finance was a major obstacle to dropping into the school system. It seemed that the same issue of finance that pushed some participants out of secondary school impeded their drop-in attempts. Many were openly saddened by their experience of being unable to re-join the formal education system due to their financial constraints. In many ways, the money problems that these youth experience reflects a much wider problem of the poverty in which they were brought up as children.

Even in the instances where participants managed to drop into the formal school system, they struggled to acquire basic requirements such as a uniform, lunch fees,

money to cover transportation costs, and so on. Their poverty was an ominous marker in the lives of these participants in school, which, in the case of the female participants, was exacerbated by their status as mothers.

One participant recalled his constraining financial experiences after dropping out of secondary school but then later returning to complete Matric, after which he received an initial bursary to enter tertiary level studies. The participant stated:

> Finances created a problem for me when I was in school. There was no money at one stage and I dropped out of secondary school but then I went back and continued and finished my Matric. I didn't have money to continue my studies to a higher level in that year that I Matriculated. But I heard about bursaries at the Department of Education and Culture, so I applied and got one.
>
> After that I started studying the following year, 1998 at the Technikon. But I dropped out of the Technikon after a year two because the Department didn't pay up my bursary to the school; the school asked me to sit out because I owed them (R21 000). The Department of Education never paid; when I look at it, it seems like a lot of fraud took place at the Department because the Department is under the impression that all the bursaries have been paid but the school hasn't received the money. [P4]

The participant's experience is that of being a repeated dropout. There was clear frustration and sadness in the experience, evidenced in the participant's remarks such as, '…there is no proof that I once studied there [Technikon] because I owed money…' The common thread in this experience is that the participant's schooling was thwarted through no fault of his own. For all of these participants, their inability to finance their education, or have it financed, was a major disruption in their lives.

- Class outlier: misfit in class with younger peers

Some participants found that their age was a major impediment in their drop-in experiences. The age factor seems to have been an impediment because conventional wisdom in the secondary school phase says that learners within a certain grade

should be within a particular age band. Deviation from this norm seems to put one in a position of being a misfit within a grade, and a target for social ostracism, isolation, and mockery. This view appeared to have defined the experiences of some participants who dropped into secondary school to finish their education. They said 'We tried to re-enter. I once did so at Greytown where we used to live. I even bought the uniform. But I found it quite difficult. My age was an issue for me… when I went back [to school] the children were teasing me, and then I stopped going because it was difficult'.

> They [the other children] laugh because in the class, there were those children that were much younger than I was. Many of them knew me because I used to be in school before. They mocked me; saying that they found themselves studying with their granny… some even said 'Wow, Sipho's mom!' [P3]

> It was at that moment that I realised it was necessary to put the pen down. I couldn't imagine myself studying with younger children. My sister's child, who was much younger than I was, was already ahead of me in school. Studying in this environment gave me stress. [P3]

There was clear psychological distress in their experience. For these participants, this distress distracted them from their academic work. They felt unwelcome and unwanted within the class environment, which caused them to be astonished about their decision to return to secondary schooling in the first place. It seems many expected some sort of social support and protection from their class teachers, but this did not materialise. One participant commented that:

> The teachers didn't say anything when other learners teased us. It was a bad experience for me. When I decided not to go back to the school, my family was disturbed but after a while they said that I might as well stay at home rather than being made a laughing stock by children. I am now trying to study for a certificate to become a shop teller. [P3]

The psycho-social pressure leads some participants to become repeat drop-outs. The intensity of this pressure was strong enough to overcome these participants' will to finish their formal education. It seems that support structures for learners who drop

into the formal school system after dropping out had not been offered to these individuals.

