

**YOUTH MINISTRY IN MOZAMBIQUE:  
A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

**by**

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## DECLARATION

I Victoria Armando Chifeche hereby declare that this research submitted to the University of Pretoria, is my original work, and has not been previously submitted to any University. Sources used or quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature (Student) Victoria Armando Chifeche\_ Date: September, 2018

Signature (Supervisor) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_ 2018

## **DEDICATION**

This Thesis is dedicated to my husband Rev Salvador Bacar Catine, to our four children Elizabeth, Silvio, John-William and Ester Neidy. I also dedicate to my mother Almina Vilianculos, my late father (Armando Chifeche whose in life had a wish and prayed for me to achieve a high academic degree, today this dream became a reality). All these have made this degree possible through their immeasurable moral support and contribution to the success of this work.

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## Summary

Mozambique is one of the poorest countries in the world because of the political instability that has lasted several decades. The country has been devastated by two major political crises namely, the anti-colonial struggle (1964-1975) and the civil war (1976-1992). Large numbers of people were killed during the conflicts. The result is that many children and young people were left in a particularly vulnerable situation, the effects of which are still evident today. Women and children have suffered the physical and psychological trauma of war and they in particular were affected by various forms of abuse, including sexual by the marauding soldiers. Sexual abuse was common in areas where RENAMO forces were operating, and the abuse affected mostly youth. Rape was used as a weapon by military forces to instill fear among citizens. With this and other atrocities they demonstrated the government's inability to protect its citizens. On the other side, government forces also tortured people who were accusing of collaboration with RENAMO. The great tragedies of the civil war include not only the killings and destruction of property, but also the creation of child soldiers. The consequences for these children over time were dire.

In 1992, the General Peace Agreement (GPA) was signed in Rome by Joaquim Alberto Chissano the former president of the Republic of Mozambique, and Afonso Dlakama the (now deceased) president of the opposition party, and the war came to an end. However, many Mozambican youth were left parentless, homeless, stricken, illiterate, hopeless and living in poor health conditions. Mozambique is threatened by a devastating increase of HIV/AIDS and malaria that have affected a huge number of youth and these problems are proving difficult to overcome. Most of those affected are poor, with limited access to medical care and get caught up in forced premature marriages. There is a high rate of mother to child transmission of AIDS.

Today Mozambique still bears the scars of the conflict. The initial thrust of reconstruction activities was focused on economic reforms to ensure macro-economic stability and higher rates of economic growth in preparation for more tough processes of peace

negotiations, pacification, democratization, and other political and economic reforms. The sectors which would normally be used to create employment and function as channels for providing alternative incomes to vulnerable groups including young people, no longer exist or those that do still exist are considered weak and inefficient. Mozambique still faces a high prevalence of foreign aid dependency, which leaves it extremely vulnerable to changes in the priorities of international donors.

Christian churches, including the United Methodist Church whose restorative actions form part of the focus of this study, aim to be a place of hope for the youth today where people can find unconditional love and the care they desperately need to grow and thrive. Attention should be paid especially to the most vulnerable of the vulnerable: children, youth, and women. Churches may not be able to completely prevent abuse in every situation, but they can work toward greatly reducing the risk. A policy of prevention, rather than just responding to what has already taken place, can go a long way towards turning around the situation. The United Methodist Church (UMC) is a faith community that focuses specifically on creating a safe environment and being a sanctuary for women, children and youth. The Mozambican Episcopal Area has set minimum standards for abuse prevention to demonstrate its concern for and commitment to the safety of all women children and youth, including children with disabilities, see (Social Principle of the United Methodist Church 2009-2012).

The objectives of this study were to investigate the causes and effects of child and youth vulnerability in the country and to develop the strategies to empower the youth in Mozambican society. Vulnerable youth are deprived from participating in decision making, educational opportunities and are often the victims of severe gender imbalances. Data collected through group discussions, was obtained through direct observation, key informant interviews and narrative interviewing.

This thesis explores the cycle of poverty which negatively affects the youth in Mozambique. Part of this cycle is the practice of early marriage which affects the lives of female children. In general poverty has affected women, children and youth into most.

They have then been deprived of resources and opportunities for development. This qualitative study analyzed and interpreted data in order to come to a better understanding of the research problem.

A phenomenological method and semi-structured interviews were used to gather primary data. Based on the findings collected during the field work recommendations were made. These include advocacy against child marriage, the promotion of education, and improving skilled-based programs that are to be made available to young people. The study investigated the United Methodist Church's approaches to addressing the problems of youth. It concluded with recommendations as to how faith communities can work in partnership with the Government with regard to poverty eradication, promoting training in various skills, helping vulnerable men and women to identify small business opportunities for self sustainability, providing endowment funding for shelter, communication, employment, medical care, and to promote the physical and emotional well-being of the youth in Mozambique.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

Joaquina Filipe Nhnanala, the Bishop of the United Methodist Church in Mozambique. Nnanala is the first female clergy in the African Continent to be elected in highest position of the church.

AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

CCM: Christian Counsel of Mozambique (Conselho Cristao de Mozambique)

FRELIMO: Mozambique Liberation Front (Frente de Libertacao de Mocambique)

GPA: General Peace Agreement

Graça Machel is the widow of the late first President of Mozambique Samora Moisés Machel. Ahe was the Mozambican Minister of Education and served as chairperson of the National Organization of Children of Mozambique. Graça Machel received an award from the organization CARE for her long-standing work on behalf of children. She is the founder of FDC (Fundação para o Desenvolvimento da Comunidade), an organization that works toward uplifting vulnerable women and children in Mozambique.

Jorge Ferrão: the former Minister of Education and Human Development.

HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus

IMCI: Integrated Management of Childhood Illness

IOM: International Organization for Migration

MOH: Ministry of Health

NGOS: Non Governmental Organizations

RENAMO Mozambican National Resistance (Resistencia Nacional de Mocambique)

UN: United Nations

UMC: United Methodist Church

UNICE: United Nations Children's Funds

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Socio-political background

This study aims to investigate, describe and evaluate the strategies of the United Methodist Church (UMC) in Mozambique by means of which the church addresses the problems that affect vulnerable youth in post-civil war Mozambique (1992- 2015). The perspective of the study is a theological approach to ministry with this group of young people. Factors such as the civil war which lasted from 1976 to 1992, starvation and drought contributed to the displacement and vulnerability of many young people. Serra (2006:4) regards young people as the most jeopardized group in the whole of Mozambique. During the civil war the youth faced much violence, witnessing the killing of close family members, terror attacks, kidnapping, and experiencing life-threatening events. They often also had to participate in the violent attacks. They had to witness the fear of their parents and see their loved-ones being injured.

The war in Mozambique has caused a number of social, cultural and economic problems. There was much social change in general. Young people and children in particular were severely affected. Consequences for the youth included, but were not limited to, a lack of self- confidence and low self-esteem, a sense of hopelessness, confusion and ambiguity concerning moral issues. Another factor was and still is the negative impact of the media.

During the civil war in Mozambique more than 1 million people were killed, of whom 454000 were youth under the age of 15. Injured youth only 23% were admitted to health care centres. Between 1980 and 1993 approximately 7000 youth became physically disabled because of land mine explosions. Frelimo, the ruling political party, and Renamo, the opposition party both recruited child soldiers under the age of 18 years for their armies. Consequences for young people included dehumanization, famine, thirst, malnutrition, work exploitation, sexual abuse and involuntary involvement in military acts. Young people no longer trusted adults, lost their self-confidence, had no vision of

the future, faced isolation, depression, and were prone to a high level of aggression. They suffered a loss of sensibility, became more introverted and lacked adequate skills for resolving conflicts, their capacity to cope with frustration was limited (see Serra 2006:6).

In 1992, under the guidance of the United Nations, the General Peace Agreement (GPA) was signed in Rome by Joaquim Alberto Chissano, the then president of the Republic of Mozambique and Afonso Dlacama, president of the opposition party. The leaders undertook to put a stop to the civil war that had lasted for 16 years.

Mozambican youth had by then already been severely compromised and affected by a great variety of problems. Many had been orphaned, became homeless, were stricken by poverty, and were illiterate and living in poor health conditions.

The study specifically investigate a variety of risk behaviours that affect youth in Mozambique, including illegal drug abuse, early sexual involvement, the effects of child marriage, a high rate of unemployment and gender based violence which is a major cause of disease and premature death among youth in Mozambican communities. Children and youth in poverty stricken communities often experience persistent hunger, there are high rates of single motherhood, and they suffer excessive exposure to illegal and violent behaviour. The 'Bancada Feminina', the department of the Mozambican parliament which focuses on women's issues, was established in 2008 with the aim to provide girls and young women with a supportive environment in which they can discuss their issues, problems and experiences. The contribution of this study is to identify those issues that youth in Mozambique face which can be dealt with effectively in the context of faith communities.

In the community everyone should share the responsibility to create a friendly environment and provide people with a safe place to live. Faith communities in particular have the capacity to support the healthy development of children and youth. Such communities share values such as acceptance, tolerance, and mutual respect. Faith communities can also greatly influence how children and youth deal with violence

and other forms of aggression that they experience or witness. Leaders in the faith community can both bring the gospel message of tolerance as well as help to create a comforting and safe environment for children and their families.

The contribution of the faith community can and should be to model tolerance, respect, and the support of others. It can share religious narrative that encourages persons of faith to love others, seek the ways of peace, and defend those in need. The church can relate these stories directly to children and youth who are affected by violence. It can incorporate elements of best practice in religious education classes and activities. Faith communities can implement effective programmes that oppose violence, early sexual involvement, child marriage and gender inequalities the in organizations associated with faith communities, such as parochial schools, child care centers housed within communities of faith, and organized youth activities. The contribution of the church can further be to provide support for youth and families in distress, offering them counsel and facilitating contact with mental health resources and informal support. Religious leaders can cooperate in an inter-faith response to harmful and cruel practices in society. They can raise the awareness of young people in this regard and show them a better way.

The study focus on the following Mozambican provinces: Inhambane, Gaza, Sofala, Manica, Niassa and Maputo since these are the provinces in the country where youth are mostly vulnerable. Those provinces are vulnerable due to high incidence of HIV infection. They are highly populated and have economic, educational, and epidemiological needs. More than half of the children in Mozambique live in these regions in which disease is rife. The climate is harsh and drought, floods and cyclones regularly compromise people's income from farming. This leads to food scarcity, causes loss of life, people's livelihood is lost and there is often damage to the infrastructure. As a result many people in those provinces are forced to move to other areas. This affects the children who have to interrupt their schooling for sometimes lengthy periods of time (see UNAIDS Country Progress Report, 2014:8). These provinces have a high incidence of poverty related diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, cholera and also

high rates of malnutrition among children and youth. Access to health facilities is poor. The Ministry of Health Programme Endeavour was introduced to mitigate the impact of these conditions. Health care programmes were developed. These programmes focus not only narrowly on health prevention and treatment aspects, but more broadly aim to integrate all aspects related to health, such as access to clean water, hygiene education, malaria prevention and care (speech of Abdula, the Minister of Health on International Nurses Day on 4 May 2016 in Maputo).

The specific provinces have also been chosen for investigation in this study because they are representative of the three geographical regions of Mozambique, namely: south, central and north. Some of these provinces are close to borders with neighboring countries. Today's culture and lifestyle are increasingly affected by the exchange of goods, information, fashion and other cultural aspects. Such exchange can take place over greater distances than before, especially because of the media. The main economic activities of these provinces are agriculture and some semi-legal cross-border trade. During the last few decades, and even today some of the provinces still suffer armed conflict and natural disasters. The infrastructure of the provinces shows the typical decline from the south to the north of Mozambique. The north is the poorest, with least access to communication, transport, telephones and electricity. It is also the region with the most difficulties regarding education and employment.

## **1.2 Consequences for children and youth**

### **1.2.1 Youth and the military**

In Mozambique the killing of people and destruction of property were not the only atrocities perpetrated during the civil war, which had dire consequences for the country as a whole and for young people in particular. One of the most tragic results of the civil war was the recruitment of children as soldiers. A child soldier is a girl or boy under the age of eighteen years who is part of any regular or irregular armed forces. Children in refugee camps and orphanages were particularly vulnerable to abduction and were forced to join armed groups when conflict erupted. The result of this was that they often

had to participate in acts of war. Children from poor families were more likely to be recruited as soldiers than children from rich families. Many of the more privileged children were sent out of the country. Also, many wealthy parents were in the position to protect their children by buying their freedom through either legal means or political influence. Should a child from a privileged background attend a camp, such a child would in time most likely be promoted to a position of authority (see Machel 2001:8). The consequences of the civil war on children and youth include the following:

- the recruitment of child soldiers;
- the killing of children;
- sexual violence against children;
- disease;
- destruction of property.

Children involved in conflict are exposed to the worst dangers and the most atrocious suffering, both psychological and physical, they are easily manipulated and encouraged to commit criminal activities that they often do not understand. The ravages of war have done great damage to the lives of young people in Mozambique. One of the effects of criminal activities related to poverty in the country is that youth are manipulated to live a life of crime. They even revert to kidnapping disabled people for commercial interest, killing vulnerable people and assassinating public servants (see Harari 2015:15).

During the civil war many parents who were trapped in a situation of poverty, were tempted to send their children to the army, because the children could earn a wage and send the money home to the family. Some children themselves volunteered to join the armed forces. They did so because often being a soldier was the only way to obtain food, clothing and some medical benefits. Other children joined the armed forces because they erroneously thought that they would be protected there. In a context of violence and general disorder, they felt safer when carrying weapons. However, when children are recruited into the armed forces they are no longer treated as children. They are considered to be adults and are subjected to fairly brutal induction ceremonies that involve a great risk to their lives see (Machel 2001:11).

Adolescents are often the prime targets for recruitment into the armed forces in times of war. In post-war times these young people also constitute the greatest resource for rebuilding war-affected communities. When adolescents participate in community based relief, recovery and reconstruction programs, these activities contribute to building and strengthening their self-esteem and sense of identity see (Machel 200 12).

During the civil war the government also provided various forms of assistance to the people who were fleeing from rural areas to cities. The initial response by the government was to offer temporary shelter, after which the people were given land on which to build temporary accommodation. When they were settled, the government assisted further by providing blankets, clothes, food, and safe drinking water. The demand was too high, however, and the government could not cope with the large numbers of people who converged on the towns (see Brett and McCallin 1996:257).

When children were released from the various armies after the civil war had ended, they often came home to find their families uprooted and their villages either abandoned or destroyed. Quite a number of these children never found their families again.

Reintegration is one of the areas in which faith communities can make a contribution, especially since the community often reject former child soldiers because of their actions during the civil war (see Machel 2001:18). Many child soldiers came back from the war with physical disabilities. Such children do not have access to education on account of their lack of mobility and the lack of facilities for them. Even if facilities were available, they would be too expensive for most people with a disability or their poverty stricken families (see Filmer 2008:141–163). Poverty affects a large number of young people in Mozambique. Approximately 70% of the population lives below the poverty line. The lack of financial means is a major stumbling block to the basic human rights of young people (see Griffiths 2011:23).

### **1.2.2 Youth and poverty**

In Mozambique there are large numbers of people who live in extreme poverty. This makes it impossible for efforts of poverty alleviation and other social advances to benefit everyone equally. Poverty in Mozambique is a pervasive and deeply rooted problem. A

high percentage of children live in extreme poverty, which deprives them of basic rights. Eradicating poverty in all its forms remains one of the greatest challenges facing humanity in general, and specifically the post-civil war the society of Mozambique see (Bruck and Van den Broeck 2006:21).

A half of population in Mozambique lives on less than \$1.25 a day. In the present-day Mozambican context most workers are still employed in jobs where they earn low wages and productivity is low despite significant progress made by the government over the last decade, Mozambique remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Devastated by a 16-year civil war, the country was left with an all but destroyed infrastructure, decimated fauna, large-scale dislocation of people, groups and families, dangerous land mined areas and a feeble economy. People do not have sufficient access to health care since most clinic health posts were destroyed during the civil war. The rate of illiteracy is high and for girls largely lacking. The high unemployment rate affects young people most severely (see Thierry 2006:2).

Mozambique has a young population with half of the country's people younger than 14 years of age. Despite sustained improvements in terms of general economic development, many children are still facing a life full of hardship. Almost half of Mozambique's 10 million children are living in conditions of extreme poverty. For example in Maputo, the capital city of the country, where public services are generally more accessible, the number of poor children is noticeably lower than in the rural areas of the country (see Briggs and Joyce 1997:575-582).

### **1.2.3 Youth and healthcare**

#### **1.2.3.1 HIV/AIDS**

There is an alarming increase of both HIV/AIDS and malaria in Mozambique, which has affected a large number of the youth. These problems are proving difficult to overcome. According to the Ministry of Health Report of 2013, it is estimated that one out of every three pregnant women in the Beira Province in the Central part of Mozambique is HIV

positive. The mother to child transmission of HIV is therefore frequent and one child out of ten dies before the age of ten. An estimated 400 000 children in Mozambique are orphans because of HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS is one of the greatest challenges that face Mozambican youth today. Some 12% of all people between the ages of 15 and 49 years are estimated to be living with the disease, as are more than 90 000 children under the age of 15. Less than 3% of children who are eligible to receive anti-retroviral treatment are in fact being treated. Less than 40% of the people in general have access to basic health services, largely due to a shortage of trained medical personnel. This makes the position of children and young people especially dire. Although many orphaned children in the country are assisted by UNICEF, that support is not sufficient. The number of orphaned children is increasing dramatically due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic (see Machiana 2008:12). The HIV/AIDS pandemic compounds the crisis of increasing numbers of orphaned and vulnerable children.

According to UNICEF, more than 380 000 of the 1.6 million children in the country have lost their parents due to HIV/AIDS. If this trend is not turned around. Scholars estimated that by 2015 the number of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS in Mozambique could reach 630 000. A consequence of this is that many young people are obligated to become the head of the households. The many challenges and struggles they face already began before their parents' death and were compounded afterwards. They witness the hopelessness and fear of death of their parents (see UNICEF Report of: 2006:3). After their death the children carry the full responsibility for one another and for the household.

When disease racked the country in the 1950s and led to the death of many women, a great number of newborn babies were left without care. The United Methodist Church responded by establishing orphanages and church schools, among others at Cambine in Inhambane. These orphanages currently accommodate children whose parents have died as a result of the civil war or HIV/AIDS. The United Methodist Church employs specific strategies to protect and take care of children and youth (see Machado 2007:3). Insights gained from this investigation will point to the possibilities of faith communities

to make a substantial contribution to the welfare of children and youth in present-day Mozambique.

### **1.2.3.2 Early sexual activity and pregnancy**

The lack of employment and education opportunities as well as a strong social and cultural influence contributed to early sexual activity, often unprotected. This puts young people at risk of several sexual and reproductive health-related illnesses and early pregnancy. Many drop out of school and are socially stigmatized for dishonoring their families. Many contract HIV. Some choose to abort the pregnancy, but since abortion is illegal in the country, girls and young women risk their lives and health when reverting to illegal abortion. Youth in Mozambique have been affected negatively in many different ways.

Whether people in Mozambique receive effective health care or not, depends largely on geographical location. People in remote areas and those living in unfavorable socio-economic conditions suffer most on account of a lack of proper health care. The effects of great distances between the home and sanitary units and the status of women in the family and community are aspects that contribute to a negative impact on young women and girls. The culture of the country propagates the submission of women to certain customs. Women have only limited access to education and information regarding safe motherhood. This severely affects young women in Mozambique (see Nicholas and WuDunn 2009:14). One consequence of these conditions is the widespread occurrence of the medical condition of *obstetric fistula*. Obstetric fistula is the result of a combination of factors such as adolescent pregnancy and prolonged, obstructed labour without timely medical intervention. During such unassisted, prolonged labor, the sustained pressure of the baby's head on the mother's pelvic bone damages the soft tissue and causes a hole or fistula at the bladder and/or rectum. The pressure deprives the tissue of blood flow and causes necrosis. Eventually the dead tissue comes away, leaving a fistula which causes a constant leaking of urine and/or feces. This was explained by doctor Ernestina David from Johns Hopkins, a Non-Governmental Organization based in Maputo Mozambique that focuses on Reproductive Health in a

workshop with United Methodist women in Maputo in July 2015. This is a preventable medical condition which then plagues a young female person for the rest of her life.

#### **1.2.4 Youth and sexual abuse**

The sexual abuse of women and children has been prevalent to a greater or lesser extent in all cultures in history. It is mentioned in the Bible (see for example Lev 18) and it is still a fact of life across the globe today. It is also a problem in Mozambique. Some children are abused by persons they know. Sometimes sexual abuse is perpetrated after the separation or divorce of parents. Some children suffer sexual abuse at the hands of a step-parent. There is no socio-economic or class distinction regarding this particular kind of violation. Child sexual abuse also occurs in families of the so-called "upper" social classes. These families are often better able to hide the abuse (see Bentovin 1988:24-25).

Adults often find hard to believe that a person they respect could have sexually abused their child. If a child (mostly a girl) tells her parents about the abuse, they often dismiss it as a lie. A young person who finds courage to tell her story and is believed has the best chance of recovery. If a young girl has suffered sexual abuse and does not speak about it, healing will be extremely difficult and the effects of the trauma will remain for long time, if not life-long (see Conte and Shore 1982:104). This is another area where the faith community in Mozambique can play a decisive role. If the rising number of vulnerable children and youth is to be addressed, both society and the church should play a more active role and design strategies that will combat the factors that render children and young people vulnerable.

#### **1.2.5 Work exploitation of children and youth**

Youth constitutes a group of people who are in transition from the dependence of childhood to the independence and interdependence of adulthood. Young people in this stage of transition are in search of stability. They are also in a process of transition from education to employment. One third of the youth in Mozambique is forced to work from

an early age. Many of them work in family businesses or as domestic workers. Legislation specifies the minimum age for work to be 15 years and prescribes that the work environment should be safe. This law is, however, not really enforced. Orphaned children and young people placed in foster care are particularly affected. Many of them are exploited. They have no other choice but to work in order to survive. Girls are often forced into prostitution (see Griffiths 2011:9).