In the interviews with school principals it emerged that these principals would rather avoid dealing with the over-age factor of returnee drop-out learners than to help them fit back into the school setting. One participant principal remarked that:

> As much as we all view education as a right, we have to consider other factors... For instance, their age: Sometimes they do not fit age-wise with their colleagues [peers] in class... There is always a room for conflict, as a result of the age gap. Most of the drop-outs who are re-admitted to school are beyond school-going age, or beyond the age that they should be in... they find it difficult to cope in class and to submit to their youthful teachers. They refuse to accept corrective measures. [PRINCIPAL B]

It seems that a school manager's apprehension to readmit out-of-school youths is informed by fear (or actual experience) of undisciplined behaviour by these individuals. It implies that there is an onus on readmitted out-of-school youths to conduct themselves in acceptable ways in the school. But the principals were of the view that a majority of the readmitted learners are usually '...focused and demonstrated a will to achieve educationally'. These views above provided another perspective on the youths' experiences as misfits in class at school.

- Negative teacher attitudes

Some participants spoke not only about unwelcome experiences with their classmates but also about some teachers' negative attitudes towards them. The female participants were the main victims of the negative teacher behaviours. They experienced verbal abuse from their teachers, a situation that occurred mainly in the classroom. As one female participant stated:

> The principal only wanted my report [the previous year's report card to prove that she had passed]. My problems started when I encountered the school community. The teachers started saying nasty

things about me. They mocked me... Said that is the reason I left school before... And that I will get another baby soon. They labelled me as a prostitute.... This hurt me and I left. I failed twice. [P2]

The nasty comments from the teachers add to the psychological hurt felt by the readmitted learners. One participant explained that she sometimes felt like a punch bag, as a result of her teacher's negative attitudes towards her, and that she sometimes felt like a vending machine (having to give of herself all the time) – as a result of their teacher's demanding, egocentric attitudes. Such encounters seemed to aggravate the stress experienced by these learners as a result of both their academic work and their parental responsibilities.

Several of the participants thought that the nasty attitudes that some teachers displayed towards them were surprising. As these participants explained, '...there is a policy which says you can go back to school after giving birth'. The surprised reactions of participants suggested that they had been unprepared – at least psychosocially - to return to school.

- Self-doubt and limited social support

Self-doubt also appeared to frame participants' secondary school drop-in experiences. Some participants were doubtful that they could cope with the demands of the school curriculum. One participant, who had been away from school for the past eight years, expressed a common view:

> It's been a long time out of school and I think my brain would fail me... I might not grasp things [academic work] like I used to. I have seen other people failing. That is why I do short [non-formal] courses instead...
> I have never tried to go back to the secondary school or to a [FET] College. [P2]

There are clear signs of low self-esteem and fear of failure in these responses. With such a mind-frame, it is unsurprising that this participant found it a challenge to again drop into the formal school system, resorting instead to the non-formal

pathway. It may well be a result of the greater chance of being successful in the non-formal route, but one needs to be open to broader explanations. The self-doubt expressed by the participant did not appear to come from direct experiences of failure. Rather, it appears to have been acquired vicariously: i.e. from indirect experiences. One participant commented: 'I know many people who failed in school'.

There seems to be limited support at home or school to help these individuals cope with their distress. One school principal's remark affirms the difficulty that readmitted learners experience: 'The learning fields of the NCS [National Curriculum Statements] are largely different from the interim core-syllabi. This makes it difficult for these youth [readmitted learners] to work tirelessly to cope'. He further noted, 'Most of these learners are from broken families and do not get much support from these families'. Such views reinforce the low self-esteem of these returnees.

The participants who had been away from school for a long-time (four years or more) expressed more self-doubt than their counterparts who had been out of school briefly (less than four years). It was not immediately apparent why, but one could speculate, especially, that the capacity to remember often fades over time.

- Criminal record label

Some participants spoke about their involvement in criminality and their subsequent incarceration. It was mainly male participants who shared this experience. The label of a criminal became a barrier to dropping back into the formal school system, which one participant was well aware of. He asserted:

> I got arrested in 2000, after I dropped out of secondary school. But when I was in prison I continued with my Grade 11 work in the prison... unfortunately I didn't finish it also because I was released before I could. Now I have a criminal record so I can't go back to school... plus am too old for these public schools and I have no money... [P5]

The participant was clearly aware of the consequence of having a criminal record, which may be why he did not bother to apply to drop into secondary school. In the interviews with school principals it was affirmed that youths with criminal records were unlikely to be readmitted into the secondary school system. A typical comment from the principals was that:

> As much as we all view education as a right, allowing a dropout back to school is quite circumstantial... We do visit our records to establish the factors that led to their leaving of the school prematurely. If our records reflect unbecoming behaviours, we deny them entry. In fact, we encourage them to pursue their education at technical schools. We do not allow learners with criminal records back into the system. [P5]

It seems from the remarks above that out-of-school youth with criminal conviction stand little chance of dropping into the secondary school system to continue their educational experiences. The stance of the principals on the matter appears definitive. To access school, these youth might have to go via alternative pathways, such as through the private, technical, or non-formal system.

- Accessing information about post-secondary schooling opportunities and requirements

Most of the participants dropped out of school in Grade 11. By virtue of this, they qualify for the FET (Further Education and Training) colleges. But many of the participants did not know about pathways other than post-secondary school opportunities to continue their education. They were unaware of the FET or the requirements to enter such training institutions. A typical comment was:

> I heard about FET on TV and in the papers. But I did not know you could enrol there with a Grade 10 pass. I never thought about it. As such, I never tried to enter into FET as I thought they wanted Matric and I have not passed Matric. [P6]

For some participants, their experience with regard to dropping back into the education and training system was largely vicarious. They had only read about the

opportunities or were aware of other people who had been attending these institutions and the sort of things that go on there. For other participants, however, there was no experience of the formal school system beyond the secondary level. Their experience rested within the non-formal system.

(ii) Rewarding experiences on school drop-in

- Reuniting with friends and completing matric

Participants who had dropped into secondary school spoke about their positive experiences. For some participants, reuniting with friends was a hallmark of their positive drop-in experience. A relevant comment was: 'I was very happy to see my friends... we laughed and chatted about what had happened in school while I was away... I told them about what it was like being out of school and about what happened to me [pregnancy]. They helped me to catch up on my schoolwork. It was fun'. For these participants, building social relationships was important and meaningful.

Of the six participants, one was able to drop back into secondary school and successfully completed Matric. It was this experience that was most rewarding for this participant. He explained:

> Because I knew the difficulties of the [Folweni] community, I had to work very hard when I got readmitted at school. It was a struggle for me. I had to read a lot; I dedicated myself to my books, and worked late nights because I had a lot of catching up work to do; that helped me. [P4]

> My friends helped a lot; they encouraged me and supported me... we formed a team and studied as a group. When I passed my Matric, I was overjoyed; maybe it was because I put so much of my energy into studying. [P4]

Hard work and diligence were features of this youth's experience. It seems that good supportive friends and friendship were keys to the rewarding experience of success in

the Matric examination. It demonstrates how education and maintaining friendship can coexist.

But escape from the difficulties of the community and perhaps a life of destitution was a motivation to succeed in Matric for this participant. The difficulty was marked by struggles, as the participant explained: 'I struggled to get back into secondary school. There was no money my mother wasn't working... but eventually she found work in town. That made the difference for me; she got me back into school'. Being able to go back to school gave this participant hope. He noted: 'It [dropping back into school] gave me hope because I would have been sucked into the crime and violence that was so prevalent here... At my place at Golokodo section, if you were a boy and you were not part of the [criminal] activities of the area at the time, you would be in trouble with the people [the gangs] in the neighbourhood'.

- Completing short courses

Some participants did not drop into secondary school, but went instead into the non-formal education system. These participants spoke about their positive experiences.

> While at home I heard about a 10-day course at Umbumbulu College. The community was called together and we were told that those of us who didn't work had to come and indicate what we would like to study. It was free so I went and learned how to compile a business plan. I succeeded in the course... we all passed. After finishing, we managed to form a Cleaning Company business... but we had difficulty finding work. [P1]

Similarly, another participant noted:

> I once did a bricklaying course for co-operatives at Umbumbulu... they wanted unemployed people from the community... it was a good experience because students were provided with money for transport. But the bricklaying courses are not very useful as people only get work for a few months when there is construction work going on. [P4]

For these participants, completing the course was an achievement but it was overshadowed by the challenge of finding work. This is one example of the fact that accessing the labour market needs more than mere certification. Being able to create your own job and manage it is as important.