Youth in Mozambique who are employed in some way or another do mostly short-term and temporary work. They therefore do not have a contract with their employer. This leads to exploitation. They often work for hours on end without payment. If they do have a contract, the employer can terminate it without prior notice. Paulo Freire (1970:43) calls the practice of employers of giving young people some work, but for minimal payment, “false generosity” since this actually amounts to exploitation. False generosity is when rich people appear to help the poor but, in reality, poor people become dependent on them with little or no hope of advancement.

### **1.2.6 Food security and malnutrition**

Malnutrition has become a significant problem among the youth of Mozambique. According to the report of the Ministry of Health Workshop held in July 2015 in Maputo, the 2014-2015 droughts in Mozambique have once again shown that there is an urgent need for developing possibilities for a resilient livelihood for people. This is needed in order to address the underlying causes of the widespread malnutrition in the country. More than 150 children under the age of five have died as a result of malnutrition during the period of 2014 and 2015. See (the report of the Ministry of Health Workshop held in Maputo in July 2015).

Many people still do not have access to adequate food, clean drinking water and sanitation. Women are disproportionately more likely to live in poverty than men due to unequal access to paid work, education and property. A better nutrition and food security program is needed. For food security to become a reality, adequate production of food for consumption and the ability to generate a stable income, are needed. For

good nutrition and health, access to sufficient and safe food, illness prevention and access to adequate health care are needed.

### **1.3 Research Problem**

Current conditions in Mozambique have a devastating effect on children and youth. The situation constitutes an enormous social challenge. Individuals and communities are affected on a psychological, economical and social level. The government of Mozambique declared the situation a crisis already in 2009. The impact of the crisis could already be seen in some sectors of the economy. Externally, exports have declined and prices have fallen. The tourism, transport, communications and mining sectors recorded significant slowdowns in growth, and a further decline in growth was expected in real growth. The impact of the crisis at the level of the family and the individual became most visible in urban areas. Increased prices for fuel and food, combined with the devaluation of the local currency, the Metical, in the past two years have led to a decline in the standard of living of most citizens. Already since February 2008, protests have erupted in the country's main cities in Maputo. On 5 February 2008 and 1-2 September 2010, young people in several Maputo City neighborhoods staged violent protests against increases in the prices of transport and food, especially bread. Young people form a substantial proportion of the urban population in Mozambique. About 25% of the population in urban areas is aged 15-24. Forced to face various risks, including economic risks, the youth is the group that is most affected by the crisis. Not much has been documented on the social impact of the economic crisis on youth in Mozambique. This study aims to contribute to a better understanding of the vulnerability of the youth in Mozambique (see Report of Ministry of Finance 10 September 2010:8).

Vulnerability is the condition where individuals, families or communities have a limited capacity to face situations of risk or control the forces that affect the opportunities provided by the state, the free market or society. Such conditions could be temporary or they could last throughout their entire lives. Vulnerability takes into account the dynamic of the generation of opportunities, which vary with historical context and existing social

disparities such as age, sex, local contexts and the economic structural characteristics of the country (see Serra 2006:9).

The majority of Mozambicans are aged between 18 and 35 years. An estimated 70% are unemployed. Some have had little access to quality education, as the educational system is under-resourced in terms of teachers, materials, and school infrastructure. Where there is the opportunity of education, the quality is often poor. Teachers often have minimal formal training, the classes are large, school management is poor, and there is a lack of parent involvement. In addition to that, opportunities for ensuring an adequate livelihood are limited, particularly in the rural areas. There is very little on offer regarding skills training for youth, which has the consequence that they are often left out of both formal education and employment sector. Many survive by hawking on the street and so care out a meager living. These young people are susceptible to negative street influences see (Bruck et al 2006:21).

Mozambique remains one of the poorest countries in the world. More than half of its population lives below the poverty line and its Human Development Programme is heavily dependent on foreign aid. Mozambique still faces considerable economic and human development challenges although some natural resources such as gas, petrol, gold and diamonds are being discovered in different parts of the country such as, for example, the Inhambane, Manica, Nampula and Niassa provinces. However, due to the lack of education, Mozambique does not have qualified people to explore these resources. Should the people of the country have been able to do so, it could have contributed to the alleviation of the poverty which affects such a large number of people in the country (see Loureiro 2006:19).

Youth not only represent the country's future, but currently many of the challenges are magnified in this group. There is only a very limited opportunity for higher education. Jobs are also not open to all, since selection and hiring depend largely upon political connections. The primary school completion rate in Mozambique is very low, especially for girls. School fees and associated costs are the major obstacles to accessing

education. Corruption and gender-based violence including sex-for-grades in schools are common. The youth bulge in the country's population is increasing. If they are to contribute to the economic growth, to democracy and social stability, economic opportunities and jobs will be required. As a viable alternative to formal schooling, technical and vocational education could enable them to work and fend for themselves. However, resources are limited also for this option.

The Constitution of 1990 and the General Peace Agreement were implemented and the first general elections took place in 1994 with the active participation of Renamo. However, the parties have not always adhered to the General Peace Agreement. Renamo, the opposition party, regards the return to war as a possibility, whereas Frelimo, the ruling party, as well as the international community do not take this threat seriously enough. In recent Mozambican history there have been elements that could lead to a renewed war and this would have the greatest effect on young people. One serious factor is the fact that Renamo has never really accepted the results of the 1999 elections. They are of the opinion that Dhlakama beat his Frelimo adversary, Chissano. In 2000, during a demonstration in Cabo Delgado Province organized by Renamo, many activists were arrested: 119 of them died in the cells at Montepuez. Only two prison guards were held accountable. Renamo stopped with the demonstrations after these events. Currently a number of multinational corporations are investing in natural gas in Cabo Delgado and Pande in Inhambane and in coal in the Tete provinces (see Serra 2001:2).

Former child soldiers are still in the bush with Renamo, the opposition movement, and remain pessimistic of the future. They are isolated and are often prone to depression, high levels of aggression, apathy, introversion, and suffer from a variety of phobias. They lack adequate coping skills for solving conflict en dealing with frustration. Some former child soldiers suffer from psychosomatic disturbances, such as constant exhaustion, dizziness, sleep disorders, frequent headaches, and stomach pain. Child victims of sexual abuse in the military forces suffer additional emotional trauma. Victims of sexual abuse typically conceal what they had experienced, because they have been

socialized to feel guilt and disgrace. Rape is often seen not only as a personal shame, but also as a mark of shame on the entire family. Should the sexual abuse become public knowledge, it would be used against the victims and their families. They can expect no sympathy from the community who often refer to abused children as "prostitutes". Other war-affected children in Mozambique harbour feelings of fear and anger toward anyone holding a position of authority (see Serra 2001:7).

The situation today begs the question why Renamo is still concentrated in the Gorongosa area (Sofala Province) where the rebels used to live during the civil war of 16 years against Frelimo. Given that Renamo is still fully armed, it seems clear that the process of disarmament has not been concluded as the General Peace Agreement in Rome (1992) had envisioned. Is Renamo undermining the political and institutional framework that has been developed? In a modern democracy a better way of resisting the government would be to boycott elections rather than resort to violence. According to Wood and Giovanni (1996:10), "one of the features of capitalistic economy is that it helps people to avoid war, implementing trade and business". The international partners of Mozambique, who have strong economic interests in the country, will not take kindly to renewed civil war. The country should affirm the patterns of democracy it has established up till now.

This study aims to trace the role that the United Methodist Church plays in this context. The way in which the Church responds to the problems and whether its prophetic voice is heard sufficiently, will be investigated. This study focuses on the specific strategies of the United Methodist Church, since this church has devised a plan which includes programmes on nurturing, outreach and witness. The study will investigate the strategies employed for the implementation of the plan, the administrative infrastructure that has been established, and evaluate to what extent the plan aligns with the mission of the Church. The results of this investigation will be used to develop a holistic approach to youth ministry. The focus will be on building up a group, and on the role of worship and discipleship in youth ministry.

In South Africa, the neighbour of Mozambique, 2014 marked the year that the first generation born after the apartheid regime (post 1994) could vote. Though these young people had not yet been born when others were involved in the apartheid struggles, many still feel the after-effects thereof. South African youth ministry scholar, Anita Cloete (2001:1-6), puts it as follows: “The reality in South Africa is that the divisions, conflicting presuppositions and contradictory worldviews that divided the country in the past, continue to undermine the present”. The distress experienced by the youth in a countries such as South Africa and Mozambique at this point in their histories, is not only problematic but lodges an urgent request for new practice theories. Youth ministry will have to integrate ways of addressing the social challenges alongside their faith formation process.

#### **1.4 Existing literature and research gap**

Youth leaders should to be equipped with the personal values and skills needed to sustain long-term involvement, development, and training with the youth, especially in rural areas of Mozambique, where there is dire need. Long-term goals are needed in order for youth ministry to contribute to positive change in the hopes, values and behaviour of the youth. The broader vision of such a youth ministry also aims to help to change relationships and the environment in order that high risk behaviour among youth can be eliminated and young people can be equipped with a sufficient education. The study investigates the realities of vulnerable youth. With an in-depth understanding of these realities an effective curriculum and training activities can be developed in order to better meet the complex challenges of rural and urban youth in Mozambican communities. Leaders of faith-based institutions and community leaders can work together towards eliminating risk behaviour and promoting social connections, mutual trust and understanding, as well as shared values. This can contribute to the facilitation of what practical theologian, Don Browning (2007:14), calls human networks and communities of cooperative action. Building relationships and gaining the trust of young people is not always easy for faith communities. Often such attempts go through periods of apathy, negativity, or even antagonism on the side of the faith community. It

is necessary that faith communities make every effort to reach out to individual young people, to demonstrate the sincere care the faith community, and to invite them into the life of the community. This can be called a ministry of welcoming (see Callahan 1990:19-20).

Parents are the primary educators of faith. Ideally they are the people who create a sense of trust, love and concern which is so foundational to the future openness of young people to faith. Parents can facilitate their children to develop good communication skills and build healthy relationships. Often parents do not feel capable of educating their children in faith. They can, however, open their children to the wonder and power of the gospel by loving their children unconditionally and by living their own faith day with conviction and dedication. Youth ministry cannot be done by one person only or by a small group of people. The faith community is the family of God. In a family the older generation takes the responsibility to pass along their values, traditions, stories and faith to children (see Adams and Levermore 2003:9).

The faith community is where people grow in relationship with God. It offers young people the opportunity to participate in the activities as integral members and leaders. They should be included in the liturgy, service projects, and social activities of the congregation. Young people need the community of faith for their growth and the development of their own ministry. The community, in turn, needs young people. Since young people spend a significant portion of their weekdays in the schools relations between the faith community and the school community should be fostered, see (Benson and Wolfe 1981:136).

Children should be actively involved in community systems such as schools, sports and music activities, civic groups, social service agencies, and church based youth groups in order for them to experience a wide variety of perspectives and opportunities for the development of their personalities and faith. The ideal is that church leaders, social service providers, and the members of their various communities should collaborate regarding the growth and development of children and to keep them safe. In the

opening speech at the Annual Conference session on December 2015, Joaquina Nhanala (2015:4), the female Bishop of the United Methodist Church in Mozambique at the time, described it as follows:

When we step back and look at young people through a practical theological lens we can begin to recognize ways in which we have come to view and respond to young people with our deepest beliefs. Drawing from the field of marketing might lead us to view young people as merely consumers to whom we market our spiritual goods and services. However, theologically we know that children are created in the image of God, children of the Father, full members of the body of Christ whom we are called to equip for the works of God.

Youth ministry as practical theology determines how youth should be efficient, effective, successful and relevant in ways that are faithful at every turn to proclaiming the in-breaking kingdom of God. Theological reflection is what thoughtful people of faith including youth ministers have done for centuries to make decisions about ministry and mission. Youth ministry aims to understand practical situations concerning young people which call for a faithful response. It reflects on this situation with the tools of discernment, including those offered by the gospel itself, and constructs a faithful response to this particular situation. For youth workers, this includes becoming more thoughtful about youth practices and more aware of the way in which youth ministry reflects on the gospel of Jesus Christ. Practical theology aims to give direction to youth and provides the language to describe this process (see Clark and Powell 2006:29-33).

Youth ministry is a cyclical process in which people reflect on norms and strategies for Christian actions. This cycle of theological reflection lays the foundation for practices of faith that cooperate with God's transformation of the faith community and the world, a plan of salvation in which every young person, in his or her particular place and time, plays an irreplaceable part. Practical theology differs from other forms of theological reflection because it focuses on knowing God through concrete situations. Instead of

developing pastoral theories from biblical texts, historic confessions, or church doctrine, practical theology is informed by and goes beyond all of this. Ultimately a practical theology for youth ministry grows out of the accumulated wisdom of hundreds of pastoral situations that eventually add up to a theory (see Smith 2005:3-8).

According to Osmer (2008:98), “the practical theologian does the same, and also draws on theories of others, both biblical and scientific. The scriptures portray Jesus as Wisdom incarnate, who reveals God’s secret Wisdom; Jesus provides a radical, countercultural framework within which Christians interpret wisdom literature. The church should reshape youth ministry in order to provide an analysis of the context of youth ministry. This includes the immediate cultural context as well as the local congregational context. It should also include a description of the current ministry and the key problem or concern that is being addressed. There is a need to interact with the ministry and the key problem of concern biblically and theologically in order to questions like: How the Bible challenges the current ministry assumptions and practice? How does the church tradition challenge the current ministry assumptions and practice? What can be learnt from other sources of God’s truth that can impact others”?

Interaction with communities and contexts in which youth faith formation processes have worked, leads to new ideas that can enrich the faith formation processes of youth. Richard Osmer (2008) identifies four tasks of practical theology, namely: Descriptive, Strategic, Interpretive and Normative as models that interpret episodes, situations, and contexts theologically. Osmer grounds the descriptive task in terms of a spirituality of presence which is a matter of attending to what is going on in the lives of individuals, families, and congregations. Osmer describes it as “attending and priestly listening”. Priestly listening can be informal or formal (see Osmer 2008:153).

In the past Sunday schools placed strong emphasis on transferring manners and morals to young people who did not learn these from their families. This was also a time when the need for youth leaders to guide these youth became evident. At the time youth development work was not considered the work of the church, but pastoral care to these youth was regarded as church work. This has changed in a postmodern context with its

holistic approach to youth development and faith formation. Faith-based organizations are now also involved in youth development work. As the youth became an established and recognized group in society, their way of living and new ideas as part of the youth subculture, were seen both as a source of social change and as a potential threat to the existing social order, including the existing order in the church (see Nel 1998:16).

In today's postmodern world, youth ministry aims to guide young people to discover that they are called to and capable of doing ministry themselves, of caring for others, of claiming and assuming their place as full partners in the priesthood of all believers. This happens through teaching, mentoring, and listening. When young people work together towards a common goal in ministry they are in fact "practical theologians", said Bishop Dinis Singulane of the Anglican Church in Mozambique in a lecture at the Youth Conference of the United Methodist Church in Mozambique in 2015. Youth are living in and trying to make sense of the world during a time of great personal, social, physical, emotional, and spiritual transition. As youth develop their skills, they learn what makes sense to them in terms of the role God plays in the world, and in their lives. Adults should engage ministry with them, and experience the joys and difficulties of adolescence together. The role of adults in ministry with youth is to help them develop their gifts, to challenge them to leadership, and to encourage claiming the place to which God has called them. Some churches do not provide young people with a sufficient opportunity to speak. The voices of the youth are often not heard in the faith communities. The adults who minister alongside young people have the responsibility of advocacy on their behalf until such time as they are invited to speak for themselves (see Singulane 2015:5). This study aims to contribute to knowledge that can equip congregational leadership to interpret problems, situations, and contexts that confront leaders in ministry. The objective is to equip theological educators so that they can be effective practitioners in the field.

The Inclusive Congregational Approach to ministry (see Nel 1998) focuses, among others, on integrating adolescents into the current life, mission, and practices of the local church. Youth ministry and congregational development scholar, Malan Nel,

emphasizes that the biggest problem youth ministry faces today is the isolation from the larger church. According to him, adolescents should not function separately from the congregation. Youth ministry should be the responsibility of the entire community of believers. He puts it as follows (Nel 1998:15): “The Inclusive Congregational approach asserts that youth ministry is not a separate or additional mode of God’s coming to the youths.” Youth ministry, then, becomes a comprehensive ministry of the entire congregation. Kenda Dean (2012:50) pleads for a theological turn that will transform the way in which people engage youth ministry and also bring about widespread change in faith communities. According to her, youth ministry is seminal work that will stir up the prophetic imagination of youth workers.

This study will investigate the social and economic development of youth who have been affected by political instability and the aftermath of the civil war in Mozambique and reflect on it from a theological perspective. The needs and challenges facing young people will be identified and a visionary direction for youth ministry in this context will be proposed. The study will focus on the perspectives of young adults themselves. Aspects regarding young people that will be investigated are: their vulnerability, the risks, their development, their social and economic capabilities, as well as their well-being in general and possible opportunities. Other social and economic factors concerning young people that demand attention are: employment and economic activity, poverty, child trafficking, kidnapping, work exploitation of children, sexual abuse, gender-based violence, early marriage, early pregnancy and the effects of *obstetric fistula*, crime, corruption, the lack of trust, war, famine and strategies for making a living, education, health, social and emotional well-being, and gender issues. In order to investigate these problems more deeply the following questions are addressed:

- How can the United Methodist Church, with its existing strategies regarding youth, minister effectively to vulnerable children and youth in Mozambique?
- What factors in Mozambique contribute to child marriage and prostitution among girls and young women?
- How can youth participation influence policy and decision making with regard to reducing the vulnerability of the youth in Mozambique?

## **1.5 Methodology**

The socio-political situation in the Mozambican context will be investigated and evaluated by means of the existing literature, government documents and by perusing the strategy of the United Methodist Church for addressing the problems of youth in post-civil war Mozambique. This will be investigated by means of the Church's policy documents. Ethnographic methods will be used to come to a deeper understanding of the lives of youth who are involved in armed opposition groups. The study will focus on youth education and explore the hopes, concerns and needs of young people and children in the context of present-day Mozambique.

Interviews will be conducted with young people and their parents in the church, as well as at United Methodist schools and community schools with the aim to listen to their stories and hear their voice. The activities of social justice organizations in the community that advocate for and liaise with youth will be investigated. Insights gained from these investigations can empower churches and communities with knowledge for their own reflections on effective leadership, discernment, and planning.

Another method the study will employ is to organize a workshop with youth leaders to imagine together what ministry to young people in this context should entail.

Participants in the workshop will discuss ways to include youth in the life and activities of the congregation and to discover ways in which they can collaborate more fully to make young people feel welcome in all ministries of the church and the activities of the community. Youth leaders who come together in a workshop environment will be able to discover new ways in which they can have a positive effect on youth ministry. The workshop will help youth leaders to understand the developmental changes that young people are experiencing during early and older adolescence and how these changes affect the type of ministry that the church and community offer today. Participants will explore how faith changes during these adolescent years and will explore ways in which youth ministry can address and support these changes (see Nhanala 2016:1).

A strategy will be developed to recruit volunteers among young people in the community who will affirm and encourage other young people to participate in the planned activities. These volunteers are to build friendships with young people. It is necessary to inspire the volunteers to remain committed to the work of youth ministry for at least a few years in order for them to facilitate growth in the adolescents. The aim is to equip young people to take action through service, mission, social action and leadership in the church in the community and the world. Encouragement and challenge are essential elements in youth ministry.

An aim is further to increase the level of youth participation in economic, social, cultural and sports development. This can be done through the promotion of juvenile associations and vocational and technical training programmes. Environmental programmes, from cleaning campaigns to education about the environment, are particularly important in the Mozambican context. Socio-educational programmes and incentives to take part in sports can be conducive to the health of the young people of the country. It is imperative that equal access is given to girls and boys to participate in decision making on issues that contribute to their growth. Through such programmes and actions conditions can be created in which young people experience loving care which can translate as experiencing the love of God. They can feel included in the life of the congregation and have the opportunity to grow in their faith. Youth ministry should lead to a deeper relationship with Christ and to a deeper commitment to the work of the faith community in the world. Youth ministry should be directed at creating opportunities for transformation of the vulnerability that so affects this group of people (see Barker2005:8).

The study follows a qualitative approach to obtain effective cultural-specific information about the values of the youth. The study emphasis the need to re-think specific interventions by building on a broader understanding of the complexity of urban youth's perceptions and experience of vulnerability. The investigation will aim at identifying strategies to reduce the vulnerability of the youth. In order to develop such strategies it is necessary to understand the nature and causes of their vulnerability and their access

to income and assets, or the lack thereof. The objective of the investigation is to come to a deeper understanding of the meanings, experiences, ideas, beliefs and values of young people in this specific context, given the recent history of the country (see Bernard 1995:12).

By means of social construction theory the cultural and historical aspects of the investigation will be interpreted in order to highlight how the interaction of the social context and the individuals in that context contributes to producing the perceived social reality and knowledge. A social constructionist approach will be useful to explain why the problems of the youth in Mozambique are defined the way that they are, how society responds to these problems, and how the experiences of individuals influence the definition and response to the problems. This approach can serve to broaden and enrich policy deliberations and decision making. The overview of existing literature will be used to create a theoretical framework for the investigation. Data gathered from the specific context will be brought into dialogue, processed and interpreted from the different theoretical perspectives (see Nkwiet al. 2001:412).

The purpose of using youth ministry models in this study is to identify what could constitute a more vibrant and dynamic youth ministry than has previously been the case. Authentic Christian leadership can be shown by sharing knowledge with young people that advocates for their rights, teaches them skills, and guides them to follow a lifestyle that can empower adolescents to become responsible and authentic leaders in their schools, churches, neighborhoods, and communities. Through the interviews the perspectives of young people on issues that affect their social development will be heard. As they share their opinions with others they process the past and contribute to planning for the future.

The Campus Ministry Model will be utilized to identify needs of the youth in the community. Through this method young people will identify and hone their skills in order to become dedicated, able and passionate believers who, on their campuses, share their faith effectively with other young people and welcome them into the youth group (see Senter et al. 2001:159).

The Mentoring Model is about partnering adults with young people in one-on-one relationships. The goal is to integrate young people into the life of the faith community and facilitate their spiritual maturity. Youth should not be left alone to navigate the complexities of life. The mentoring model is especially helpful when adolescents do not have strong nuclear families (see Smith and Thomas 2010:9).