(b) Experiences entering the job market

Participants had mixed experiences in trying to enter the job market. For several participants, their options in the job market were limited, not only because of the few job opportunities in their area but also because of the requirements to enter the job market. Post-secondary and tertiary qualification was a key requirement to access jobs, but many had no such academic credentials. This frustrated the pursuit of jobs for many, as they had little choice but to take on piece-meal, menial, unskilled jobs – if, as, or when offered. Common sentiments were:

> It's not easy [getting jobs]… the problem is that every time you go and market yourself, they [employers] want certificates. You see now, I don't have one. [P5]

> I have tried to find a job. I am not lucky to find anything. But there are too many people who have even stopped looking. There are no jobs for people who are not educated. [P6]

Beyond the qualification, nepotism played an important role in some participants' attempts to access the job market. Relatives and friends helped them to find jobs, not only in the taxi industry, but also in the manufacturing sector. One participant remarked: 'I'm working at Toyota… my mother helped me find the job there… she is a team member at Toyota, assembling car seats… she has a Matric qualification. I don't know what strings she pulled to get me in, but it has been great being there'. Another commented: '…at Folweni…most of the things [jobs] are managed by certain people and the people who benefit are the few people around them… by the time you hear about these opportunities it's too late… a good example is the building of RDP houses and the bricklaying training course'. Information related to the job market

flows to only a few people and seems to frustrate the search for jobs of some of these out-of-school youth.

Some participants gain access to the job market by becoming entrepreneurs. Two of the six participants had their own business. But for those who undertook this pursuit, their entrepreneurial experiences were of mixed fortune. Relevant comments reflecting this were:

> I opened my own salon in 2002, and it's been operating since then. It was a struggle to get it up and running... it needed money. There aren't a lot of people in the area who can come for hair treatment so the target group is small. This has made the business a bit of a struggle. In 2004 I tried to get some assistance from the Umsobomvu programme but I was turned down. The salon business was not a priority category for them; they promised to get back to me but they never did. [P4]

> I am blacklisted by the credit bureau as a result of unpaid Technikon fees so I can't get loans, so I have to work at Toyota in order to keep the salon going as I want. It's been difficult. [P5]

The challenges of managing one's own business are clearly evident in these experiences, but the participants did not crumble under the burden of these challenges. Their experience is in contrast with that of the participant who explained: 'It was a group of us [group of ten] that started the Cleaning Company... government gave us R30 000 as start-up capital. We bought the equipment and materials... we registered the company and placed it on the Internet. But we never received any jobs, despite trying. We were called to places to do work but the lack of a company certificate caused us to lose the jobs and not get tenders. Our company certificate got misplaced... this frustrated us and we had to close down'.

Inexperienced management is reflected in the above experience. The participants' will to be gainfully employed pushed them to focus more on accessing work than on the careful management of the enterprise itself.

5.3.2 ***Research question 2:*** Which factors influence out-of-school youth transition between high school and the labour market?

The data suggests there is no single factor that is responsible for the school-to-work transition of youth. The interview with the out-of-school youths and with the principals highlighted a number of key factors perceived to have an influence on the youths' transition from secondary school to the labour market. The data suggest that these factors include (a) academic qualifications, (b) networks of family/friends, (c) altruism: the desire to care for the family, (d) the desire for a better life, (e) job availability, (f) incomplete training in the ETD system, and (g) personal agency.

(a) Academic qualifications

The participants attempted to drop back into the ETD system so that they could attain some form of academic qualification for employability. This point was succinctly made throughout the interviews with the out-of-school youth (cf. section 5.3.1). Their view of schooling is instrumental (cf. section 5.3.1.1). For instance, when asked about her plans to drop back into school, one participant remarked: 'I am still going to try…I want to study for a certificate to become a teller… Shoprite store said they wanted such a certificate'. The significance of certification in the shift from school to the job market is recognised by the youth.

(b) Family/friend networks

Participants cited the importance of connections between family/friends and business people to their attempts to find jobs. This was clearly demonstrated in the interviews with the out-of-school youths (cf. section 5.3.1.1b). This last observation points to the value of networking in the transition process.

But social networking is not strong among many young people. Employment opportunities therefore often escape them. One participant remarked: 'I got some of the information from a friend… if you hear some of these things it's by luck, and sometimes by the time you hear it it's already late'. It appears that the weak social network among members of the community influenced some participants to

associate successful transition to the job market with luck, being at the right place at the right time, and hope.

(c) Altruism: the desire for a better life and to care for the family

The participants spoke about their desire to 'carve out' a better life for themselves and to assist their families as the motivation in their attempts to drop back into the school system or enter the job market. A common view among the participants was: 'I want to change my life… I can only do that with an education… I see a lot of people being independent… I can be of great help at home like eradicating some of the family problems'. Another participant stated specifically: '…studying gives you opportunities… assists you to live a better life'. The participants' altruistic motivation seems to drive them in the process of shifting from school to the labour market. The belief that education is a necessity for job market access and personal success is consistent with the education and social mobility hypothesis.

There seems, to be an almost religious belief among the participants in the education-social mobility link. Yet such a link remains questionable. Cases of individuals dropping out of school and being successful entrepreneurs in the first economy are rare. However, participation in the second economy as entrepreneurs is common. Some participants in the study believe they have a chance as entrepreneurs in the area. At the same time, several participants view themselves as useless and as failures when they do not make the transition from school to the labour market successfully, that is, completing school and finding a job that matches their competence. This view is well captured in the sentiment of one unemployed drop-out participant who stated: 'I'm nothing… I can't help my family; I can't care for my children… I still live with my parents… I'm nothing'. By implication, being something to him means acquiring a formal school qualification and being able to do the abovementioned. It is in this way that a better life is perceived: i.e. better than the one they currently experience.

(d) Job availability

Job availability is a major determinant in the transition from school to the labour market. The majority of the participants acknowledged this point. The Folweni

community, where the participants reside, was characterised as difficult, violent, rundown, and lacking infrastructure – a place where, in the view of one participant, '...there is no progress like there was in the olden days because many people do not have trust in the area, and do not want to invest their money in the area. When you want something proper [restaurants, shops, supermarkets, library], you have to get out of Folweni'.

This comment implies that there is a dearth of job opportunities in the community. The participants have to compete with others for whatever jobs are available there. When there are limited job opportunities, a person's chance of accessing the job market is minimal, regardless of his/her academic qualifications. Often, the alternative is migration out of the area for those who can leave. For the rest, there is a life of unemployment. The latter situation characterised the life of two of the six out-of-school youth in this study.

(e) Incomplete training in the ETD system

Participants acknowledged that when one does not complete one's schooling, access to the labour market is much harder. This view is stated consistently throughout the interviews. Some participants explained: 'When you leave school before completing Matric, it's only crime that you do... you end up in crime'. The fact that this view was expressed is unsurprising, given the recognised emphasis placed on qualifications in the labour market (cf. academic qualifications, above).

5.3.3 *Research question 3:* What are the characteristics of the pathways taken by youths who drop out or drop into the ETD system after dropping out?

The career pathways taken by youths who drop into the ETD system and those who remain as school drop-outs are outlined in the summary Table 4 below.

Table 4   Participants' Matric status and participation in post-secondary schooling pathways

Participants	Matric		University		Technikon		FET		Learnership		RPL		SETAS		uMsobomvu		Skills programme	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Drop-in the ETD system																		
P1		☑		☑		☑		☑		☑	☑			☑	☑		☑	
P2		☑		☑		☑		☑		☑	☑			☑		☑		☑
P3		☑		☑		☑		☑		☑	☑			☑		☑		☑
P4	☑			☑	☑			☑	☑		☑		☑		☑		☑	
Remain as school dropouts																		
P5		☑		☑		☑		☑		☑	☑			☑		☑		☑
P6		☑		☑		☑		☑		☑	☑			☑		☑		☑

The Matric status and post-secondary schooling pathways in which the youths participated are shown in Table 4. Two participants did not drop back into secondary school after dropping out the first time. Of the rest who dropped in, only one was able to complete Matric after dropping in. Findings on the career pathways of these two groups (youth who dropped back into the ETD system and those who remained as school drop-outs) are outlined below.