In the Preparatory Model, training and discipleship are primary goals. This is a specialized ministry to adolescents that prepares them to participate in the life of existing churches as leaders, disciples, and evangelists (see Abram 2002:200).

The Christian School Model aims to provide young people with the knowledge necessary for their becoming well-rounded Christian young people. Christian high schools are seen as a social, academic, and spiritual “laboratory”. It is shaped by Christian teachers and administrators who share and foster a Christian worldview in order to live as Christians in an often non-Christian world (see Callahan 1999:19-20).

The Youth Institutional Model focuses on the school environment, including educational institutions such as middle schools, boarding schools and other special schools. The aim is to collect and interpret knowledge in order to create a pool of young people and families who will “ evangelize ” others in the community (see Adams and Levermore 2003).

This study will make use of ethnographic research in order to come to an in-depth description of current systems, processes, and phenomena regarding youth in Mozambique. The aim is to come to a deeper understanding of the beliefs and practices of youth. By means of this research method narrative data will be collected in a natural setting within this specific context. In the process of gathering information about human behaviour, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships, this qualitative research process will be useful for identifying intangible factors such as social norms, socioeconomic status, gender roles, ethnicity, and religion. The qualitative approach is appropriate to the aim of understanding and interpreting the complex reality of a given situation. The situation of children and youth in post-civil war Mozambique is a complex

reality that should be understood by the faith community, should the faith community want to participate effectively in cooperating with the state and communities toward solutions and a better quality of life for young people and for all people in the country (see Denzin and Lincoln 2000:2).

## **1.6 Chapter outline**

Chapter 2 discusses the situation and problems of youth in Mozambique. It includes a historical overview of political and socio-economic events and realities that shaped the current situation in which the young people of Mozambique find themselves.

Chapter 3 addresses the influence of culture on youth. It investigates young people's attitudes toward and engagement with popular culture in order to describe their social and cultural identity and interpret their place and role in the community.

Chapter 4 focuses on youth education, as well as the hopes, concerns and needs of young people and children in the context of present-day Mozambique. The aim is to develop a model for a holistic youth ministry which is specific and appropriate to this particular complex context.

Chapter 5 comprises the empirical investigation. The study opts for a qualitative approach with interviews, rather than a quantitative approach with questionnaires. The aim is to gain an in-depth understanding of the socio-cultural milieu of children and young people in the context of post-civil war Mozambique. This is achieved by bringing the data gathered through interviews into dialogue with the theoretical framework of the study. The dynamics of youth work is interpreted with respect for contextual differences (see Dunn and WuDunn2009:10).

The Department of Practical Theology of the University of Pretoria, gave ethical clearance for conducting the interviews. Care was taken to ensure that the ethical aspects of the research project were adhered to. Criteria for the selection of respondents were designed with the aim to create interview groups with sufficient

knowledge of the focus areas explored by the study. The aim of the study is to acquire an in-depth reflection by knowledgeable persons on the cultural, ethnic, religious, political, and professional factors that affect the situation of youth and that are prevalent in the various communities (see Smith and Morrow 1991:1). Open-ended questions were posed to the participants in order to provide them with the freedom to focus on the issues and themes that are of particular concern to them. From their answers common themes were identified and processed by bringing the data into dialogue with the theoretical framework of the study (see Smith 2008:158).

Chapter 6 interprets the data gathered and integrated in previous chapters from a theological perspective. It describes the role of the church and indicates possibilities for effective youth ministry that can contribute to the healing and development of young people in this particular context. The findings of the study and some recommendations as to how faith communities and churches can cooperate with the state to improve the situation of children and young people in Mozambique are presented in this chapter. With such cooperation progress can be made with regard to the education and quality of life and faith of children and youth in the country.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **YOUTH IN PRESENT-DAY MOZAMBIQUE**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Mozambique is located in Southern Africa and the country has 28.5 million inhabitants. After five centuries of Portuguese colonization, Mozambique gained its independence in 1975. Its social and economic development was hindered by a brutal civil war from 1976 to 1992. In 1992 the ruling and opposition parties agreed to bring an end to the civil war. This chapter explores the current situation of highly vulnerable youth, which has become in crisis in the country. This will be done by assessing the impact of the recent economic crisis on their lives. The study will investigate the situation of former child soldiers and their reintegration into the post-conflict society. This is a complex and multifaceted process with economic, political and social consequences. The study examines resources that are available for facilitating their transition to a normalized life. It evaluates the strengths and limitations of the programmes that were put in place to support these children. It investigates what the youth find most troubling or frustrating as they struggle to construct a new life as young adults in peacetime.

The study aims to contribute to knowledge on how the economic recovery of the country has impacted on poverty affected young people and what initiatives they take in search of a better future and socio-economic stability. The study aims to provide insight into how the youth experience their situation and their vulnerability, and how they see their possibilities for development, their social economic capabilities, and well-being and future opportunities. The social and economic impact on youth of the recent global crisis that includes factors such as employment, economic activities, poverty, strategies for a livelihood, education, health, social and emotional well-being, and how gender difference affects vulnerability, will be investigated. The aim is that all stakeholders, church and state, who are involved in the effort to promote the development of all children in the country, should be equipped with the necessary information to develop effective programmes and policies and make a real difference to the situation of children

and youth in the country. The study aims to provide an overview of the socioeconomic situation of the millions of Mozambican children and also give an overview of current public policy and service delivery with regard to children specifically. The aim is to identify areas in which progress is needed and to make recommendations as to the way forward.

The life stages of adolescence and young adulthood are a crucial time of life when young people ideally move toward fulfilling their aspirations, achieving economic independence and finding their place in society. It is a time in their lives when young people can expect their parents and community to invite them to participate in decision making and support them in their personal development, empowerment and motivation. Making children and young people aware of their rights, increases their protection and self-capabilities to advocate for themselves. Entering into the world of employment is a serious concern for young people. If they do not succeed in doing so, there is a higher risk of poverty and society loses their potential to contribute valuable skills. Whereas a small number of young people do manage to obtain good employment, a significant number of young people in the country remain vulnerable. They are either trapped in temporary and low-paid jobs, mostly in the informal economy, or remain unemployed.

In Mozambique, in spite of strong economic growth and political progress marked by five consecutive multi-party elections, problems such as poverty, inequality, corruption and political violence persist. Political instability and violence that have reappeared in 2012 are undermining the country's socio-economic prosperity. During that year there were renewed tensions between Renamo and the ruling part of Mozambique Liberation Front, known as Frelimo. The political progress made since 1992 was not recognized as sufficient. The instability in the country did not serve to bolster the confidence of potential investors. The country's image as a postwar success story was severely damaged. In 2013, the president of Renamo, Afonso Dhlakama, and his armed soldiers began attacking road and rail traffic in the center of the country. Rail transport of coal between two major coal-producing provinces, Tete and Beira, dropped by half, and that

from Rio Tinto, one of the major coal-mining corporations operating in the region, was briefly suspended due to security concerns.

## **2.2 Education**

### **2.2.1 The current situation**

Education begins at birth, not only at school. Children start learning from their first day. Every day children have new experiences when they learn and discover new things from their neighborhood and make friends with people other than their close family. Education of all kinds, informal and formal, is vital in preparing children for adult life. Under Portuguese rule opportunities for formal education opportunities were limited for Mozambicans. Most of the population remained illiterate in the sense that they could not speak, read or write in Portuguese. Most of the political leaders were educated in missionary schools. After independence, the government placed a high priority on expanding education, which reduced the illiteracy rate with two thirds. Primary school enrollment increased drastically. However, in recent years the construction of new schools and the training of teachers could not keep up with the population increase. Though the post-war enrollment of children in schools has reached an all-time high, the quality of education in the country has suffered (see Abrahamson 1995:3).

Higher education institutions of a good quality are limited. Most students who complete high school do not proceed to university studies. Many choose to study at institutions that specialize in agricultural, technical, or teacher training. Illiteracy and the lack of educational opportunities present a huge challenge. For children from illiterate families it is difficult to gain access to schools. The majority of children between 15 and 18 years are still in primary school. They often drop out of school because of their age. Because of their age and lack of education they find it difficult to find employment. The most common reason why children do not complete their school education is the lack of resources. The daily struggle for survival is the plight of people who suffer extreme poverty. Families tend to keep the children at home to help with the house work or send them out to work in the fields or to seek employment as domestic workers. Many children are thus deprived of a basic education which would have enhanced their lives.

This is often because of the ignorance and poverty of their parents or guardians. Even if tuition were free, the cost of uniforms and stationery would still have made it impossible for many families to afford to send their children to school (see Dhawan 2005:83). Lamprecht (2008:1833-1838) explains it as follows:

In 2001 only 43% of Mozambican children attended school, the quality of education remains a challenge. Many classrooms are overcrowded with 70 to 80 learners per teacher, many of whom are unqualified. Learners who had to repeat a year reached 21% in 2004. The proportion of female learners who attend schools to males remains lower. In 2006 literacy was 67% among male children and 38% among females. The Mozambican Government provides free primary education, an enrollment fee is charged for each child by schools. This can become a significant financial burden for many families. Children who can show a certificate that states that the parents' income is below a certain level is exempt from paying these fees. However, educational facilities are scarce, schools are overcrowded and there is widespread corruption in the school system. Often parents have to bribe teachers or officials in order to be able to enroll their children in a school and also again in order for the children to receive a pass grade. Only a fraction of children continue with secondary education.

### **2.2.2 Transformative education**

Transformative education is the process which deals with the psychological or convictional revision of belief systems and behavioural changes in lifestyle.

Transformative education aims to develop the consciousness through the basic and specific capacities of the self. It is facilitated by directed processes such as accessing and receiving the symbolic contents of the unconscious and critically analyzing it. In contemporary societies, education should help people to learn how to make their own decisions rather than act on the purposes, beliefs, judgments, and feelings of others. Education contributes to developing the capacity for autonomous thinking in an

individual. It provides an appropriate educational framework for teaching and learning in the context that benefits indigenous and vulnerable people.

Education makes people aware of how the meanings of other people's experience are interpreted. This builds a vocabulary for interpretation in learners, which can guide their own meaning-making processes and future action. The impact of education is that it gives people the capacity to develop skills to change their frame of reference. This is done when they critically reflecting on their assumptions and beliefs. Then they can make and implement plans, which provides them with the new experience of defining things for themselves. Education enables people to have a comprehensive description of how to build, evaluate, and reformulate the meaning of their experience in order to change their attitudes and emotional reactions. They are then able to engage in critical reflection of their experiences which can bring about a transformation of their perspective. When education has transformed people they will be able to do self-examination, and will respect and accept others' opinions. This will build confidence in themselves and trust in new ways of doing things. They can then create action plans based on their knowledge. Such action plans will aim to benefit all (see Mezirow2000:125).

Transformative education provides people with alternative ways to express meaning. Messages and interpretations from others are important for the transformation of the whole group. In transformative education, if an individual goes through an emotional process, this can provide the opportunity for a discernment process in the entire group. The group can realize that old systems of understanding are no longer relevant to their lives and they can take the opportunity to establishment new ways of thinking. They can make a use of both old and new systems. Through education people get involved in experiencing a deep structural shift in thinking, feelings, and actions.

Changing attitudes help to facilitate the understanding of people's relationships with others. Education develops relationships of power in interlocking structures of class, race and gender. It creates a body awareness and visions of alternative approaches to improve people's standard of living. It awakens in people a sense of what the

possibilities are for social justice, peace and personal joy. Education builds the capacity of both young people and adults to define terms which aim to promote a democratic vision of society and self-actualization among other people (see Mezirow2000:125).

Learning is and experiment with life; it is not a preparation for life. Therefore, learning requires authenticity, availability, a commitment to focus on the here and now, understanding of feelings and emotions within the learning setting experience. The relationships between an individual and the team are addressed in the course of the education process. Emotions and feelings are a “language” that builds the capacity of people to enable them to learn about themselves. They gain knowledge of who they are and what they aim to achieve. They get to know what relationships with others entail and they learn how they make sense of all aspects of their life experiences.

Education provides opportunities for people in the community to effectively participate in decision making. In the process of decision making people are enabled to figure out values, assess the reasons behind competing interpretations through critical examination of evidence, arguments, and exchange points of view. The goal is to create a community of young learners who are united in a shared experience of making meaning of their life experience. The educated teacher will create an environment that builds trust and care development of sensitive relationships among people (see Dirx, 2006:123-139).

## **2.3 Challenges for youth today**

### **2.3.1 After the war**

In recent decades, youth have featured centrally as both the targets and the perpetrators of violence in various armed conflicts across the Mozambique. Young people’s participation in warfare and political conflict is not a new phenomenon. However, the scale and magnitude of the problem today is unprecedented, both in the numbers of young people involved and in the level of their participation. Youth can be easily manipulated to become involved in armed conflict, from participation in direct

combat to functioning as spies, carriers of ammunition, guards, as well as cooks, cleaners and servants in military camps. Girls are often sexual abused, raped, enslaved and experience a multitude of tribulations during the time of war (see Honwana 2005:3).

The reintegration of youth in post-conflict societies is a complex and multifaceted process that includes economic, political and social insertion into their communities. In order to address the reintegration process in the community the following questions are relevant:

- What resources are available in Mozambique to facilitate the transition of youth back into a normal life?
- What are the strengths and limitations of the programmes that are put in place by the government to support former child soldiers?
- What are the young people's thoughts with regard to the experiences they went through?
- How do the young people assess their present situation?
- What do the young people find most troubling or frustrating as they struggle to construct their new life as young adults in peacetime?
- Is the role played by faith community in the process of forgiveness and reconciliation effective and are they able to convince both parties to return peace to the country?

After the reintegration of young people with their families, they need to return to school, obtain vocational training, and attain access to healthcare, regular food, clothing and shelter. The standard reintegration kits provided by NGOs did not last for more than a week. These gifts were not sufficient to fulfill the needs of the youth. Most likely the young people who returned to their families had to share what little they received, with those relatives and friends who welcomed them back. NGOs that facilitate the reunification of young people with their families often faced the dilemma of having to extend their services to the entire community in need. This stretched their limited

resources. As a result certain programmes were then shown to not be sustainable in the long run.

After the young people had been reintegrated with their communities they were challenged to rebuild their lives and regain their dignity. Many discovered that their parents or close relatives had been killed during the war. Homes were burnt down, schools and hospitals destroyed and friends and neighbors had been disappeared. In these circumstances, reunification with family, relatives and fellow villagers did not represent the end of these children's predicament. The real issues regarding reintegration arose after young people were returned to the communities (see Banks 2016:437-454).

The Children and War Program created very basic community schools under trees and employed untrained teachers to keep children busy. At the end of the program the Ministry of Education of Mozambique was called to absorb these community schools into the national educational system. The Ministry of Education did not adhere to these requests on the grounds that these informal schools did not fulfill the minimum requirement for being fully incorporated into the official educational system. The teachers had no formal qualifications and could not be placed and paid within the national qualification and salary scale. This created some tension between the communities and the Ministry. Ministry officials reiterated that the development of such schools should have been discussed and planned with the Ministry from the beginning in order to guarantee their sustainability within the national system at the end of the programme (see Banks 2016:437-454).

### **2.3.2 Poverty**

In 2000, 2015 and 2017 devastating floods affected Mozambique. As a result, more than three-quarters of the Mozambican population lived on or less than US\$2 a day. This study aims to contribute to the existing body of academic knowledge by evaluating church and community efforts to reduce childhood poverty and improve child development in Mozambique from human rights based perspective. To this end, a

deprivation-based measure of childhood poverty is presented to complement the official consumption-based measure of childhood poverty which examines factors such as children's access to clean water, sanitation, shelter, education, health care nutrition and information (see Chavana 2009:8).

The lack of large-scale revenue and the persistence of a constrained tax base means that the government does not have the funding that is required developing infrastructure such as roads, railways and electrification that would hugely benefit the internal and external movement of people and goods. The country's economic growth is partly offset by the scale of people entering into the labour market. Should young people be able to find employment, this would go a long way to alleviating the persistent poverty in Mozambique. The government, working with international donors and investors, should balance the short-term needs of commercially competitive industries which will provide a strong return for the government, with the social needs, as well as the constitutional rights and expectations of the country's citizens. Children who live in poverty face many deprivations and a violation of their rights, which include the right to survive and to develop. Young people have the right to be included and participate in decision making, and children and youth have the right to be protected. Mozambique needs to be connected to the key international legal instrument on children's rights of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), to which Mozambique is a signatory. In order to facilitate this rights-based approach to childhood poverty, the study uses faith community and schools as indicators to measure children's access to rights such as nutrition, water, sanitation, healthcare, shelter, education and information (see Garcia et al 2008:15).

When a child does not have access even one of the basic amenities such as education, for example, it is described as a "severe deprivation". Mozambican children live in absolute poverty because they face two or more forms of severe deprivation. The definition of childhood poverty is referred to a deprivation-based approach and is presented in conjunction with the standard consumption based measure of poverty.

Mozambique was ranked as the poorest country in the world in 1992, which means that there is still a long way to go. A cost-effective delivery of basic services and social support programmes in rural areas is needed. The urban-rural disparities that exist and that are not attended to are identified in this study. Poverty and inequality are widespread problems: the poor often live alongside the non-poor and most inequality is accounted for by differences within districts. Female-headed households represent a third of all households in Mozambique and carry a disproportionate burden of taking care of orphaned children. These households are likely poorer than families headed by male persons. The sheer depth of poverty from which Mozambique is emerging means that a high number of children are still living way under the poverty line. The levels of consumption and deprivation-based childhood poverty remain high and progress in relation to the reduction of childhood poverty is being seriously undermined across all sectors because of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the resulting weakened capacity of key actors to care for and protect children (see Chavana 2009:12).

### **2.3.3 Vulnerability**

Since the time of the global crisis in 2008 it has been difficult to fathom the social impact it had on Mozambique. The monitoring systems in the country are not well-equipped to register changes that occur in such a narrow frame of time. The media have been slow to record how the phenomenon was experienced by the Mozambican population. For these and other reasons, there is a lack of concrete evidence of the actual effects of the economic crisis on youth at a local and national level. However, there is substantive evidence of crises related to the effects of recession on the education, health and employment of young people. Crime has escalated and has affected the social well-being of mostly young people (see Marcus and Gavrilovic 2009:113).

In Mozambique about 25% of the population in urban areas is between 15 and 24 years old. Given their vulnerability to various risks, including economic deprivation, young people are most affected by the aftermath of the global crisis. However, little has been documented on the social impact of the economic crisis on youth. This study aims to contribute to a better understanding of the particular vulnerability of young people to

economic deprivation and how it is experienced by them. From the year 2008, the price of transport and food has been increased. The government has not been able to create sufficient employment possibilities for the large numbers of young people who leave school each year. Some institutions have halted recruitment, because of economic pressures. This has contributed to the high unemployment rate among young people especially (see Aksoy and Dikmelik2008:22). Monjane (2011:22) explains it as follows:

Vulnerability is understood to be the condition in which individuals, families or communities have a limited capacity to face situations of risk or control the forces that affect the opportunities provided by the state, the free market or society. The condition of vulnerability may be temporary or it may affect lasting throughout their entire lives. There are essential elements for confirmation of a condition of vulnerability such as, material or symbolic resources, opportunity structure offered by the market, state, society and strategies for the use of assets. The concept of vulnerability takes into account the dynamic of the generation of opportunities, which vary with historical context and existing social disparities for example, age, sex and local contexts.

The vulnerability of young people and children in Mozambique is largely the consequence of poverty and social exclusion in general. Other characteristics linked to this condition are age, gender, socio-cultural and economic circumstances and the strategies that the youth adopt to manage the crisis and accomplish personal and family goals. Each generation has distinct characteristics, influenced by the political, economic, technological and cultural circumstances of their time and place. The old values and rules with regard to the life cycle are disappearing. New values and rules with regard to sexuality and choosing a partner are being adopted. Old traditions are going through a transformation. Although young people today enjoy a personal freedom that previous generations did not have, they also suffer from a lack of traditional guidance and support. The ethical and cultural values that young people adopt today could result in their failing to find their place in society (see Banks 2016:437-454)

## **2.4 Land and industry**

Mozambique had already seen conflict when land has been taken for new industrial or agro-industrial initiatives. The current laws governing changes of use require that investors and affected communities together achieve full, free and informed consent before land is handed over. In practice, processes concerned with community engagement and negotiation have not been efficient. More work has to be done with investing companies. They have to be clear about their social responsibility. At the policy level the government should develop the capacity of provincial authorities to act on behalf of communities. They should ensure that change contributes to the growth of the people. Forming an independent producers' association for the sector could bring a range of benefits to the government, the private sector and civil society particularly if this was funded not by the private sector but by a donor or investor. The mandate of the producers' association should lobby the government on issues that could otherwise detract from individual company interests (see Gavrilovic 2009:113). The government should use the association to ensure that all operators including contractors work on a level playing field to be able to use such an association as a forum for raising concerns.

Land and landownership is an issue that is growing in scale as Mozambique signs contracts with foreigners to develop business. The government should work to eliminate discrepancies between budgeted and transferred revenues to Mozambique. The country should not only look to foreign investors and businesses, but should also deliberately build national skills so that international labour can be replaced in the medium and long term. In Tete province in the north, coal can overtake aluminum as Mozambique's main export product. The civil responsibility of those who operate the country's mines should be made clear. Therefore, Mozambique's interest in the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights should be encouraged (see Gavrilovic 2009:137).

## **2.5 Substance abuse**

Children whose parents, siblings or other family members abuse alcohol and other substances normally they often be the forgotten victims. These children may be forced

to live in an environment where the behaviour of their caregivers is unpredictable; there is a lack of appropriate care and lack of structure to their home life. This often results in substance abuse. Such an environment can be painful for children and lead to problems in their future. Many children are exposed to violence, abuse, neglect, financial problems and even malnourishment at a young age. This especially is the case if family members are addicted to drugs or alcohol. The abuse of alcohol or other substances can lead to the separation of families. Children who are affected by this can be abandoned and can become homeless. Parent can be incarcerated or die as a result of substance abuse. These issues can all have a long-term negative effect on a child's development and future life choices. Children and young people themselves can turn to alcohol or drugs as a way to cope with their miserable lives or simply because that is what they know and it seems like "normal life" to them (see Ammerman 1999:1238).

Adults who abuse alcohol or other substances have difficulty controlling their behaviour, mood and actions. This can be very confusing to children who are often on the receiving end of violence, depression and abandonment. Children often do not understand why adults or their parents behave in such a manner and can blame themselves for what the parent's actions. This can be detrimental to the development of children and has a devastating effect on them, also later on in life. Children can become fearful, frightened, violent, depressed or anxious from a young age in response to the unpredictable behaviour of their family members. Children from such a background can face social challenges because of their family's behaviour. They can become socially isolated in fear of being judged because of their family's lifestyle. Signs of such social isolation includes their not inviting school friends over, avoiding attending events where a parent would have to be present, or even lie to friends about a family member being sick or absent. The family can become a "guilty secret" for a child, which means that the child will have no one to talk and will not seek or receive help. They withdraw for fear of people's reactions and stigma (see Winters 1999:291).

When children abuse alcohol and drugs, it can cause psychological damage. They can become aggressive and violent. Some parents do not realize that if they abuse drugs or alcohol, it can affect their children negatively. The young people who live with drugs and

alcohol abuse as an example in the home can become abusers themselves. A parent or family member may become angry and violent when they are under the influence of drugs such as methamphetamine and this violence could be directed towards to the children. The result of that anger could be confusion, sadness or fear in the children who can feel guilt and blame their actions for the behaviour of others in the family. Children can blame themselves, their grades, their untidy room or their behaviour for the emotional problems at home. This can lead to internalized shame which causes them to withdraw socially. Children who feeling ashamed of their home life is a common result in families with substance abuse problems. Shame and blame are not healthy ways to cope. Such children can encounter even greater problems in future. This can include emotional problems at school, problems with friends, or health problems. Such children can experience inordinate stress which can lead to a variety of health problems, including eating disorders, a higher risk of illness and infection. It can also contribute to mental health problems (see Wilsnack et al 1997:264).

Substance abuse in schools can lead to behaviour such as bullying others, fighting, of jealousy if friends achieve better academic results. They can have difficulty paying attention in class, can fear authority and can develop emotional problems. When children grow up in the care of parents who abuse substances, they can have severe problems at school. Others are resilient and show immense strength to cope with their problems and still manage to maintain good school grades and good relationships with others. Generally, children with problems at home or with substance abuse at school will not want to speak about what is troubling them. Sometimes they keep quiet because of shame and the fear of being stigmatized. Sometimes they remain silent because they have been manipulated by family members or their parent to keep the substance abuse a secret. In Mozambique, parents with substance abuse behaviour often pass their children on to relatives or foster families (see Down and Miller1998:63-77).

## **2.6 Employment and the economy**

The lack of formal, long-term and secure employment is the main concern of young people today. The unemployment problem is not specific to the past five years. In general, there has been a shortage of job opportunities for all. However, for youth in

particular is a huge concern. Employment is needed if they are to become fully contributing members of society. The main factors that cause the lack of employment for the youth are:

- a lack of the necessary qualifications;
- a lack of work experience;
- a lack of schooling;
- high levels of nepotism in formal institutions;
- the requirement for bribes to be paid in order to procure a job.

Youth unemployment and under-employment result in missed opportunities in terms of economic growth and development. The increasing pressure on the labour market also contributes to social discontent because jobs are not available for the majority of young women and men. However, young people's professional and personal development can be enhanced through measures that ease an effective school-to-work transition. This support is especially needed to mitigate the negative impact of the job crisis on youth employment. Youth in rural areas have no access to money, adequate education or political power. The empowerment of rural youth should be imperative for the combating of poverty and the development of rural communities. Therefore young people should be given the opportunity to develop their talents and capacities in order to be able to live a life of dignity (see Castelo-Branco 2008:11).

After devastating flooding which affected some regions in the country, youth unemployment remained high and job opportunities became especially scarce. A high number of young people are neither in school nor employed. For young women the situation of poverty is a contributing factor that affects their physical and intellectual development. International investments have not yet reached a stage where they provide the government of Mozambique with taxes and the people with jobs. Many key poverty indicators for Mozambique have largely stagnated over the past decade, and the country's infrastructure of roads, telecommunications, railways and electricity is

inadequate to keep up with the demands of investors, leaving alone population growth. The infrastructure is vulnerable to damage by floods that affected much of central and northern of Mozambique see (Baker 2001:3).

Young people have the developmental task of defining their social and cultural identity and should ideally become economically independent. Youth are searching for what their place in society might entail and need acceptance from their community. They struggle with the dilemma of being dependent and at the same time having to take on new responsibilities (see Chavana 2009:10). In Mozambique, about 25% of the population in urban areas is aged between 15 and 24. Given their vulnerability to various risks, including economic deprivation, these young people are probably the group that is most affected by the global crisis since 2008. However, little has been documented on the social impact of the economic crisis on youth. This study explores the extent of the vulnerability of young people in order to come to a better understanding of the situation in order to devise strategies of cooperation among various parties, including the churches, overcome the dilemma in which the youth of the country find themselves.

Urban poverty is one of the greatest challenges facing the government, since it is directly connected to social unrest and political dynamics such as elections and political support. In response to this, the Frelimo government, which is the ruling party, has approved the extension of the Local Initiative Fund (*Fundo das Iniciativas Locais*) also to urban districts. A loan can be made from this fund in order for young people to establish their own small businesses. The aim is that this would make self-sustainability possible for them. The government expects that in future megaprojects in the country can contribute more to the state who, in turn, can help to reduce poverty levels. A concern is the country's heavy dependence on external aid (see Castelo-Branco 2008:14). Active discussions involving academics, politicians, NGOs, and international organizations over the role and weight of megaprojects in Mozambican society are on-going. Many questions need to be addressed, including to what extent these projects are effective for creating wealth and how they benefit the population at large.

Another important question is whether these projects are not taking advantage of the country's weak regulatory framework, particularly in terms of the environment and other related areas. Economically, the system faces many challenges, including continuous price increases for basic commodities and services such as public and private transport. Unpredictable events such as flooding which leads to among others increased food prices, pressure on the public transport system(see Tvedten et al. 2007:16) and a host of social problems, disrupt the national plan.

## **2.7 Politics**

Political tension causes persistent unrest in Mozambique. Social issues, food prices, and land claims are at the centre of most of the protests and outbreaks of violence. The challenges for the Mozambican government are interlinked. The lack of sufficient revenue and a persistently constrained tax base mean that the government does not have the funding required to develop the roads, railways and electrification, all of which would hugely benefit internal and external trade and bring investments to the business sector.

The country's economic growth is affected by the large number of youth people who are entering the labour mark. Among the many economic and socio-political challenges affecting in Mozambique, key issues include:

- the state of the country's democracy;
- insufficient mega-projects;
- corruption;
- security;
- justice;
- human rights.

In order to address these and other issues the contribution of all the country's citizens is essential. There is a direct relationship between the economic, political and social

issues facing the country. Something as simple as a price hike can generate tensions that, if they develop rapidly, can lead to full-scale social unrest that can turn into a political crisis. The economic profile of Mozambique shows that the country's over-dependence on donor aid (see Castelo-Branco 2008:8) creates current problems and does not bode well for the future.

Some years ago, the Mozambican government provided a fund named 7 Milhões (7 Million). Funding was made available to districts to be used as micro-finance to help local entrepreneurs establish or further develop small businesses. The fund's core business is to fund initiatives and entrepreneurship at the district level, creating an opportunity for local development and boosting the local economy in rural areas. The initiative with its dissemination of funds to the districts succeeded in breaking the country's long-established dependence on the central government. However, on the negative side corruption and nepotism now also became common at the district level. Geographically and administratively, Mozambique's provinces are divided into districts or municipalities. The municipality system in Mozambique is still fairly new. It was only implemented in 2008 and people are not yet used it (see Beck et al 2011:27).

## **2.8 Child headed families and food security**

A child headed family is a family where there is no responsible adult who is able to take care of the household and children. The burden then falls onto a child to take care of the household and siblings. It is mostly the oldest child in the family who then looks after the younger ones if parents are no longer there or are unable to care for the children due to illness, separation or old age. In Mozambique, there is a high incidence of parent deaths or separations. Children are directly affected when their primary caregivers become ill and die, or cannot continue working due to illness or disability. The children then have to take care of sick and dying relatives, as well as their siblings.

Orphans who have to be integrated into other households after the death of their parents often have to contend with discrimination in society. Due to bias against them, resources are not adequately allocated to child headed households. Despite a strong

overall positive attempt toward the reduction of poverty in the country, the poor and many of those assessed to be just above the poverty line, remain highly vulnerable to adverse circumstances and events. Therefore there are large regional fluctuations in the quantitative indicators of poverty from year to year. The precarious status of the members of child headed households necessitate government objectives for poverty reduction that will include a concerted effort to protect poor households and particularly female-headed households, from the consequences of devastating event such as natural disasters. These households would be enabled to maintain an adequate and relatively stable standard of living. Social protection schemes and a balanced distribution of resources play important role in ensuring the protection of the most vulnerable households from destitution. Careful planning is required in this regard (see Chigunta 2002:8).

Malnutrition hinders the ability of youth to achieve their full potential. A large number of young people suffer from physical and psychological deficiencies due to a lack of food. Almost a half of Mozambican young people are still deprived of adequate health care, education, nutrition, shelter and other critical necessities for survival. The study aims to provide a fairly comprehensive picture of the situation of young people in Mozambique, with a specific focus on the most vulnerable and isolated. Malnutrition is one of the greatest contributing factors to the suffering of the country's young people. Poverty is the major cause of malnutrition, which occurs mostly in rural areas.

More than 70% of poor households live in rural areas. Farming is their main source of food and income, but agricultural productivity is low. Farmers and fishers generally are not able to produce enough to meet their household's basic food requirements and still have some of their products available for trade. Incomes from both farming and fishing are meager and most of the rural populations survive only at subsistence level. Malnutrition results in hunger and poor health for which there is also no adequate health care available. This has a severe detrimental effect on the development of the Mozambican population and especially the younger generation. The causes of malnutrition include the following (see UNICEF report of December 2006:3):

- low income;
- a lack of assets, whether physical or human capital;
- a lack of opportunities;
- social exclusion often but not always associated with ethnic minorities.

## **2.9 Sexual abuse and exploitation**

The problem of sexual exploitation and the abuse of children raise concern regarding the incidence of domestic violence that affects children in homes and in schools. If children or adolescents had witnessed violence between their parents or had suffered physical abuse by relatives in their youth, that can influence their future life negatively. The psychological effects of violence, abuse and exploitation on children's wellbeing and development and are likely to influence the child's behaviour and attitudes throughout their childhood and into adulthood. Significant steps should be taken by faith communities and the Government to work together to improve policy and legal instruments for protection of children from violence, abuse and exploitation in order to ensure access by the most vulnerable children to basic social services (see the Report of Ministry of Health on Reproductive Health and Sexual Behavior of Youth 2015:3).

Child abuse is common in the country and it manifests in various forms, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and emotional or psychological abuse. These can be described as follows (see Widom 1989:251-271).

- **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse refers to all types of maltreatment of children that result in physical injuries, such as bruises, welts, burns, abrasions, lacerations, cuts, or fractures.

- **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse can also encompass a variety of abusive behaviours, ranging from fondling or touching to sodomy, incest, or rape.

- **Neglect**

Neglect is defined as any situation in which a child receives no care from the parent or other primary caregiver. It can also refer to care that is below acceptable standards, either of what the community or professional guidelines deem acceptable. This can include, for example, the failure to provide children with adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical attention.

- **Emotional and psychological abuse**

Emotional and psychological abuse can occur in conjunction with other types of abuse. These too can have profound long-term consequences for children and young people.

Child sexual abuse is when an adult or another person of authority, abuse their position of authority over a child or an adolescent to perpetrate some form of unwanted and inappropriate sexual act with them. When this abuse includes the infliction of pain, it is also physical abuse or battering. When the abuse is in form of verbal insults, or undermines a young person's confidence or sense of self-worth, it is also psychological or emotional abuse. Two out of five families in Mozambique experience domestic violence and sexual abuse. Perpetrators of child abuse, include strangers, family members and friends of the family. Abusers are mostly men but also some women and they are from all economic and social groups.

Faith communities with their direct contact with people on grassroots level should avail themselves of the opportunities they have to continually raise awareness of this. Faith communities and church institutions can also form collaborative links with civil society, the relevant government departments and social workers. Together these institutions can make an effort to combat the problem of child sexual abuse (see Chou and Lawson 2002:51).

The perpetrators of child abuse try to protect their identity and hide their crime by intimidating their victims by threatening them. Sometimes they promise gifts in exchange for silence or blame children for being willing complicity. Abusers are often

capable of manipulating children's emotions to such an extent that the child will transfer the guilt to herself in order to protect the criminal. Violence against children often occurs as a result of conflict between the parents. If separation takes place in the family, some parents will abuse and violate their children in order to harass and punish their spouse. Domestic violence is the biggest challenge with regard to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. It affects a high number of women and children. Violence is harmful to children, because they suffer physically and emotionally. Small children, for instance, can be injured because they are with their mothers while the abuse is taking place. Similarly, older children can be injured if they try to stop the parents from fighting or try to intervene what the man batters the woman. Children and young people are traumatized when they observe those they love and trust acting aggressively toward each other. They experience psychological and emotional trauma (see Wilson and Horner 2005:471-82).

## **2.10 Child marriage**

### **2.10.1 Introduction**

The so-called "early marriage" practice which, in effect amounts to child marriage, is one of the most severe crises that affect child development in Mozambique. More than ever before, there is a global awareness of child marriage and its implications for both human rights and a range of developmental outcomes. Child marriage is a traditional practice that violates the rights of both male and female children and undermines their efforts to achieve a level of sustainable development for their future life as an adult.

As a strategy for eliminating child marriage and meeting the needs of those children who are already married, faith communities should look to experts and skilled people at local level who will work with local and international stakeholders in order to maximize established best practices. The vision of faith communities should be to find every avenue possible to provide guidance to communities to ensure that boys and girls be given the opportunity to reach their full potential, to end gender-based violence, to foster

gender equality, and to promote the empowerment of women and girls. The marriage of a girl to an often much older husband, effectively ends the girl's childhood, interrupts her education, increases the risk of her becoming a victim of domestic violence, and puts her at risk of pregnancy which is detrimental to her health because of her age. There is a high probability that such girls who lack mobility, education, and economic opportunities due to having been married off at an early age, come from families who also live in poor and unhealthy conditions. Child marriage is both a cause and a consequence of poverty and gender inequality. It reflects and reinforces the limited economic opportunities for girls and perpetuates discriminatory gender norms (see LeMoyne 2005:2).

Families in crisis who experience emergency situations often see child marriage as a solution. If the girl is married, she is protected from sexual violence. It is also seen as a way to avoid pregnancy outside of marriage, which would bring shame to the family. If the girl is married she is no longer a burden on the resources of the family of origin. The husband will then provide the necessary resources, such as food, water and shelter. However, in actual fact child brides who are given in marriage because of family emergencies often face even more dangerous threats, such as domestic violence and marital rape, poor nutrition and pregnancy. It is therefore important that faith communities in coordination with the government should raise awareness among communities that child marriage is harmful to girls and is not a solution to family's problems of a lack of resources (see Willis 1990:1). Reasons that are given for why families give their girl children to be married are poverty, the physical safety of the girl and the honour of the family. This will now be briefly discussed.

### **2.10.2 Poverty**

The key factor regarding child marriage in Mozambique is poverty. The marriage of children is often seen as a strategy for economic survival. Families who give way their daughters into child marriage perceive it as away to protect the girls and to provide some stability where they as a family and society as a whole are under extreme pressure. Many child wives in Mozambique, who ought to be in school or should still be

playing like children, are working in slave-like conditions in the homes of their in-laws. There are large numbers of children, particularly girls, who drop out of school because they are forced to marry older men by their families. This contributes to the situation that many married women of all ages are illiterate. Factors that contribute to the increase in the practice of child marriage include (see Conte and Shore 1982:98):

- social change;
- general poverty;
- the feminization of poverty;
- teenage pregnancy;
- the loss of family members due to the AIDS pandemic.

Community life is substantially affected by the decline of social networks, the disappearance of cultural values to a certain degree, the increasing violent and ruthless behaviour of people, the poor quality of education and the high rate of youth unemployment. All of these factors contribute to poor socialization of young people which negatively affects their successful integration into society.

The government strategy of providing economic incentives are particularly important where the prevalence of child marriage is high and the median age of marriage is around 15 years or under. Such incentives are especially needed in fragile communities which have been devastated by prolonged natural disasters or conflict. In those societies families often face hunger and malnutrition. They then view marrying off a daughter as one way to reduce the pressure on their scarce resources because there will be one person less to feed. Such a marriage could even be seen as a potential source of income for the family. With the disruption of markets and the livelihood of many people, families often feel compelled to send their daughters out to work for an income, which sometimes means to labour in fields far away from their home. Government economic support and incentives can provide families with the necessary relief in order that they can adequately feed, protect, and foster their daughters. Girls and young women should be afforded the opportunity to build their economic capacity,

acquire assets by earning some form of an income. This can contribute to increasing the family's financial security and the overall wellbeing of their daughters (see Wilson and Homer 2006: 471-82).

Economic condition is a central contributing factor that drives the continued practice of child marriage in Mozambique. Household poverty, especially in rural communities, because of which families are not able to meet the dowry and marriage expenses of adult women, is instrumental to driving down the marriage age of girls. Poor families marry off their daughters at the earliest opportunity because they perceive a girl child as a financial burden on the family. Performing the marriage of two or more girls in the family at the same time, irrespective of whether or not any girl has attained the legal age of marriage, is a simple cost cutting technique used by families to save on marriage and dowry expenses. Younger girls are perceived as both marketable and less likely to command higher dowries. Poor families are eager to marry off daughters at the earliest possible opportunity, especially when they receive an offer of marriage with good prospects. Intergenerational poverty and the lack of viable income-generating options for girls and young women are important factors contributing to high rates of child marriage (speech by Nhanala, United Methodist Women's Conference, October 2016).

Child marriage forces female children to drop out of school. Because their families are unable to meet the cost of education, marriage is the only option to acquire economic security and avoid their becoming a financial burden in their families. Poor parents often believe that investing in a girl's education yields poor returns, because after marriage, a girl will have a very little control over her earnings and will be unable to give financial support to her parents and siblings. Child marriage leads to low female labour force participation and hinders economic growth and development. The host of psychological and physical health problems associated with child marriage, child pregnancy also imposes heavy costs to society (speech by Nhanala, United Methodist Women's Conference, October 2016).

The faith communities and institutional churches should implement a strategy of working together with lawmakers and parliamentarians to oppose and bring an end to child marriage. This should be done by the implementation and enforcement of laws and policies that prohibit marriage before the legal age. Community leaders, traditional leaders, members of law enforcement and the judicial community have a critical contribution to make in this regard. To bring an end to child marriage requires the commitment, involvement and collaboration of diverse partners, who should network to bring unique perspectives, skills, and resources by means of which to face a daunting challenge.

Faith communities, the government and the private sector can partner to develop successful programmes to help to offset the economic pressures on families who marry their daughters while they are still children. Through multiple mechanisms a direct incentive for delaying marriage can be provided. It is also necessary to incentivize school attendance for female children. Financial aid for young women to develop small business and incentives for capacity building for family members, can contribute to the increase of food security for families. The empowerment of female children is an essential step toward enabling them to choose what they want to be and do in life without the fear of violence or coercion. Both married girls and children who are at risk of being forced into marriage should be the focus of programme interventions (see LeMoyne 2005:7).

Government should work in partnership with faith communities to ensure that the rights of children are protected. This should be done by enforcing existing laws across the country. Private organizations and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should prioritize the need to end child marriage by tackling the complex issues such as economics and deep-rooted social norms, attitudes, and practices. A strategy to work in partnership with parents to discourage this practice should be implemented. Child marriage is often the consequence of the constraints and stresses experienced by families as a result of poverty, displacement, or societal pressures. Therefore strategies will not work unless these underlying issues are addressed successfully.

Targeting parents will be a way to transform attitudes and identify viable alternatives that advance the interests of individual children and the wellbeing of the entire family in order to ensure that interventions have positive sustainable results see (UNICEF Report 2011:6).

Interventions by government and faith communities should aim to reinforce the role of women and girls as change agents within their societies. Women and girls should be recognized as more than victims or people at risk. Because they are closest to the problem, they will have particular insights that will be helpful in the process of searching for solutions. Women and girls should have a voice in decision-making and be allowed to become leaders on national, regional, and community level. They should be enabled to speak out about their situation, hopes and dreams and to appropriate their rights see (Mutyaba 2011:339-355).

Male persons, such as fathers, brothers, religious and traditional leaders should be specifically targeted to cooperate with programmes to foster awareness concerning the dangers of child marriage, as well as the long-term benefits of education to open up greater economic opportunities for young people and their families. Equally, it is critical important to reach out to boys at a young age to encourage equitable gender attitudes and norms so that they can become activists in the prevention of child marriage and can become change agents within their communities (Conte and Shore 1982:95).

The negative consequences of child marriage with regard to the sexual, reproductive and psychological health of female children have been described. Particular concerns are the following:

- the physical and mental wellbeing of married girls;
- health conditions of adolescent mothers;
- the quality of marital and family life of adolescent married women;
- national productivity and economic growth.

The practice of child marriage leads directly to a high maternal mortality rate. Children who are forced to marry, are more likely to experience the complications that go with multiple pregnancies, multiple miscarriages and the termination of pregnancy. They are also more likely than adult women who get married, to be malnourished. They are often unable to carry a baby to term, or if the children are born, to adequately care for the children and the family because of poor physical and mental health. These children are also vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases, obstetric fistula, and generally poor sexual health. Many married adolescents lack a sense of self-worth. On the one hand they are “young” and therefore cannot participate in decision making. On the other hand the community sees them as adults because they are shouldering the responsibilities of adults. Therefore, married female children experience has difficulty interacting with people with a measure of self-confidence. They are often looked down upon in the marital home and by the community. Their opportunities to develop and reach their full potential are severely limited, if not non-existent (see Chong and Haberl and 2008:1).