5.3.3.1 *Career pathways taken by drop-outs who did not drop into the ETD system*

For the individuals who did not drop into the ETD system, the common factors in their lives since dropping out of school have been periods of working as casual labourers and periods of unemployment. By virtue of not dropping back into the ETD system, these participants by-passed both the formal and non-formal schooling pathways and instead sought directly to access the labour market. When working,

these youth, as one explained, '...clean the streets, operate as taxi conductors, or do piece-jobs on the road: dig trenches for plumbing works... sometimes it's for a week or two weeks'.

All of the participants noted that they found the majority of school drop-outs who did not drop back into the ETD system in the semi-skilled and informal labour market sectors. One of the principals interviewed stated: '...most of them [the drop-outs] end up in the taxi industry... and they end up there not even as taxi drivers – who need a licence – but as sliding door operators... that's the new name for them [the conductors]'. Another was of the view that some girls who dropped out of school take up careers in prostitution, while the boys engage in criminal activities. One commented as follows:

> There have been some cases wherein some of our drop-outs were spotted in the act of confiscating cell phones from in-school learners... also some of the drop-outs are drowning themselves in alcohol. [PRINCIPAL A]

One can conclude from these observations that many school dropouts who did not drop back into the ETD system end up in menial jobs in the labour market, if any. The work they receive is occasional. The participants acknowledged the difficulties inherent in finding these jobs and the challenges in accessing employment when one does not have academic qualifications. They feel regret at not having completed Matric, or going further than Matric.

5.3.3.2 Career pathways taken by youth who dropped back into the ETD system

The participants who dropped back into the ETD system pursued their education to different levels before seeking to access the labour market. One participant completed Matric and went on to a Technikon. But while the others failed to complete Grade 12 – only managing to reach Grade 11 before dropping out a second time - some were able to take up a post-secondary schooling pathway along non-formal channels, such as participating in the uMsobomvu and the government skills programme (cf. Table 4).

But some of the youths who dropped back into the ETD system did not know about many of the non-formal pathways that were available to pursue their post-secondary schooling. The lack of awareness of these pathways was the common thread connecting the majority of the out-of-school youth who participated (cf. Table 4). There were instances where some participants took part in training programmes organised under these non-formal schemes without knowing that they were alternative schooling pathways. One participant stated: 'I think the skills programmes are the ones that took me to Umbumbulu College where we had been trained to be co-operatives'.

The career destinations of the youths who dropped back into the ETD system varied. Some became entrepreneurs in the salon business and the cleaning business, or found jobs in the manufacturing sector at Toyota in the area. Others worked in the taxi industry. Because of being in possession of some form of academic qualifications, these youth had a greater chance of accessing the labour market than the youths who did not drop back into the ETD system.

5.3.4 ***Research question 4:*** What are school managers' (principals') views regarding youths' dropout and possible drop into the education and training system, and into the labour market thereafter?

All three principals reported incidents of drop-outs at their respective schools. They also reported cases of youths dropping back into the school system after dropping out. The principals were flexible in their attitudes toward re-admitting drop-outs back into their schools. One stated: 'There is no policy that speaks specifically to how to deal with drop-outs who seek re-entry… we just take them back; the policy of the school allows it'. But it was often conditional. Drop-outs with criminal records were not given automatic drop-in. The decision seems to be at the discretion of the schools.

The principals spoke about the work attitudes of youth who dropped back into the school system. For them, the majority of the returnees were hard working. One

commented: 'some of them [the drop-outs] come with outside influences and are not co-operative... but others come with a revived vigour, willing to work hard because they have some experience of the outside world... but some come in and drop out again'.

It does not seem that there is any consistent strategy across the schools to discourage learners from dropping out. Some principals spoke about encouraging the learners to make use of their teachers and invited guest speakers to talk to learners, while others refer problem cases to the social workers. But there were few remarks on the effects of these measures regarding stemming drop-out incidents.

Comments on the labour market have already been made in other parts of the above analysis.