### **2.10.3 Physical safety**

The physical safety of female children, especially in rural areas, is a huge national concern in Mozambique. Girls in rural areas are often the subject of sexual harassment, physical assault and are bullied by boys and adult men on the way to school and even in the classroom. Because of this, parents are often hesitant to send their daughters to school if they have to cover long distances on foot to get to school. Parents are concerned with their daughters’ safety. Parents also find challenges for having an adolescent unmarried daughter at home equally worrying because she continues to be a potential target for sexual crimes. To keep a girl who has reached puberty at home increases the risk of self-initiated courtship or marriage. Due to the strong social stigma attached to pre-marital sex and rape, marrying the daughter off at the earliest opportunity is assumed by the parents as the only way to ensure both the girl’s physical safety and maintain family honour and respect (see LeMoyne 2005:2).

The study has shown that there is a poor implementation of birth and marriage registration systems and enforcement of child marriage prevention law. Poor public

awareness and knowledge on the need to register all births and marriages, a lack of clarity regarding the registration process is prevalent in communities. These factors are some of the reasons why child marriage continues to increase in the country. The enforcement of laws against child marriage and the compulsory registration of births and marriage are not currently successful. The punishment of those who violating the legal age of marriage or issue false birth certificates in order to legitimize child marriage is not adequate to discourage families and community leaders from breaking the law. Sometimes parents arrange the marriage of a daughter based on her physical maturity rather than on her chronological age. In their minds their daughter is ready for marriage when she is physically mature rather than when she has reached the legally age for marriage. Physical maturity traditionally signifies the transition from childhood to adulthood and from this perspective a young female person is ready to enter into marriage (speech of Nhanala, UMC Women's Conference Meeting, October 2016).

Child mothers are less likely to be emotionally mature or possess the necessary life skills and knowledge to deal with the challenges of married life. A Child marriage involving a very young female person and an older husband tends to be less cohesive and is often riddled with marital strife and unhappiness. Such a marriage is more likely to end in divorce, abandonment, or polygamy. A child bride with a much older husband is more likely than older wives to be widowed at an early age. Because they have no education or skills they cannot then provide for themselves and their children.

Child marriage places girls at increased risks of acquiring HIV and AIDS compared to unmarried sexually active girls. Married female children are forced to have sex often, unprotected, and their older male partners are more likely to be HIV positive because of their long term sexual activity. In countries where there is a high incidence of HIV and AIDS such as Mozambique, Kenya and Zambia, studies have confirmed that the HIV infection rate is higher among married girls that sexually active unmarried girls (see Chong and Haberl and 2004:1).

#### **2.10.4 Way forward**

A way to combat child marriage in Mozambican communities can be to introduce the topic in the school curriculum in order to elicit open discussion and provide a legitimate platform for girls to raise their voices and to report if one of their friends is being forced into marriage. The quality of education can be enhanced through recreational activities, creative learning, and the promotion of knowledge on health matters and teaching young people life skills and vocational skills. Access to services for both married adolescents and girls who are at risk, should be improved. The state should ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for all children, including married and unmarried girls and boys, to complete their education. The most effective interventions to address child marriage and gender-based violence require the integration of prevention and response efforts regarding the following:

- health;
- education;
- food security;
- economic growth with an emphasis on strengthening economic security of households and families;
- governance;
- justice and rule of law.

The major goal of implementing such strategy is to prevent and respond to gender-based violence across the country. An effective way is to work directly with girls and those who are at risk of child marriage and to provide them with information, develop their skills and see to it that they have adequate support networks. Harmful traditional practices such as bride abduction, the bride price, and child marriage should be addressed in community conversations to raise awareness of the effects of such practices (speech by Graça Machel at the Youth Parliament, November 2016).

The education sector in Mozambique should enhance the accessibility and quality of education for both girls and boys. The relationship between school enrollment and child

marriage is a discussion that is still heavily debated in the communities where it is practiced. Schools can help to protect children against early marriage in that it enables the girl to be seen as a child whose rights should be respected. Schools can be good spaces for female children if they are safe, girl-friendly and the education is of a high quality. In a formal schooling environment both girls and boys should be able to develop social networks and acquire skills and information to enhance their ability to better communicate and negotiate their interests. Through informal, girl-only educational programmes married children and adolescent mothers can be retained in a school environment which can enable them to transition to secondary level. Through education and providing children with a voice, their capacity to protect themselves from child marriage can be enhanced and community can become aware of the need to actively combat child marriage in the Mozambican communities (speech by Jorge Ferrao, Minister of Education at the inauguration of a secondary school in Zambeze province, January 2016).

The Ministry of Social Action and Children can adopt a strategy to work in partnership with organizations, community leaders and religious denomination in specific sub-national districts to develop an education plan for the youth that will make a good education possible and accessible for all. National and local governments and non-governmental organizations should investment their efforts specifically in education for female children who are at risk of being forced into marriage. The expertise of international institutions and experts can contribute much to such an effort. It is critical for non-governmental partners to identify the most effective local government authorities with which to work together. Efforts should be made to design and implement new programmes in areas where there has not been much of an investment to date. The emphasis should be on evaluating the scale of the problem in order to be able to develop effective strategies. Pilot programmes that have shown positive results can be scaled up to reach more girls and their families (speech by Chauque, Minister of Women at the Girls Centre of the United Methodist Church in Inhambane province, December 2016).

Churches at the national level should promote programmes in cooperation with other sectors such as education and health. Such joint programmes can focus on improving girls' lives and providing more opportunities for them. The issue of child marriage which is unconscionable on a moral level, and harmful on a health level and detrimental to education and access to a life of dignity for young women, should be addressed clearly and specifically. Such programmes should invest in the future of female children in a way that can help them to avoid or mitigate the harm of unsafe relationships, including marriage. It is important that these programmes reach the girls and young women who need intervention. They should have access to the appropriate information, programmes and services. Special care should be taken to reach those female children who are already married or who are at particularly high risk to be forced into marriage. Information should be collected from the community to establish a baseline and subsequently track performance toward benchmarks (training by Mudime, United Methodist Women in Inhambane province, October 2016).

The church and society should find ways to combine both macro and micro level factors in ways that would impact positively on girls' lives. It is imperative the young females be given opportunities to make informed choices and to function within a safe environment which is free from threat, coercion and violence. Poverty reduction programmes alone are not sufficient. They should intentionally be accompanied by aims to bring about a shift in social perceptions of what the aspirations of girls are "allowed" to be and of the values of female children and persons in society. Schools should be spaces which can guarantee safety for girls and make it possible for them to work toward realizing their aspirations and potential.

Government programs, policies and laws should not only focus on those who are at risk of being coerced into child marriage, but should also implement a plan with regard to those female children who are already trapped in marriage and are denied an education because of marriage. Faith community can facilitate discussions between program officers and parents in order to educate parent with regard to the negative consequences of child marriage. Families should be assisted to see the value of a girl

child through intensive engagement and public dialogues. Then families can increase their support for girl children and adolescents rather than see them as an economic burden. Families should be encouraged to commit to retaining girls in school until they have completed their education and not marry them off while they are still in school. Families should be mobilized and enabled to provide support for girls to enhance their learning skills and enable them to fulfill their educational aspirations. Families should be encouraged not to differentiate between sons and daughters in their aspirations and expectations for their children (see Nhanala December 2016 opening message at annual conference session). Governments and institutions should subscribe to basic humanitarian goals such as that all people should be able to live a life of human dignity. Communities, from a cultural perspective, should subscribe to cultural values with regard to the value of human life and dignity. Faith communities, from a Christian theological perspective, should subscribe to the idea of the equal value of all human beings before God, since they are God's creation, created in God's image.

The broad term of "community" includes the immediate family, the people of the neighborhood where someone lives, as well as the various peer groups in a variety of settings to which a person belongs. It is important that communities are well defined, identified and targeted with focused intervention and messages. The intervention programmes and initiatives to end child marriage should expand to include those sections of society and communities currently outside the purview of these programmes. A fundamental change in male and societal attitudes to women is critically needed. Mudime highlights that the initiatives to end child marriage should focus on changing the norms that discriminate against women because of the cultural setting of Mozambican societies. Decision makers in the family and community are men. Therefore programmes and initiatives to end child marriage need to work with men and boys to change their attitude toward girls in the family and community. If prevalent attitudes that lead to practices of exploitation, coercion, abuse and harm, do not change, the various programmes and initiatives to encourage girls to stay in school, complete schooling, and learn life skills, can be at best only partially successful (see Mudime, training with United Methodist Women in Maputo province, October 2015).

The faith community and the public sector should provide resources to improve registration of births and marriage, information and communication technologies need to be used constructively and effectively, to educate the public on the legal age of marriage and compulsory registration of birth and marriage, through a combination of educational and entertainment programmes. Both traditional and newer forms of media should intentionally build positive images of women and break stereotypes on gender roles, tasks and responsibilities, in order to support the human value of a girl child and bring about social change. The process of birth and marriage registration should be made simpler, more accessible and easy to use, especially in the rural areas. Capacity building is needed at all levels in order to strictly enforce current laws on child marriage prevention. Child marriage prevention laws and compulsory registration of all births and marriages should be strictly enforced and punitive measures against those who violate the laws or commit an act of violence against women, should be made more harsh in order to dissuade would-be perpetrators from breaking the law and harming female children.

There is need to scale up programmes and to elicit a wider support for bringing an end to child marriage. This can be done by building alliances among different stakeholders and bringing them together under one platform. All government departments and non-government organizations should work together to uplift women and children and to develop strategies to end child marriage. Comprehensive, holistic strategies, operating at every level of influence and the consolidation of programmes for ending child marriage can be more effective in reducing the prevalence of child marriage than numerous fragmented programmes and initiatives that operate in isolation (speech by Chauque at the Girls' Centre of the United Methodist Church in Inhambane, December 2016).

Family support is essential to enable female children to continue their education and not to be coerced into marriage. Different types of families are at different levels of risk. For example, girls from displaced families or single parent families are at a higher risk of dropping out of school and marrying early. Rather than that government efforts and

programmes be directed solely at unmarried adolescents and traditional families, the focus should be broader, namely on all adolescent girls and boys, married and unmarried from all types of families. Finally, the study has shown that there is critical need to prioritize interventions through evidence based monitoring, and identify different entry points of intervention at different levels within an overall framework, which integrate and converge at a common goal, namely to end the practice of child marriage. It is imperative that norms and attitudes with regard to female children and adults change and that their value as human beings is accepted by all. Prevention of child marriage is not the end goal. The goal is to enhance the value of girl children and female adults in order to bring about greater gender equality and justice in all spheres of life. The faith community should raise awareness of the situation and facilitate appropriate action. Where there is insufficient data on the practice and repercussions of early marriage, researchers and officials in both government and civil society should work to bring about much needed change (speech by Nhanala, December 2016).

### **2.11 Adolescent suicide**

When parents divorce young children often believe that they were the cause. Young children have the general tendency to think that they are the cause of everything goes wrong in their lives and the life of a loved one, especially if they are not being told differently. In their mind removing themselves from the situation by committing suicide will bring an end to the problem. Child and especially adolescent suicide has been increasing dramatically in many societies. Woodward (2005:10) explains it as follows:

Suicide has been linked to mental disorientation such as depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, borderline personality disorder, and alcoholism and drug abuse. Suicide is not just a state of mind that develops overnight. It is a lingering thought in the person's life and finally when they hit rock bottom they don't see the end of tunnel anymore and they call their final shots. At that moment living becomes much harder than death could ever be for them. These years the suicide rates have risen by 60% worldwide and are one of the leading causes of death in teenagers

and basically people between the ages of 15 to 45. Suicide is just the result of one problem but a combination of complex socioeconomic, personal and interpersonal situations.

According to Al-Shamsi and Fulcher (2005:45-55) the most common causes of teen suicide are stress, bullying, failed relationships, abuse, and the failure to achieve the desired grades in school. Adolescent suicide is a reflection of how harsh society is today. The impression is that when a young person opts to commit suicide, they feel that no one understands or accepts them. They have no one to talk to, not counselor they can turn to when they struggle. For them it feels as though there is no other solution but to end their life. It is important for young people to have an open relationship with an adult or adults. This is one of the ways in which suicide can be avoided. Many young people, who should be enjoying school, parties, and friends, are choosing instead to end their life even before they have had the opportunity of going to college, embarking on a career and have a family, travel or participate in other experiences that life has to offer (see Al-Shamsi and Fulcher 2005:45-58)

### **2.11.1 Bullying and peer pressure**

The effects of pressure and bullying are now a more common phenomenon in various societies than it was before. It is also more common among early adolescents who begin high school. Adolescents who experience bullying tend to isolate themselves and their self-esteem and confidence are affected. They feel worthless and incapable of anything productive. This attitude leads them to think and imagine that their life truly is worth nothing and therefore they no longer feel the need to keep on living. Some develop a severe depression and end up taking their own life.

Afraid of further bullying, many victims do not inform parents or teacher of what is happening and this form of abuse tends to go unnoticed for many years. Young people are under pressure at school. Not only must they get good grades, but they must also choose a career at a very young age. Form some this becomes too much. When the pressure gets too much some adolescents to make an end to their life in order to take the pressure off once and for all. Depression causes the brain to function differently

than usual and leads to thoughts that eventually drive someone to committing suicide. Adolescents with mental disorders often lack a sense of belonging, either in school or in society and consider themselves to be persons without a value. Mentally vulnerable young people are particularly susceptible to the detrimental effects of bullying. Therefore it is important that bullying at school should be detected early and treatment provided before much harm is done to the victim (see Schneider et al. 2012:171-177).

### **2.11.2 Sexual orientation**

Puberty and adolescence are the phases of development when sexual desires and new feelings emerge due to the development of the body and physical changes. Those changes influence both mind and body. Young people react to these changes in a variety of ways. During this time they discover and struggle with their sexuality. Should a young person discover that they feel sexually attracted to persons of the same sex, they encounter additional difficulties. They face the problem of telling friends and peers who sometimes turn on the person and mock and ridicule them. Other friends are most understanding and they can remain friends for life. Then there is the issue of parents and family, who more often than not are not particularly welcoming and understanding when it comes to a same-sex orientation, especially in some cultures where it is taboo. This places much pressure on young people who attempt to be themselves when society's view of them causes great confusion. This can lead to depression. Internalized homophobia can cause a young person to believe that he or she is actually the bad person that people make him or her out to be. They conclude that life is no longer worth living and put an end to their suffering (see Langel and Hartgers 1998:336-348).

### **2.11.3 Domestic abuse**

Abuse affects a large number of families and children in all cultures and in all walks of life. Children experience physical and mental abuse by strangers or members of their own families. This has a long lasting damaging effect on people. If children are not victims themselves but witness acts of domestic violence, it can also have a damaging effect on them. Often abusers resort to blaming the children (or the wife) for the abuse, because of something big or small that they did wrong. Children and abused women

often internalize this message and believe that they are the problem and it is their fault. Abusers often manipulate children to keep them silent about the abuse. Some abused children become abusive adults. Others decide to end their lives, believing that no good can ever come of their existence in this world (see Schneider 2012:171-177).

#### **2.11.4 Trafficking**

The UNICEF Report of 2006 highlights that trafficking of children for economic purposes is inextricable linked to some of the worst forms of child labour. In the underworld of human trafficking, children are traded for prostitution, for begging and soliciting, for work on construction sites, in small shops, in factories and in domestic service. Treated like slaves, these children often end up working as labourers on plantations, in mines and in the urban informal sector.

In Mozambique people who live with albinism face discrimination and abuse. This often culminates in murder or human trafficking. The abuse is connected with the belief that their body parts can produce wealth and good luck when used for ritual of witchcraft purposes. In Mozambique, especially in the northern part of the country, people who live with albinism face kidnapping, violence and murder because of the wide-spread belief that their body parts can bring people magical powers, luck and wealth. Aly Faque, a musician who lives with albinism, was interviewed on Mozambican Television in September 2016. The questions Aly Faque was asked were the following:

- What are the reasons behind the murder and kidnapping of people who live with albinism?
- What are the mechanisms needed to eliminate the persecution, murder and kidnapping of people who live with albinism?
- What can be done and by whom, to advocate for people who live with albinism?

Aly Faque answered as follows:

People with albinism have been forced to lead isolated lives for fear of being discriminated against or even hurt. The cause of murder and kidnapping is because people's belief that an albino is not a normal person and has to be killed. There are many albinos hiding in remote areas who do not receive any support. The government and churches should address the burden of such discrimination on people living with albinism and promote their participation in the economic and productive development of their communities. The state and churches should develop stronger programmes that meet the needs of people living with albinism and vulnerable children, families, and communities, developing relevant and appropriate policies that protect their rights and ensure their care, ensuring protection from all forms of abuse, violence, exploitation, trafficking, kidnapping, murder and loss of inheritance.

Aly Faque is a prominent advocate for the government in addressing the needs of people with albinism. Although Mozambique has a National Plan (2015), the country still lacks relevant demographic information and the funding to implement the strategies that are outlined in the plan. There is a need to have strong policies to support people who live with albinism and to educate society about the condition of people living with albinism.

#### **2.11.5 Emotional neglect**

Parents today are often so involved in their own busy lives that they do not pay adequate attention to children and adolescents. They then miss signs of isolation and depression in their children. Emotional neglect causes adolescents to feel forgotten and alone. They feel that whether they exist or not, it makes no real difference. If they were to end their life, no one would even notice their absence. Emotional neglect has a devastating effect on people, especially children and young people. Faith communities can join efforts to help prevent adolescent suicide by combating isolation, addressing a child or young person's depression, removing objects that can be used to commit suicide and by simply paying attention to what the child does or feels. Schools should

provide education and support on this matter. This is the place where youth empowerment should be prioritized since this is where students spend the majority of their time. School can be the place where they start planning their future, or it can be a place of isolation and misery, not having a vision of the future. Students' peers can heavily influence their state of mind, positively or negatively. The school setting is the environment where care should be taken to prevent suicide and to provide support (see Betancourt et al 2012:423-444).

## **2.12 Reproductive health**

Worldwide there are an increased number of women who need services with regard to pregnancy and birth, but there is not sufficient medical care available. This is a consequence of inadequate manpower to cope with the high number of patients and it affects the quality of maternal health care. The poor remuneration of staff and the increased workload for health professionals working at the maternal and child care units are contributing factors. In many places in the world poor infrastructure and facilities contribute to the problem. This is also the case in Mozambique. The growing number of the patients places pressure on the few available facilities of infrastructure at the health facilities in the country, which results in poor service.

A programme to improve maternal health services is currently being implementing. Funds for this were allocated by the Government of the United States of America. However, local authorities seem not to be contributing to the programme which results in but limited impact of the programme in terms of improving the access to and scope of the healthcare facilities. Maternal health strategies should have the potential to improve neonatal and maternal survival if targeted care is provided where its benefits are needed most. One serious detrimental factor with regard to the health of mothers and babies, is HIV and AIDS. The USAID Report (2008:2) describes the situation as follows:

The transmission on mother-to-child of HIV is continuing to grow or has stabilized at a very high levels; maternal child health continues to be a major problem, with up to 45% of HIV-infected mothers transmitting

infection to their children. HIV is becoming a major cause of maternal mortality in highly affected countries in Southern Africa. The majority of deaths and disabilities are preventable, being mainly due to insufficient care during pregnancy and delivery. About 15% of pregnancies and childbirths need emergency obstetric care because of complications that are difficult to predict. A woman dies from complications in childbirth every minute about 529,000 each year. Annually, an estimated 150 Mozambican women die from pregnancy related complications, out of 529,000 global maternal deaths, thus a woman's chance of dying from pregnancy and childbirth in Mozambique is 1 in 13. The main causes of maternal mortality in Mozambique are: hemorrhage, infection, unsafe abortion, obstructed labour and toxemia hypertension, malaria, anemia and others including HIV and AIDS contribute to unsafe childbirth in women. Other factors underlying maternal mortality include lack of awareness about complications in pregnancy and on the need to seek medical intervention early; lack of transportation to the health facilities where maternal healthcare can be provided; and inability to pay for services.

One of the strategies to address maternal health problems is to train women by using participatory adult learning methods. Women and men can be recruited to work as volunteers with maternal and neonatal caregivers. Safe motherhood practices can be taught to community-based healthcare providers. Traditional birth attendants in communities, midwives, and community health workers can also receive the training needed to enhance their skills. Multidisciplinary epidemiological teams can be established. Medical experts can be engaged to participate in making policy in cooperation with the health ministry. Special training sessions can be organized for women's organizations in the community. The training should focus on the following:

- recognizing danger signs during pregnancy;
- labour and the delivery of a baby;
- the postpartum period;

- prenatal care to prevent complications;
- life-saving skills in case of emergencies when there is lack of resources;
- hemorrhage and anemia;
- retention of the placenta;
- reproductive health and sex education;
- care of the new born and family planning.

This strategy can be implemented in communities to improve maternal health in resource constrained communities. The mobilization of the community and its resources, as well as the empowerment of individuals in families, should contribute to improved services and support self-care and antenatal and postnatal family community care. Improved care practices can be adopted and people can be alerted as to appropriate care seeking for illness. This approach should be targeted to motivate women in communities to change their expectations. They should not only how quality services can respond to their needs, but should also to seek quality services because it is their fundamental right (see USAID Report 2008:4).

Women of child-bearing age should go through training which is facilitated by the public department of health and other clinical services. These services should provide health workers who can do training in the social and cultural environment of communities.

Family community care should include the following:

- behaviour change with regard to care seeking
- better and more effective communication;
- the mobilization of communities;
- improved antenatal and postnatal care practices;
- care seeking for illness;
- Community-based management of illness.

People should receive information and training with regard to neonatal care practices such as breastfeeding, clean cord care, a clean if not sterile environment for home births and referral when complications arise during home births. Women should be able

to receive extra home visits if needed, as well as support with breastfeeding. They have a right to such services and should demand them if necessary (see Blanca, training session at the UMW in Maputo, 2015:4).

A strategy to improve child and maternal health which focuses principally on the provision of technical skills to the women of childbearing age as well as mothers' groups and traditional birth attendants for better home based maternal and child health care should be implemented. It should take the form of a social mobilization programme that promotes the necessary preparation for giving birth at home. Volunteers can counsel the mothers and families at home visits and they can address community group meetings. This approach combines a strategy of home visitation with that of community mobilization to enhance skills in the community. Matters such as the management of infections, caring for babies with a low birth weight can be addressed. Mothers' groups, traditional healers and traditional birth attendants can benefit from this programme. Ernestina David (2015:3) emphasizes that counseling with regard to breast feeding, complementary feeding and food diversification is of importance so that babies can ingest all the nutrients needed for healthy growth. This approach sets great store on community participation, the promotion of positive health behaviours and the development of skills for home-based care and management to prevent diseases such as pneumonia and diarrhea. It aims to promote community health care (see David, training at the UMW in Maputo, 2015:3).

Communities should be aware of and connected with the available health facilities. This will ensure that care provided in communities meets the quality standards and that the key concerns with regard to training and supervision are addressed adequately. Primary care services should be accessible to the community. Effective communication and feedback mechanisms should ensure that the concerns of the community are conveyed to the relevant authorities. Once the connections between communities and health care services are firmly established, the health care system can gain substantially from the resources and support provided by national and local governments and non-governmental organizations.

Women's groups will be trained to understand the problems of maternal and child health. They will experience that they are regarded as a priority. They have an understanding of their problems with regard to health care and can participate in finding a way to solve the problems regarding maternal and child health. The women will identify strategies that are realistic and devise actions which will help to overcome the problems with regard to maternal and child health (see David 2015:3). In a speech at the at the December at the conference Session (2016) of the United Methodist Church, Nhanala emphasized that well-designed community-based projects should have the potential to be more inclusive, to empower communities, including poor and marginalized groups, and strengthen links between civil society and the government.

The board of directors of the United Methodist church should work to improve the affectivity and sustainability of their interventions which aim to reduce the vulnerability of people. There should be an initiative to build organizational capacity at local level that will mobilize communities to identify problems, plan and manage projects that help to strengthen the local capacity for collective action. There should be a strategy to devise programmes for community development which can strengthen health care, education, food security, economic growth with an emphasis on economic security for households and families, governance, justice, and rule of law. Communities should be empowered to command services and create a mechanism for rebuilding trust and accountability and re-establishing a viable social contract between themselves and government.

### **2.13 Summary**

This chapter has discussed the situation and problems of youth in present-day Mozambique. A historical overview of the political and socio-economic events and realities that shaped the current situation, in which the young people of Mozambique find themselves, was given. The resulting problems faced by vulnerable children were highlighted. It has identified challenges that force children to take responsibilities beyond their years, including caring for sick parents and siblings while they themselves are only children. The chapter indicated the effects of illiteracy and the lack of safety and security on children. It highlighted the detrimental effects on females of forced child

marriage. The role of faith communities and church institutions to work alongside government and the private sector to empower young people and help to bring about the transformation of society was explored.

## CHAPTER 3

### SOCIAL IDENTITY AND THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURE ON YOUTH

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the influence of culture on youth. It investigates young people's attitudes toward engagement with popular culture. The aim is to describe their social and cultural identity and interpret their place and role in the community. The chapter will provide a brief overview of youth culture and how the media shapes youth culture, also in the Mozambican context. The study aims to trace how the community develops its perceptions and attitudes of young people. The nature of those perceptions and attitudes are identified in order to recommend ways in which faith communities can contribute to changing them. The study identifies the extent of stereotyping of young people and the impact of those stereotypes. The chapter will examine the role played by the media and by other prominent groups within the community and what influence they have on young people. On the one hand the young people are exposed to the outside world by means of the media. On the other hand they are rooted in their local cultural values. This can be confusing. Young people need guidance in order to navigate through the confusion and make responsible choices.

Firstly this chapter aims to contribute to an understanding of youth and culture in the Mozambican context. The relationship between the youth and the media will be investigated, with specific reference to the way in which the media portray sex and sexuality. The distinction between sex and sexuality will be maintained, namely that sex refers to biological realities where as sexuality is a much broader term which goes beyond sex and does not necessarily to include genital sex. The point of departure is that a close connection between sex and sexuality exists.

In this chapter sex and sexuality will be approached from a theological perspective and the role of faith communities with regard to the education of youth on the issues of sexuality will be explored. In conclusion the chapter will demonstrate how faith

communities can become a hermeneutical agent with regard to culture and cultural influences. The importance of opening up space for a theological understanding of sex and sexuality will be illustrated.

## **3.2 Culture**

### **3.2.1 Culture as a way of life**

The concept of culture is multidimensional because it embraces the totality of people's way of life in response to the needs and circumstances of a certain group of people. Culture can be socially learned, shared and transmitted. It affects all aspects of an individual's life, which include social responsibilities, sexual expression and belief-systems. The attitudes and behaviour that identify a particular social group or organization are reflected in their norms, care and behaviour based on age, life stage, gender, and social class. Culture is an important element of the foundation of every society. Culture provides the framework for people's social behaviours it contributes to a sense of community and belonging. It contributes to the formation of individual identity. However, constraints arising from cultural traditions often limit young people's access to the information and services they need to make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual and reproductive lives. Culture is often used to justify social inequality and can be an obstacle for youth to achieve their full of human rights (see Walton 1993:10). Ekeh (1975:91-112) describes culture as follows:

Culture is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, defined by everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, to music and arts. Culture is constructing an attempt to analyze and integrate events and ideals in broad spectrum of area of society. From wider perspective, culture includes the total repertoire of human action which is socially transmitted from generation to generation. The transformation of culture is gradual and not sudden. Culture is a continuous process of change, it changes exactly the same way as the human being changes. It is dynamic, learned, acquired, transmitted or

diffused through contact or means of communication flow from generation to generation.

According to Brockman 2010:162-164), the word culture refers to intellectual and creative products, including literature, music, drama, and craft painting. Another meaning of culture is that it describes beliefs and practices of a society, particularly where these are seen as closely connected with tradition or religion. Culture is part of the fabric of every society, it shapes the way things are done and why they should be done in a certain way. Brockman opts for the comprehensive approach to culture as proposed in the definition adopted at the World Conference on Cultural Policies (Mexico, 1982) Culture is the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or a social group. It includes not only arts and letters, but also modes and styles of life of which has the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs.

### **3.2.2 Youth culture**

Youth subculture provides young people with an identity of their own. It gives them the opportunity to experience a sense of social reality which is independent and different from the adult world. According to Malan Nel (2000:32), the development of the terms “youth” and “adolescent” is a cultural invention created by the labour market. Industry and the labour market separated children and adolescents from adults and a new subculture emerged. That is youth culture. Youth culture has been identified as an anti-culture. This opposition to the adult culture has been utilized by sociologists because it represents the most visible aspect of the youth experience.

A conceptual understanding of youth culture not only focuses on the characteristics and identity of young people of a particular age, but sees youth culture as a way of life which is built through social processes such as family, the labour market, school and other cultural environments. A distinctive way of thinking, living, doing and talking, youth culture is better described retrospectively because it is never static on the same place and time rather it is changing all the time according to the dynamic of life.

McRobbie (1993:426) explains it as follows:

Youth culture is the way adolescents live, norms, values, and practices they share. Culture is the shared symbolic systems, and processes of maintaining and transforming those systems. Youth culture has to do with customs, lifestyles and values that characterize a society or a certain group of people. Youth cultural aspects include concepts of beauty, education, language, law and politics, religion, social organizations, technology and material, values and attitudes.

The elements of youth culture include beliefs, behaviours, styles, and interests. An emphasis on clothes, popular music, sports, vocabulary, and dating sets adolescents apart from other age groups, giving them what many believe to be a distinct culture of their own. Within youth culture, there are many distinct and constantly changing youth subcultures and these subcultures' norms, values, behaviours, and styles differ widely, and may differ from the general youth culture. Understanding what adolescents think and do is fundamental to understand the relationship between structure and agency, social patterns and individual action (see Robbins 2004:24).

Youth culture, through the way young people behave, is seen as a mirror of the society and world in which they live. Youth are constantly making statements of one form or another and these statements take different shapes under different historical conditions. This leads to a situation where youth sometimes are perceived as different and an enigma at home, in the church and in broader community (see Nel 2000:28–29).

Culture is part and parcel of a person's very being. The transmission of culture differs from the biological of people and animals. It is how people understand themselves, what they believe and how they choose to live their lives. Culture can also be seen as the surface medium through which people, including the youth, express their convictions and their collective identity. Culture internalizes in people and becomes part of their environment through the medium of other individuals and cultural products. Culture manifests on two different levels: the empirical level that can be observed and the

underlying individual worldview. The levels of the empirical and the underlying worldview should be taken into account in order to gain an understanding of youth culture. Knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and value systems that are underlying to the empirical actions that can be observed help in engagement with youth culture. Youth culture is expressed by the empirically observable behaviour and attitudes of youths, for example, through language and, clothing style, tattoos, body marks, music, films and television shows, art, and who their role models are. It is important to understand their lifestyle. This requires some kind of an understanding and relationship with the youth and a non-judgmental attitude when engaging young people (see Mueller 2006:116).

Youth culture should be viewed as social norms and values, which are identified and contextualized through different options, diversity and choice. This also leads to a greater diversity of attitudes towards sexual morality than how youth used to live in the past. In the modern and postmodern context, people should be free to make choices, even moral choices, in terms of individual preference. The question is how does this relate to sexual matters with regard to youth in the Mozambican context today? Many young people's lives are shaped in the context of variety and diversity of choice and lifestyle. This is also how moral values on sexual matters are shaped. Young people make their choices based on personal decisions. Today, people construct their own world by the selections they make from the huge variety of choices that is available and, because the choices they make are so different, a diversity of lifestyles is the inevitable result. These choices are also made in relation to personal fulfillment and emotional happiness as goals of human existence. Today people make money using sex in the name of culture. This leads to an increasingly widespread and graphic adoption of sexual interaction of all kinds of books, newspapers, magazines, cinema, television and the internet (see Bishops' Group 2003:1).

According to Erikson (1993:12), youth culture developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when it became more common for adolescents to come together. Prior to this time many adolescents spent the majority of their time with adults and child siblings. Schooling and other societal changes made the joint socialization of adolescents more prevalent.

According to Erikson the primary goal in the developmental stage of adolescence is to answer the question of who they are. In order to find their identity it is natural that they would seek out others within the same age group to grow and learn together and understand the social norms and values of the society. Young people find themselves in a confused stage of development. Their identity forms as they become increasingly independent of their parents and have a greater confidence in their peer group of friends.

In the process of forming their identity, young people gather some rules, ideas, knowledge and experiences and look for a coherent path through they will overcome contradictions. Their ideas of adulthood are straightforward: marrying and having children, earning money, improving their livelihood and being a respected member in the society. The lifestyle of young people in a given culture depends largely on the roles and responsibilities they are expected to assume. The extent to which they are expected to share family responsibilities, for example, is one large determining factor with regard to their behaviour. Some young people are expected to contribute significantly to household chores and responsibilities, whereas others are given more freedom. Those who come from more privileged families often have fewer responsibilities. Differences between families may reflect various historical socio-economic backgrounds, which are further influenced by cultural norms and values of young people.

Youth begin to develop a unique belief system through their interaction with social, familial, and cultural environments. These belief systems encompass everything from religion and spirituality to gender, sexuality, ethics, and politics. The range of attitudes that a culture embraces in a particular way affects the beliefs, lifestyles, and perceptions of young people, and can have either a positive or a negative effect on their development. In some parts in Africa today lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people face much discrimination and bullying by their peers based on the broader cultural attitudes. Many are disqualified from peer groups because they are seen as people who are breaking with cultural gender norms. This can have a tremendous impact on the development of queer or transgender adolescents, increasing the risk of

depression, anxiety, and even suicide. Similarly, girls who experience early maturity may suffer teasing or sexual harassment related to their developing bodies. This can contribute to a higher risk of depression, substance abuse, and eating disorders (see Conger and Elder 2001).

An individual should be seen and understood within the context of culture, but not defined by culture. This can be put into practice by cultivating a willingness to question, examine one's own behaviour and ask for feedback. It is impossible to be an expert on every culture with which one comes in contact, but it is possible to be willing to learn. Some families are able to address cultural beliefs directly. Others may not realize the influence of their beliefs. Some children are able to introduce cultural differences that they have learnt from friends to their family (see McRobbie 1993:406).

### **3.2.3 Gender and culture**

Gender identities and relations are critical aspects of culture because they shape the way daily life is lived in the family, but also have an effect on relations in the wider community and the work place. Gender and race or ethnicity functions as an organizing principle for society because of the cultural meanings given to being a man or a woman. This is evident in the division of labour according to gender. Some societies have clear patterns of women's work and men's work both in the household and in the wider community and there are cultural explanations of why this should be so. The explanations differ among societies and change over time. While the specific nature of gender relations differs among societies, the general rule is that women have less personal autonomy, lower resources at their disposal, and limited influence over the decision-making processes that shape their societies and their own lives (see Willis 1990:1).

Societies and cultures are not static; they are living entities and continually being renewed and reshaped. Gender definitions change over time and the changes are shaped by many factors. Cultural change occurs as communities and households respond to social and economic shifts associated with globalization, new technologies, environmental pressures, armed conflict and development projects. Change also results

from deliberate efforts to influence values through changes in the law or government policy, often due to pressure from civil society. There are many examples of efforts which influence attitudes about race relations, the rights of workers and the use of the environment. Efforts which reshape values about women and gender relations have focused on concerns about the number of girls who attend school, women's access to paid work, and public attitudes toward gender-based violence. Cultural definitions should be identified through a process in which some segments of society promote change through advocacy, because societies are not homogeneous and there are no assumptions that can be made about a consensus with regard to cultural values (see Brown and Preston 1995:46).

Changes in gender relations are often highly contested because they have immediate implications for both women and men. This means that gender roles and particularly women's roles as wife or mother can be symbolized by cultural change or continuity. This politics of such symbols is evident in the ways in which religious and political movements have focused on women's roles. Religious or cultural values often function as a means to resist outside influences. In such contexts, internal efforts for change become even more complex since those who advocate for change can easily be dismissed as unpatriotic or not religious enough. Therefore, religious beliefs and national identity are also important to women. This is evident in the efforts by different groups of women to review interpretations of religious texts and to reaffirm values and traditions that support freedom and dignity for women (see Eckersley 1998:3-34).

Cultural values are constantly evolving rather than fixed and there are different interests that steer the process. The role of women and gender equality in one group will not necessarily be the same in the next group. Also individual views within a group differ. As a result, there will be many difference in the values of women and men in a given culture. A balanced assessment of the potential for gender equality initiatives requires consultations with a range of actors, including those who work for gender equality. For example, in post-Soviet countries there is a good record of gender equality because in their context, the rhetoric of gender equality is associated with the propaganda of the

Soviet period. Woman was free to participate fully in the labour force because that benefited the transition that politicians and officials wanted to achieve. However, when there are not sufficient job opportunities, women's organizations have noted, and then this serves to justify discrimination against women. Women's organizations have been struggling to gain recognition from male dominated political and bureaucratic structures and have their message taken seriously that women want to participate in the labour market and maintain their human rights (see Wiles 2007:699-735).

Development initiatives in culture aim to change values and practices that shape social relations made in family planning and what this implies about family structures in the community. Development models also incorporate cultural values that are concerned with transition in market economies and support private property as a cultural value. Other types of initiatives impact on the social relations that identify a certain group of people in a given culture. Improved road networks for instance make greater connection between different ethnic groups in rural and urban areas possible, allowing greater mobility of people and goods. Many people in villages can benefit from easier access to markets, farms, products, health services and to have schools for children. If those who produce goods such as clay pots then have to compete with cheaper and more durable products this can lead to increased migration. There are more and more households where men are absent and women must take responsibility for farms and families. Though women in effect take charge, this has no impact on the local culture and cultural gender relations (see MCEETYA 2000:31-32). Women as still only doing "women's work" as they fill in for the absent husband who is still regarded as the head of the household, see (Adams and Castle 1994:161-173).

#### **3.2.4 Culture and sexual and reproductive health**

The effect of culture on sexual and reproductive health has made it difficult for government to formulate adequate policies and create programmes to facilitate reproductive health and rights. Sexuality itself is a difficult topic to address with youth in the public arena. Even when laws and policies exist to protect youth, cultural and religious climates may hinder their implementation. Those who seek reproductive health

services often are met by judgmental health providers and are afforded little or no privacy in which to discuss their problems. In both developed and developing countries, taboos on sexuality become obstacle to open communication and access to information. In Mozambique low levels of literacy contribute to increasing these problems. Cultural and religious restrictions often mean that sexual reproductive health becomes part of public health agenda, rather than being community based. Public health policy usually takes a broad view and looks at the effects of policy on entire populations. It focuses less on individuals and their rights. In Mozambican schools today insufficient attention is paid to the issue of child sexual abuse in schools, which affects the entire life of a child negatively (see USAID 2008:3).

### **3.3 Cultural traditions and youth today**

#### **3.3.1 Introduction**

Cultural traditions and expectations can place disproportionate constraints on girls and challenge the physical and psychological health and integrity of girl children and female young adults. This is most evident in the practices such as child marriage and female genital cutting. Child marriage is common in cultures where female children are undervalued. They are regarded as an additional expense to the family in cultures where dowry is to be paid. The smaller dowries of younger girls are one incentive for marrying them off early. Another factor is the common belief that an early marriage ensures a longer period of fertility. Parents also tend to think that, if they give away their girl children to be married that will ensure that they do not get pregnant outside of marriage and bring shame on themselves and their family (see Mueller 2006:29).

The practice of female genital cutting is a rite of passage that takes place also in Mozambican societies. This practice puts young women at risk of infection and infertility as well as severe blood loss, shock, and it can sometimes cause death. Female genital cutting is intended to reduce female sexual desire in order to prevent young women from wanting to engage in sexual activity. Having no sexual pleasure would mean that they will not stray outside of marriage where sex is a necessity rather than a pleasure

for women. Young women and their families fear social rejection if they refuse to participate in this cultural practice.

Cultural norms also place girls and young women at increased risk of HIV infection. About 7.3 million young women are living with HIV or AIDS compared to 4.5 million young men in Mozambique. Child marriage to an older man increases the chance of infection, as young women are forced to marry older or polygamous men, who are at increased risk of already being infected. Child brides cannot request of their husband to use a condom for fear of being condemned and divorced (see Mudime, Mozambican Women's Workshop, October 2016).

Traditional practices are meant to give young people access to the cultural heritage of their ethnic group and offer them citizenship. They also serve to build identity and integrate young people into the community. Today young people are influenced by global trends, especially with regard to clothing, music, dances and lifestyle. This can even be seen in the villages of the country. Young people have to navigate between conserving traditional customs and values and creating their own identity in interaction with the broader world in which they live and to which they have access today. The youth in rural areas of Mozambique make up a significant number of the population. It is important that they are included in the political, economic, social and cultural future of the country, in the interest of which the focus should be on capacity building in order to enable young people to fend for themselves and make good decisions which can be to their benefit (see Danesi 1994:37).

Young people have to define their social and cultural identity and become economically independent. Youth search for their place in society and need acceptance from the community. However, because of a lack of possibilities of sustaining themselves, they often remain dependent while, at the same time, they often have to shoulder heavy adult care giving responsibilities. Those who grow up in traditional communities, used to experience life as remaining fairly similar from one generation to the next, structured by the cycles of human life. However, these days even youth in rural communities are more in touch with the modern world than was ever the case before. Their way of life

cannot but be transformed. This should be respected. Each generation has unique characteristics and their identity is influenced by the political, economic, technological and cultural circumstances of their time. As a result, the values and rules connected to the traditional lifestyle of the previous generations are disappearing. Particularly values, norms and practices with regard to sexuality and choosing a partner are going through a significant transformation, influenced by the larger world see (McRobbie 1993:406-4250).

Young people today enjoy a personal freedom that previous generations did not have, but they also suffer from a lack of traditional guidance and support. The ethical and cultural vacuum that young people experience today can put them at risk of not finding their place in society. Literature about youth in Africa confirms that young people increasingly suffer from the loss of basic traditional values, guidance and family support. The key socialization agents in Africa have largely collapsed. Some factors that play a role in this decline include general social change, poverty, and the lack of food security, the phenomenon of teenage pregnancy and the loss of family members due to the AIDS pandemic. Community life has been substantially affected by the decline of social networks, the disappearance of cultural values and to a certain degree the increasingly violent and ruthless behaviour of some people who exert power over young people. The quality of education has declined and the unemployment rate has soared (see Chinguta 2002:6).

### **3.3.2 Sexuality and youth today**

How sexual practices are viewed today is influenced by and based on knowledge gained through modern understandings of sexuality, rather than relying solely on religious or cultural values. Dreyer (2004:919-945) explains it as follows:

In the postmodern world young people no longer accept the values advocated by the institutionalized church as unquestionably relevant to their lives, one of the reasons for this being that the supremacy of the Christian faith has given way to a secularized society. The faith

community has little influence on matters such as science and politics, social issues, matters of everyday life and death. People are educated and free to make their own decisions. They live according to their own insights and out of their own strength.

Contemporary understandings of sex and sexuality are crucial to the youth of today. Where faith communities still do have some influence on young people, conversations and education on biological, genetic and socio-genetic health matters should be included. Sexual identity is formed by both gender as a cultural construct and biological sex as a natural given. Dreyer (2004:919-945) explains the development of cultural constructs with regard to sex and gender as follows:

During the modern era the marriage covenant was slowly eroded by the process of secularization which was set in motion by Romanticism; the romantic view, sexuality was to express and strengthen emotional bonds, intimacy and friendship. Pleasure derived from sexual activity had value in itself and should not necessarily be restricted to contexts where emotional ties exist. The norm for sexuality should be mutual consent. However opposing both traditionalist and romantic attitudes have influenced faith communities. Both the traditionalist and the romantic ideas led to a reduction of sexuality. Traditionalism and romanticism tend toward essentialist view of sexuality in its significance to inherent within certain acts or practices, irrespective of context, effects, or the intentions of the actors. Traditionalism and romanticism are prescriptive and normative in their approach to sexuality. Such approach does not adequately take into account the great variety of meanings and experiences related to sexuality.

An awareness of the great change that has taken place in social life is needed if adequate guidance is to be given to the young people of today. Theologians and scholars should consider the reality of the vast differences in the contexts of the

Eastern and Western Mediterranean, the medieval, Catholic and Protestant to the modern and postmodern world. Understandings of sexuality and sexual practices cannot have been homogeneous over time, but are the result of an endless variety of factors, the consequence of which can be recognized in different times among different societies. These changes produce different sexual practices, experiences, values and meanings. Sexuality as a social construct will always be changing over to time. When socio-cultural and technological changes take place as rapidly as they do in the present era, this widens the gap between the (traditional) past and the (global) past. The challenge today is to find spiritual guidance that people will find relevant and acceptable to their lives today and that is based on the biblical message of redemption and a life lived fully and joyously in the presence of God without blind submission to outdated social and cultural constructs.

### **3.3.3 Culture and religion**

Though culture is not necessarily an indicator of religion, a careful assessment of the beliefs of a certain group of people and the religious orientation of families, can have an impact on how to best support young people to adhere both to their culture and their faith in a healthy way (see Gone 2004:10-18). Religious and cultural views can restrict the independence and freedom of young people. Some especially place limitations on female persons. Religious and cultural beliefs can also prescribe what is regarded as “acceptable behaviours and goals”. This too can be restrictive and not always healthy for individuals, especially female persons. Over against such oppressive attitudes, cultures and faith communities should encourage children and young people to make their voices be heard and to share their opinions with the community and religious leaders. Rather than restrict young people and banish them to the margins of the community and faith community, they can be invited to participate in community activities and in worship service. In this way they can developing a strong alliance to the community and the faith community, know that they are welcome, that they belong, that they are taken seriously and that the future of the community and faith community lies with them. It is important to work in consultation with church leaders especially the

clergy, healers, and other figures in the community to validate young people and their contribution to the society.

If religion is to continue making a contribution into the future, new members should be made (see Osmer and Schweitzer 2003:xii). One way of doing this is to rely on educating of youth so that they will know and continue to follow their tradition. It is also important for traditions to be reformed and reinterpreted in such a way that each new generation can find answers to the questions of their time and place. This ongoing transmission and reconstruction of values and beliefs it will keep traditions alive. However, the impression is that faith communities have some difficulty in persuading the youth to participate. Maybe that is because they have difficulty in showing young people that and how tradition can have significant meaning for their lives.

Dutch practical theologian, Gijs Dingemans (1991:34) explains the task of young people and adults in language that is relevant also to the current situation in Africa and in Mozambique:

Young people now contribute to society by finding work. Young and adult are bound together by the fear of depleted resources, a destroyed environment and the weapons of mass destruction of world powers and smaller powers. Religion as personal experience of meaning and happiness has become the vogue again. It is a way of finding oneself in a confusing and alienating world. This is not the religion of faith communities and young people are not drawn to the church. A change in sexual attitude has also taken place. Young people have a different view on sexuality and traditional roles in society where morality is guided by cultural norms.

Hamerton-Kelly (1991:22) points out that biblical patriarchy has been used to mystify the right of male persons to privilege that is denied women who are not included but excluded from social rights and activities. Power and prestige are given to men for the

benefit of men. In the first-century Mediterranean context of the Bible family belonged to the father. This cultural understanding of society served as an analogy for the concept of the kingdom of God. The father was seen as God's representative. His role was to ensure that people should worship and obeyed God. Belonging to a family was a requirement for receiving God's blessing. Within the family, the father's status was divinely ordained.

Biblical patriarchy which is a cultural construct of ancient Mediterranean societies cannot simply be taken over today as the religious guideline of what community relationships should look like. Biblical patriarchy stands in direct opposition to the teachings and acts of Jesus and the gospel message of equal access to God for all people irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender or social status. Cultural patriarchy in the today's should also be critically examined for its oppressive tendencies, its severe limitation of the larger half of the population, namely women, and its abuse of female bodies, both adult and child. In the language of today this can be characterized as human rights violations.

### **3.3.4 Culture and gender**

Gender constructs of what it means to be female has throughout history and in African cultures been based on the role of the woman as mother and the one responsible for household work. Women were to see to it that other female members of the household regularly bore children. The responsibility for ensuring that everyone was fed required careful stewardship of the resources of the household. This control on the part of the mother over those areas for which she was responsible is taken over by the father once the boys become young men and are required to participate in the communal activities of the society and in the village. The mother transmits the traditions of the community to her children. Female children are taught wisdom and respect, which includes that women take the last place at the table during the meals, serve others, forgive them their wrongs, have compassion, and heal memories when offence has taken place (see Stone 2005:25).

Societies and cultures are dynamic and are continually being renewed and reshaped. In culture also gender definitions change over time. The changes are influenced by several factors. Cultural change occurs as communities and households respond to social and economic shifts associated with globalization, the appearance of new technologies, environmental pressures, new development projects and disagreements among ethnic groups that can lead to armed conflict and severely disrupt their lives. In Mozambique such conflict influenced the psyche and prospects of an entire generation.

In patriarchal societies it is believed that the presence of a male would prevent a woman from bringing shame on the family. It also guarantees procreation. When a husband is absent, the wife has to obey the wishes and instructions of other males in the society. This happens under close social scrutiny. When the man is away, he will be represented by his children and his wife acts as his authorized agent. She is responsible for protecting her husband's interests (see Boring 1997:36-43).

The spread of HIV and AIDS due to unhealthy sexual practices is largely due to the fragmentation of gender identities and the inequalities between the two genders (see Barolsky 2003:36). Social constructs with regard to gender and sexuality have become recognized as critical for the understanding of the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS in the African context and the way in which the disease has developed.

Children who grow into puberty, both boys and girls, have to contend with hormonal changes in their bodies. They have to make sense of this by using the skills taught to them by their culture and society. If their communities are patriarchal and give unlimited power to male persons over female bodies and their society is fraught with sexual abuse, sexual violence and the use of sex to gain power and as a source of income, young persons are not equipped with healthy social skills to navigate the confusing life stage of puberty and adolescence. They are also not equipped for living a constructive life in respectful relationships with others as adults. Cornell et al (2003:26) explain masculinity as a social construct in an African context as follows:

The concept of manhood is a meaning and making process constructed by issues such as sexual power and control. Similarly, in the context of manhood the meaning endeavored to find out how men prove that they understand their manhood. Their findings included the identification of a certain dominant behaviour in African men who assert their manhood, and include the exercising of control over women and engaging in coercive sexual power. In addition, some men do not behave in this way, it seems that there exists a skewed paradigm of manhood and sex, and of gender and sexuality. In Africa there is a paradigm of social constructions which are contributing to the spread of HIV and AIDS.

The prevalence of HIV in some African countries contributes to awareness of the powerful cultural and societal discourses which tell boys and girls how to behave in this world. It is a discourse which is not sensitive to equality, healthy practices and age, but rather puts young people in a position where they are at risk. Therefore, it is important to take a closer look at cultural and societal discourses underlying the notion of gender and sex, since this is where radical change should take place if a generation is to be saved from self-destruction. The growing number of infected people calls for measures to reduce the spread of this disease. It calls for a thorough and critical investigation and evaluation of the cultural and religious messages that are transmitted to young people, especially with regard to gender equality and respect for all human beings. HIV/AIDS is redefining and challenging society as never before. It challenges people's understandings of what constitutes being an adult in terms of rights and behaviours (see Barolsky 2003:19).

Most of the literature focuses on females as the victims of sexual oppression, dominance and abuse experienced at the hands of their partners. Everyone is in agreement that the construction of male sexuality is at fault for these practices. However, for reasons unknown, these constructions are not adequately addressed by state or religion in order to influence and encourage real and substantial change. Women are the focus of interventions. However, they still lack the power to successfully negotiate safer sex from their spouses. Not only do constructions of sexuality affect the

reality of HIV and AIDS, but they also continue to affirm male power that is exerted through sexual acts. The blame for the origin of the disease, however, is placed on women. The notion of male authority is not questioned and women still struggle to set new types of sexual boundaries. Change should start with both men and women and also with the messages of society and religion as to what it means to be a man or a woman. Constructions of male sexuality within African societies on the one hand pose men as the victims of women's primal charms. On the other hand men are urged to be the initiator of sex and to have sex with multiple partners, in order to be seen as an African identical and powerful man (see Barolsky 2003:37-38).

Gender identities and gender relations are critical aspects of culture because they shape the way in which daily life is lived in the family, but also in the wider community and the workplace. Expectations about attributes and behaviours appropriate to women or men and about the relationships between women and men are shaped by culture. Gender, like race or ethnicity, functions as an organizing principle for society because of the cultural meanings given to being male or female. This is evident in the division of labour and social activities according to gender. In most societies there are clear indications of what is regarded as women's work and men's work, both in the household and in the wider community. Culture and religion also explain why this is and should be so. Religion even declares it to be the Divine will. The explanations differ among societies and religions and change over time. Gender relations change over time. However, still today most women in the global world have less personal autonomy, fewer resources at their disposal, and have but a limited influence in the decision-making processes that shape their societies and their own lives. This pattern of disparity based on gender is human rights, a development; political and religious issues see (Archer 1988:121).

### **3.3.5 Culture and polygamy**

Polygamy is a cultural practice that is still to be found in Mozambique today. Since it was also a cultural practice in biblical times, Christians who are in favour of retaining this practice call on the Bible as justification. It is a practice which has a variety of

consequences, especially for women the perception in society of their worth and value as human beings. Slonim and Al-Krenawi (2014:17) explain the term as follows:

Polygamy is a term emerging from Greek terminologies. It refers to multiple marriages practiced by the men. Polygamy can be used in different contexts relating to social, sociobiology, anthropology and sociology. There are some definitions of polygamy which is marriage where a person owns more than one spouse. Anthropologists defined also polygamy as a marital relationship includes many wives. Sociologists see polygamy as a reproductive strategy throughout increasing a number of men, within some communities polygamy is economically benefited throughout increasing the labor power of the family, and also increase prestige and power in the family.

Polygamy is mostly practiced in agrarian communities. Where farming is the main source of income a large labour force is needed (see Nyanseor2009:20). Polygamy is also the answer to the “problem” of the wife giving birth to only female children. The husband will then marry another woman who perhaps can provide male heirs. Thus, polygamy is seen as way to ensure social and economic stability in the family. Children from polygamous marriages are often utilized as the work force on the farm. It is also their task to provide for the parents in old age. Some cultures are proud of polygamy and the large numbers of children they produce in order to ensure their social and economic position. Some societies and cultures consider polygamy as a reproductive strategy by men to increase their productivity. Polygamous marriages are most prevalent in the rural regions of developing nation and in communities with a generally low level of education. In polygamous marriages the relationships between the sexes are extremely traditional; more often is the case in monogamous marriages. In polygamous marriages men are the absolute master in a family. Men can decide at any point in time to marry as many women as they choose. The focus of marriage in African communities where polygamy is prevalent is mostly on reproduction.

The consequences of polygamous relations are cultural, political, social, economic, behavioural and psychological. Women in polygamous marriages often have low self-esteem. Many experience their life as that of a slave because they lack a voice and cannot participate in decision-making regarding their own lives. They have to wait upon “the master” to make decisions on their behalf. In societies where there are more women than men, often the result of wars and ethnic conflict, polygamy is seen as a solution to the problem of social numbers. Modernized women reject the practice of polygamy because they consider it an old demeaning custom which retards their development as human beings. They would like to see this social custom eliminated (see Al-Krenawi et al. 2006:46-61).

Polygamy can also have a negative effect on the mental health of today’s youth. Family structure has an effect on the mental health of children. A problem in polygamous families is that children are often more likely to be aggressive, exhibit behavioural problems, have difficulties in communication and have adjustment problems. They also tend to have a poor self-concept. There is a high rate of attrition at school among them, as well as early sexual activity and the abuse of drugs and alcohol. Children’s wellbeing is affected due to malnutrition and the low level of interest and care they tend to receive from their parents. Family conflict tends to be high in polygamous families (see Bramham 2009:11), which also has a detrimental effect on children.

Polygamy is a general phenomenon in some African countries, mostly in rural areas, because families need to increased numbers in order to sustain their labour force and production. Women and children are forced to work as farm labourers. Women in polygamous marriages tend to have a lower status in society. They are stigmatized and discriminated against. The inequality among the co-wives also has an effect on the mental health of the “lower” wives and can lead to psychological problems. The many children in these marriages you are used for unpaid labour often do not have the opportunity to procure a good education, which does not bode well for their future. Children who live in polygamous families generally have attained only a low level of education and have difficulties with regard to social adjustment. Polygamy is considered

a serious social problem threatens and damages families and individuals. Therefore, the issue of polygamy should be investigated in further research so that recommendations can be made and solutions given to help communities to avoid the risks that ensue from this cultural and social practice (see Shepard 2013:47-62).

### **3.4 Information technology, the media and youth**

Children in Mozambique have access to media from their early age, especially those who live in urban areas and have access of television. The older they become the greater the access and the wider the variety of media to which they are exposed. The accessibility to the Internet that is now to be found even on cell phones opens a new world of information for the youth. Hoover (2006:142) describes it as follows:

Today children and young people live in complex media saturated environments influenced by television, digital video recorders, and computers, the Internet, iPods and printed media. The media are inseparable part from young people's daily lives; this is the only world youth were brought up by. Some adult people may try to avoid the media, but it is not really possible to do so as the media comes in different forms of multimedia and it is available almost everywhere. Therefore, technological development is inherited in shaping youth culture in today context forms an important basis to participate in culture and society in the contemporary world, and because media is a source in the context through which traditional symbols, ideas and values are made available for young people to learn from.

The idea is that it is the responsibility of users themselves to discern what is harmful and what not in order to refrain from engaging with negative or destructive information. The Internet provides easy access to pornography which can have far reaching effects, especially for children and teenagers. Pornography is harmful to children and most countries do not allow the sale of pornographic material to children. However in South Africa and some other parts of Africa, many households do not provide adequate

parental guidance for children and young people in this regard. Young people then have easy access to sexually explicit material from an early age without any adult guidance (see Le Roux 2010:41-48).

The media provide young people with knowledge, different experiences and ideas. The communication developments of technology make a significant contribution for youth to be exposed a variety of social, economic and political understandings. Youth and the media are in a complementary relationship: the media need the youth to be their market for economic survival and the youth need the media to guide and nurture their lives in a society where institutions such as the family and school are no longer the only formative influences on their life and future. The media have much improved the cultural communication with young people and have enabled them to make their contribution to society in a way that has been unheard of before. The voice of the youth is heard and holds much sway in the global world today. The media is seen as a resource to help young people find their way in a dynamically changing society (see Mueller 2006:27). However, parents and family are still the primary influence in young people's life. The family is the context where children first come to an understanding of the world and learn about God and themselves (see Nel 2000:19). A theological understanding of the role of family centres on of mutual loving care, where the development of self-identity, personal maturity, a moral compass and spiritual formation are fostered.

In addition to the primary formative role of the family, young people are also heavily influenced in their development by the media. This has an effect on their education, personal relationships, employment opportunities, and the like. The media comprise a powerful tool through which young people can access information about sexual reproductive health. With access to this kind of information, the youth can learn about their sexual and reproductive rights and make better informed decisions about their lives (see Cook, et al 2003:3).

A negative aspect of the mass media today is the propagation of violence, particularly on television and in the video and film industry. Much of the film content on television contains scenes of violence, sexual violence and misconduct on the part of young people. The perpetrators of murder and acts of violence are often portrayed as heroes.

Home video is very popular in Mozambique and much of its content also has the same theme of violence and the glorification of violence. The Bishops' Group (2003:23) has shown that children who watch violence on screen in their early years are most prone to violent behaviour later in life.

Another negative aspect of the media is that young people tend to implement and emulate what they see or read on media. In the emerging culture today it is important to the youth to be popular and famous. They try to emulate the lifestyle of famous or successful people in other contexts and on other continents as presented by the media. To dress like they do, to walk like they do and to do things that resemble their lifestyle, is seen as a significant sign of a young person's social standing. The closer a young person's attitude and self-presentation is to that of famous people in other contexts, with other norms and values, the greater the opportunity opens to improve their social position. Young people are misled by the media into thinking that they have vast individual choices and opportunities to believe, think, behave and dress as those presented by the media as successful. However, the addiction to this vicarious lifestyle leaves real ordinary individuals without a properly identified culture or identity. The sad side of the exposure of the young people of Mozambique to foreign media is that what is regarded as the norm for beauty on other continents and the lifestyle that is regarded as successful by them goes hand in hand with the rejection of their own culture (see Ojiha 2006:48).

According to Eckersley (1998:9), media presentations of controversial social issues do not only serve as a barometer of public opinion by monitoring socially appropriate attitudes, but people who hold views divergent from the mainstream are also effectively silenced by the norms created by the media. This means that if anyone in the community disagrees with the opinions expressed in the media they are unlikely to express their dissent. This is described as "a spiral of silence". Therefore, the media does not serve to reflect public opinion as a whole, but creates and promotes certain images that contribute to community attitudes. Therefore the media has the power and influence in part, to create public opinion. According to Bastian et al (2014:421-429), a function of the media is to enable the community to define itself.

Young people are often seen by mainstream culture as problematic, unmotivated, difficult and antisocial. The impression is that young people are curious about sexual matters. This is in accordance with their developmental stage where sexuality emerges. The media zoom in on these needs of the youth and provide different forms of entertainment that can address these needs. Some young people obtain their information with regard to sexual matters from peers groups and/or the media. The media not only provide information about sex, but also have a powerful influence on the sexual attitudes and behaviours of adolescents; given the amount of time they spend exposed to the media where sexual content is readily available. Changing sexual attitudes and behavior as reflected in the media, include premarital and extramarital sexual activity which are portrayed as commonplace (see Gouws, Kruger and Burger 2000:110).

It is clear that young people need guidance on how to understand what is happening to them emotionally, physically and spiritually with regard to their growth and sexual development. They also need guidance as to how to respond appropriately to the changes in their bodies which affect all of their present and future lives. Currently, it information technology speaks to these issues, including sex and sexuality, but often misuses these human needs for its own economic benefit. Often other social institutions, such as families and the faith community, are silent about these matters and simply become passive bystanders when it comes to the development of young people's sexuality and sexual behaviours.

Community education can be a strategy and mechanism to provide healthy inform with regard to what the advantages and disadvantages are or being young in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Advocacy for young people is needed. Society should be educated as to the negative impact of stereotyping young people and the damage that is caused to them when they are devalued as human beings and full members of and participants in society. Media can make a positive contribution if problems affecting the youth today are identified and communities are educated in this regard. The contribution of the

media is not only about the stories that are reported, but also to provide a forum for young people to voice alternative understandings and interpretations of events reported in the media(see Bishops' Group 2003:19).

The electronic media is a strong influence with regard to organizations and individual's opinions. In Mozambique radio can play the largest role. Television is inaccessible to many because of the high costs involved, whereas radio is believed to be fairly easily accessed. Community radio can announce youth-organized events. It can provide young people with a voice if they invite listeners to phone in and participate in discussions. Radio attracts large numbers of listeners especially in the rural areas where people often gather to listen together. The medium of radio is a forum through which harmful dominant social discourses can be challenged. The role of the media should be constantly reviewed in order to ascertain whether it is playing a role in reinforcing stereotypes that serve to replicate the message that benefits only certain groups of people to the detriment of others. Experienced journalists can work to strengthen journalistic standards by encouraging audiences to participate and point out when there is another side to the story which has not been heard properly. Balanced reporting in radio will make it possible for more accurate information to be disseminated. This can lead to a clearer understanding of what can be improved with regard to the reporting of complex social issues (see Miles and Huberman 2000:112).

A crucial point that emerges in relation to community education, particularly with regard to the media, is the importance and necessity to give voice to the young people. The absence of young people's voices in the community and media goes against the notion of fair and balanced reporting. There is a need for young people to explain events as they experience them, to give their side of the story, or to set the record straight. This should be possible on both public and private media. The responsibility for ensuring that young people's voices are heard should come from the government, the youth themselves, the faith community and community leaders.

The influence of information technology and media on youth culture is evident in its pervasive presence in young people's lives. Violent and sexually explicit content is

easily available across the various forms of the media. At the same time, it should be acknowledged that the media is a source of information on almost everything and therefore cannot be described only as a negative element in young people's lives. Young people search on media for information and education on sexual matters especially in cultures where sex is not discussed by families or in faith communities. The question could therefore be raised: are young people merely passive consumers with regard to media messages on sex and sexuality? The answer is not simply yes, because youth are capable of reasoning and abstract thinking. However, if the various media are the primary educators on sex and sexuality and there are no other voices, such as those of parents and faith communities who can put the conversation on sex and sexuality in a moral context, the result can be one-sided and not conducive to a balanced view. There is need for alternative voices to those of the media to guide youth in making choices with regard on how to live out their sexuality with dignity and respect for themselves and others (see Schultze 1991:11).

### **3.5 Youth, community and the faith community**

Low-esteem and anger have implications for young people whose behaviour often cause negative reaction and forms negative perceptions of them in the community. These perceptions can be far-reaching and multidimensional. In the first instance, young people feel devalued and worthless. This, for some, leads to thoughts of why bother to try and do the right thing if everybody automatically thinks they are doing wrong. Others become angered by what they see as the shallow and false assumptions the community makes about them. This anger sometimes leads to violence and antisocial behaviour. Young people are disturbed by what they see as injustice if the community treats all young people as though they were dangerous or bad. Community constructs of what young people are, impact on and influence the in a way that is damaging both in the short term, in terms of their aggressive responses, and in the long term, in terms of their internalized low self-esteem (see Krinsky 2008:28).

The concept of discourse in community attitudes means that methods should be employed to identify both the broad and dominant points of view held by the

Mozambican community about young people, the variety of less dominant sometimes overlapping views that are also part of community attitudes. Those who measure public attitudes on a great level may use large population and refers to the public opinion. Public opinion on this regard should provides the context for the broader discourse around young people, it is often within the smaller communities and specific locations where young people are living and the discourses affecting them to have the greatest impact and the community attitudes are often formed. Such community attitudes are found in locations where children go regularly including schools, church institutions, and streets, public transport, the home and shopping centres (see Beck 1995:10).

In Mozambique community attitudes and opinion should increase the role in policy development and assessment across a range of government and public sector activity. The cause and effect of influence between community attitudes and public policy is complex as deciding when and whether young are represented and have a voice on decision making. It is clear that the statements and policies made by governments at all levels of African countries and local should interpret public opinion understood by local governments, those statements and decisions should have an ongoing influence on community attitudes. When understood in both these ways, public policy should be claimed to be a significant part of the dominant discourse of a society (see Whelan 2013:777-790).

The faith community is often passive and not comfortable to speak out on sexual matters. Some very complex issues in this regard include the sexuality of single people, the ordination without regard for sexual orientation, the increasing plurality of marital and family styles and adolescent pregnancy. The discrepancy between what the faith community teaches officially and the actual sexual practices of clergy, often leads to confusion among young people and brings the church into disrepute in society. Sexual matters and questions are complex, diverse and often faith communities neglect to respond because they do not have answers. Unfortunately, their silence gives the media the opportunity to fill the gap and take the lead in the discussion with young people on sexual matters. Though there is silence on the part of faith communities,

there is much open debate and discussion on sexual issues today. People seek guidance on how to express their sexuality. Faith communities should take part in this discourse and offer guidance from a sound theological perspective. Sometimes there is a tendency to emphasize the difficulties and differences on issues and to neglect those things on which there is some clarity and which could be a constructive point of departure (see Cooksey and Dooms 2010:110).

Sexuality without the benefit of adequate modal guidance and education does not provide the best outcome for young people's lives. The faith community has various platforms that can be utilized for the orientation of young people with regard to sexual matters. Such platforms include youth groups, catechesis and sermons. Space can be created for young people to discover biblical guidelines and gain an understanding of the complex matter of sex and sexuality. Faith communities should provide a space where questions can be asked and discussed. This can provide the opportunity for young people to come to an understanding of God, themselves and others and what a safe and respectful space for sexuality would entail. In order to also create a truly safe space faith communities cannot be judgmental with regard to adolescents and their behaviour, but should make an effort and take time to gain some understanding of the views and rationale underlying their behaviour (see Enfield 2003:112).

The young people believe that negative perceptions are based on the fact that they look different, mostly because of the kind of clothing they wear. They often feel that judgments are made on the basis of superficial external things rather than on an understanding of they are. They are often blamed and falsely accused for things and sensational accounts of what young people do are reported in the media. Young people feel that the negative attitudes of adult persons and the harsh judgments directed at them cause them to feel devalued and excluded from the society. It reduces their confidence and self-esteem. Living with such negative attitudes also undermines their self-respect to the extent that the attitudes in society become self-fulfilling prophecies because they create anger and a mistrust of older people (see Auten 1990:811).

Young people often see themselves and their peers in a positive light, though they are aware that some young people feel pressured, are vulnerable, need mentors, have a need to belong and are financially disadvantaged and dependent. They feel the need for more meaningful exposure to and relationships with adult people. An effective way of facilitating engagement with youth is through opening dialogue for communication. It is better to engage in serious conversation with the youth, rather than dictating to them what to do. This means that both parties should be acknowledged and taken seriously in this process. This also underscores the relational nature of youth work. In order to create this kind of honest dialogue, Firet (1986:156) emphasizes that it should be interaction between equal human beings. This implies that young people are not less human than adults. They cannot be patronized in this conversation and only be on the receiving end of information. They should not be approached with the bias that young people necessarily have problems that have to be solved. In this space it is important that the stories of the young people are listened to and appreciated. This interaction and acknowledgement of one another as equals should meet the need of youth to belong and be respected for being fully human. Faith communities, local government and schools can work together to provide the necessary education and to foster a relationship of trust to develop between the youth and adults. Mutual respect and the acknowledgment of their achievements as well as providing opportunities for literacy and poverty alleviation will benefit both youth and adults.

A crucial element with regard to education is a social environment where young people can be nurtured and cared for. Family is both a structure and a process where identity, character and spiritual formation can take place. Adequate parental guidance on sex and sexuality to youth should include the following:

- parents should have sufficient knowledge;
- there should be open conversation about sensitive matters;
- parents should provide good information about sexuality to their children;

- sex education should not be seen as the sole task of the school;
- parents should have time with their children;
- parents should communicate effectively with adolescents.

Parents should therefore be well equipped to raise children especially in this media-advanced era. The faith community plays a vital role in educating and assisting parents in their task as both educators and spiritual leaders. The attitudes of parents with regard to the youth, especially when it comes to matters of sex and sexuality, can often be traced back to how the media report on the attitudes, behaviour and values of young people (see Anderson 2014:260–263).

From a theological and ethical perspective, Kretzchmar and Hully (1998:52) describe both love and sex as a gift from God. In education on sexuality it is important for young people to have an understanding of the consequences of sexual practices. If they are given only two extreme options, namely either giving themselves over to sexual desires, or completely abstaining from any form of sex and repressing their sexual desire, this amounts to an over simplification of sexuality. The advice to repress their sexuality is based on the fallacy that the self and the body can be separated. This kind of understanding of sex and sexuality is not healthy and does not help young people in any way. Sexuality and sex is not a private matter but a communal one. It is also about how people live their lives in God's presence. Faith communities should take the opportunity to teach and discuss sexuality and sex in a responsible and healthy way. Cooksey and Dooms (2010:106) put it as follows:

Sexuality is more on what should be done on a positive appreciation of sex and sexuality as God given. A more responsible view of sex and sexuality would be positive and focus on religious dimensions, sexuality and sex is a normal part of human being and therefore should not be ignored. Sexuality touches the very fabric of human life. It is an integral part of being human and a way of expressing intimacy. Sexuality is also a spiritual issue as it can be described as the longing for the other. The close connection between spirituality and sexuality, are the expression

of hunger and longing for connection with each other, but also with the transcendent. The education on sex and sexuality should be more positive than the over-moralization which could make youth feel guilty and ashamed of their sexuality. Being positive about their sexuality implies being informed about their responsibility as to how they live out their sexuality, as it is not a private matter but one that influences the community and the society at large. It means that youth understand that sex is not only a genital function, but involves a total being. The risky sexual behaviour of youth, as engaging in sexual intercourse at a very young age (e.g. 12–13 years old) having multiple sexual partners, gives the impression that they are misinformed on the matter.

Parents grew up in a period when sex and sexuality were not openly discussed. They are not always sure how to have this conversation with their children. Faith communities should be of help in assisting parents to be more comfortable with their own sexuality and learn to be open to such a conversation with their children. However, faith communities can never take the place or take over the responsibility of the parents. Faith communities are there to support the parents' in their role as primary educators of the youth.

A partnership between faith communities and family is needed to address the moral education of the youth. In the media-advanced culture in which they live, youth are connected with people around the world, with whom they do not necessarily have a personal relationship. If parents do not make quality time for their children to create a local, safe space where youth have the courage and opportunity to ask about sex and sexuality, the situation will continue to deteriorate and youth will turn to the media and friends as their primary educators on these issues. At the same time, it is not possible to avoid the media and its possible influence on the sexual attitudes and behaviour toward youth. Cooksey and Dooms (2010:105) emphasize that faith communities today face many challenges regarding sexuality, including HIV and AIDS, sexual violence, homosexuality, different forms of marriage and family life and the influence of the media. This challenges the faith community to put effort into the matter. Often the views

of the church do not seem relevant or provide sufficient guidance on the questions asked by young people. Faith communities should be aware of their theological history with regard to views on sexuality and sex and how this influences their message today. Faith communities should make more effective use of the opportunities they do have to engage with young people and take their place in the current discourse on sex and sexuality.

The involvement of young people in decision-making is one strategy for dealing with negative perceptions that many communities in Mozambique have of young people. If the youth are given the opportunity and the responsibility to participate in finding solutions rather than being regarded as the trouble makers, it can serve as a positive motivation for them, and can counteract the negative perceptions of adults. There is a need to recognize that youth can be leaders in the community, that they can be relied on to marshal and protect their peers if given the chance to demonstrate their skills and realize their potential (see Nel 2000:29). This strategy of including youth in community activities can contribute to altering the negative perceptions about young people in the community. This strategy should include suggestions on how to assist young people to negotiate the adult world. The current situation is considered to be the result of misinformation and misunderstanding.

To engaging marginalized youth represents a significant challenge in society today, because such young people are often disconnected from social systems and their environment. Youth engagement is a key contributor to development and facilitating positive change. Creating youth development opportunities is the joint responsibility of all institutions and sectors of society. This study emphasizes a youth-centered approach to building positive and meaningful relationships with marginalized youth by respectfully working together and engaging youth in a friendly way. The aim is to identify the gaps in social provision for young people with regard to high-risk conditions and behaviours such as poverty, homelessness, depression, abusive and health-risk behaviours, mental disorder challenges and social exclusion.

Young people need guidance with regard to personal issues, academic pursuits and their search for employment. This guidance is particularly important for those young people whose families are not available to fulfill this role. Faith communities should build young people's confidence and develop skills by exposing them to learning opportunities and providing a safe space for them to experiment, try things out and ask questions. They can, for instance be taught negotiating skills or to debate a point of view with confidence. The aim is to help them develop strategies to deal with the systems and structures in society in order that they can take control of their own lives (see Chapin 2000:781-799).

According to Osmer & Schweitzer (2003:218), a public practical theology has the potential to contribute to the common good by supporting youth to become good citizens in society. Practical theology has an understanding of what is at stake when it comes to Christian religious education in relation to the public. Both practical theology and the work of faith communities have a public dimension to their task and a broader responsibility to society as a whole. Practical theology therefore should take into account the social, cultural, and political situation which analyzes and address the situation of young people in faith community, in communities and in society.

A strategy for empowering young people to become productive and responsible members of the community is to educate them to know their culture and tradition and give them guidance as to how to take this rich heritage into the future with them. However, traditions are not stagnant and cannot always be applied to current situations in the same way that they operated in the past. It is important for traditions to be reformulated and reinterpreted in such a way that each new generation can find answers to the questions of their time and context. This ongoing transmission of knowledge and reconstruction is what keeps traditions alive according to the dynamic of culture. Religious education should take up its role in public life. Education should be seen broadly in its variety of cultural manifestations, all of which have the possibility of infusing transcendence into everyday life (see Osmer & Schweitzer 2003: xii).

Youth unemployment is an area which affects youth development and the understanding of people is considered youth as lazy who are unwilling to work. For young people, however, it is not about unwillingness or laziness. It is more about a lack of opportunities because of their exclusion from social structures. The non-governmental organizations that operate in Mozambique often do not prioritize equipping young people for the labour market. Some young people shy away from having to make a decision that would involve a lifelong commitment. This is a daunting prospect for a population who are distrustful of such commitments (see Burke et al. 1991:542-579).

If young people are to be guided to become responsible citizens who contribute to society and take responsibility for their actions, they should also be provided with protection (see Kanyadago 1991:156). Some young people are extremely vulnerable and unsafe when they are away from the family in an attempt to procure employment. This requires a mixture of a welfare agenda and a justice agenda. This can lead to some inconsistency in the way youth are approached. On the one hand they are seen as part of a family. Should they act in ways that is seen as antisocial or behave in an aggressive way, the parents are held accountable. On the other hand, youth who commit a crime are expected to take full responsibility for their actions. Young people need to be oriented as to their transition from childhood to adulthood, what this entails and what their responsibilities are. They should be guided and equipped for taking up these responsibilities.

### **3.6 Summary**

This chapter has addressed the influence of culture on youth. It investigated young people's attitudes toward engagement with popular culture. It described the processes and influences with regard to the formation of social and cultural identity and identified young people's place and their role in the community. The chapter provided an overview of youth culture and how the media shape youth culture today. It focused on the free access to sexual content in the media and the effect that this can have on youth culture today.

This chapter has found that there are ranges of community attitudes towards young people which include strong negative perceptions and much stereotyping of young people. However, young people generally view themselves positively. Different factors are seen to influence social attitudes towards the youth. However, adults who have close and personal contact with young people are more likely to report positive perceptions and are able to contextualize the negative perceptions that exist in society. Adults with little or no personal contact with young people are more likely to be influenced by media reports, opinions of others, and what they generally regard as the problematic nature of young people.

The chapter has established that negative discourses about young people exist in Mozambican society. It has also established that, because of this, access of young people to resources and participation in society is often restricted. This affects their sense of connection with and belonging to the community. The chapter has identified the failure of current communities and society to recognize young people, their needs and their potential contribution to building up society. However, there are enthusiastic positive voices that articulate confidence in young people, both in terms of their potential and in what they are contributing.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **EDUCATION AND YOUTH MINISTRY**

#### **4.1 Concerns and needs of youth**

This chapter will focus on youth education, as well as the hopes, concerns and needs of young people and children in the context of present-day Mozambique. The main objective of this study is to develop a model for holistic youth ministry which is specific and appropriate to this particular complex context. The purpose of the study is to gain a deeper understanding of the current provision of education and training of youth, identifying the most effective institutions, educational practices, stakeholder collaboration and networking strategies that can be used to improve the quantity and quality of education. This study has sought to understand the extent and the causes of the many challenges that confront the education sector, and to seek and propose solutions. It is hoped that the research findings will provide both state and non-state actors with policy and other recommendations that can contribute to planned interventions and which can result in more a effective governance and co-ordination of the sector.

The concerns and needs of youth today include physical and sexual violence, child marriage, child labour and child trafficking that continue to be prevalent in Mozambique. The number of orphans and vulnerable children continues to increase, especially as a result of HIV and AIDS. Extended families and communities in Mozambique have historically represented the first line of response. This traditional support system is increasingly under pressure as the number of children in need of care grows dramatically. The many forms of harm and abuse that threaten children include sexual abuse and exploitation, living or working on the streets, disability, harmful practices such as child marriage and lack of access to child-friendly justice. The separation of children from their families and instances of unnecessary institutionalization have been increasing recently. Effective child protection should mitigate the risks and vulnerabilities that underlie these abuses. A protected environment for children

supported by a robust child protection system and infrastructure is a rights-based approach to boosting human and economic development. This will improve the health, education the well-being of children which, in turn will enhance their capacities to become good parents, good citizens and productive members of the society in adulthood (see UNICEF report 2016:4).

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and other international and regional instruments, are comprehensive with regard to the need for child protection. Such legal frameworks recognize that children are vulnerable to violations of their basic human rights. Children are accorded the fundamental right to legal as well as social protection from birth. The discussion on the protection of children falls not only on the public but also on the private sector. Together they have the responsibility to safeguard both boys and girls from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect, which includes the unnecessary separation from their family environment. They should also be protected against the effects of emergency situations such as when natural disasters strike. Through appropriate legislative, social with administrative systems and services, including social protection programmes and faith communities, the violation of children's rights should be addressed.

The aim should be to reduce the vulnerability of children and to strengthen their resilience. Key government ministries in Mozambique that are responsible for building, strengthening and sustaining a child protection system, are the Ministry of Gender and Social Action, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior and the judicial courts. All branches of government, civil society and international organizations, alongside informal systems such as families and communities, have a responsibility to cooperate, coordinate as well as collaborate to nurture and sustain efforts to protect the rights of children. Efforts should be focused on increasing awareness as to the rights of children and the obligation of all social groups on all levels of society to harness the resources offered by the state, market or society for the benefit of those who suffer. In the view of young people in Maputo City and its neighborhoods, the public sector has a very limited capability of turning assets such as material goods, education, work experience, into the creation of a livelihood for young people and for protecting children (see Chauque a

speech delivered at the United Methodist Women African gathering Maputo October 2017).

## **4.2 The role of education**

### **4.2.1 Education for development**

The role of educators is to transmit knowledge in the community and create opportunities for discussions on beliefs, feelings and values. The goal is to assess and critically examine harmful social attitudes through providing evidence, arguments, and exchanging points of view. The educator in a community will ascertain what people's understanding of crucial issues are in order to develop a well-informed judgment of the situation. The goal of the educator is to create a community of students who are united in the shared experience of trying to make meaning of their knowledge and experience. The role of educator is to establish an environment that builds trust and care, which facilitates the development of good relationships among students. Education is a crucial part of young people's development and therefore it is important to engage parents in their children's education. Parents should be equipped to provide children and young people with the time, space and support they need in order to learn effectively. Faith communities should encourage greater dialogue between children and parents by working with parents to encourage them to support their children's education (see Dirx et al 2006:3).

Parents and children should be clear on reporting and referral procedures for cases of school-based violence and abuse. They should know how to work in collaboration with Education Authorities and Teachers' Unions and to follow simple procedures. The faith community should urgently address the problems in schools by collaborating with other organizations, especially the education network. They can urge parents and teachers to use alternative forms of discipline at home and in school rather than measures that amount to violence. They can lobby for change in social cultural identity, law and policy where necessary. Where these are already in place, they can support their effective implementation. Youth culture is a social phenomenon and youth are the primary target population for formal education and training. However, often those who are involved in

policy making, say little or nothing about the youth themselves. Bhola (2004:62), on the other hand, places young people in the centre when discussing education:

Education is central to development along with the improvement of the lives of the young people globally, and such has been identified as priority area in development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals and the World Program of Action for youth. Education is important in eradication to poverty and hunger and in promoting sustained, inclusive as well as equitable economic growth and sustainable development. Increased efforts towards education accessibility, quality and affordability are central to global development. Despite significant improvement in increasing primary school enrollment in some regions, the Millennium Development Goal of achieving universal primary level education by 2015 was unlikely to be met. Moreover, such improvements have not necessarily been followed by an equivalent transition to secondary education, vocational training, non formal education or entry into to labour market, especially for girls and young women.

Young people face a difficult time when they have to negotiate the adult world, particularly when attempting to obtain employment. This study emphasizes the need for guidance in this regard. Programmes can be developed and strategies devised to support young people in making a decision with regard to employment options. A mentoring system should be available in which a young person could link up with an older person who knows the system or the field in which the young person is interested. In such a mentoring scheme young people can benefit from the experience of older people, such as, for example, retired solicitors, salespersons or mechanics or people with expertise in the business world. This could be one way of providing relevant and specific guidance to young people (see France 2008:115).

There is a need to align education policies, curricula and training programmes in a people-centric way with National Development Priorities, International Development Strategies and Labour Market Requirements. Aligning education policies will improve the situation of young people and be more effective in combating extreme poverty.

The persistent gender gap in education is detrimental to youth development. Gender inequality in education is characterized by lack of access of educational infrastructure, material and training programs. There is a high dropout rate among secondary school aged girls. Education is a key factor for effective participation of youth in the process of social, economic and political development. There should be access to education and human rights for all, including young women. The provision of opportunities for education is a key to addressing the aspirations and challenges of young people in order that they can fulfill their potential and contribute to society as productive citizens (see Lind 2004:10).

Through education young people can achieve their goals and realize their potential. They should be equipped with the best possible education. Favourable conditions should be created so that they can attain the necessary skills in order to contribute actively to the development of the community. In this globalised and knowledge-based world, every young person should be given the opportunity to contribute to society while fulfilling their potential. Since education aims to transform the way in which people lives and think, the first priority in a society should be to provide its young people with educational opportunities in conditions that are suitable for learning and development. The self-development of youth begins with self-awareness. Young people should be guided effectively in order that they can grow, flourish and prosper. Young people learn about their society, environment, social ethics and values through education.

Young people have an enormous stake in the present and future of Mozambique. If their resources of energy, time, and knowledge are misdirected towards violence, terrorism, socially isolating technologies, and unsustainable consumption, the society of Mozambique risks destabilization and the country has no hope of a positive future.

There is a powerful opportunity for the development of the society if the vast human capital of the youth of the country is given the space and opportunity to participate positively in all aspects of sustainable development. Faith communities and the government should together create conditions for youth to receive a quality education, political support, resources, skills development, and to have the hope that they will be able to fulfill their goals and realize their dreams (see Mário 2002:3-4). The UNICEF Report (2016:4) articulates the right of all people to education as follows:

Education is a human right like other human rights it cannot be taken for granted. Across the world, a high number of children and youth are not enrolled in school. Behind these figures there are children and youth being denied not only a right, but opportunities: a fair chance to get a decent job, to escape poverty, to support their families, and to develop their communities. Decision-makers should set the priorities for global development for the next 15 years. They should make sure to place education high on the list to ensure that boys and girls everywhere complete a full course of primary schooling. Over the last 15 years, governments and their partners have shown that political will concert efforts to deliver tremendous results including halving the number of children and adolescents who are out of school. In addition, most countries are closing in on gender parity at the primary level. In today's knowledge-driven economies, access to quality education and the chances for development are two sides of the same coin. The government should set targets for secondary education, while improving quality and learning outcomes at all levels.

Education combined with sound macro-economic policies, should be considered a key factor in promoting social well-being and poverty reduction. It can have a positive impact on national productivity and shape lifestyle of people and the capability of nations to compete in the global economy. Education is seen internationally as one of the pillars of national development. Poverty will not decline unless everyone everywhere can enjoy

the benefits of quality basic education. Since 1987, the Mozambican government has been implementing a structural adjustment and macro-economic stabilization programme aimed at stimulating economic growth and alleviating poverty in the country. The outcomes of these policies have been a reduction in absolute poverty from about 69.4% in 1997 to 54.1% in 2003. Despite this improvement, poverty rates are still high with notable differences between urban and rural areas. While poverty affects about 55.3% in rural areas, the evidence for urban areas was around 51.5%, these levels of poverty are connected to population and education patterns (see Mario 2002:1).

In the time of the Portuguese colonial regime, educational opportunities for poor Mozambicans were limited (see Abrahamson 1995:11). Most of the black population were illiterate, and could not speak, read or write Portuguese. Most of the political leaders were educated in missionary schools. After independence, the government placed a high priority on expanding education, which reduced the illiteracy rate to about two-thirds. However, in recent years, the constructions of schools and teacher training have not kept up with the increase in the population. With post-war enrollments of children reaching all-time highs, the quality of education in the country has declined. All Mozambican children are required by law, to attend primary school. However, many children cannot attend school because they are obligated to work on the family's farm in order for the family to make ends meet.

#### **4.2.2 Historical overview of education in Mozambique**

Historically there were three phases in the provision of adult literacy programmes in Mozambique. During the civil war in Mozambique many people did not have a chance to study because schools were destroyed, teachers were killed and many more struggles were part of the war period. The first phase of building up the education system began in 1975, after the proclamation of the national independence this phase continued until the mid 1980s. Adult education was recognized as one of the pillars of the National Education System. The second phase began in the mid 1980s and continued until 1995. It was marked by a substantial reduction in adult literacy and education activities due to the destabilization which was the result of the civil war. This affected the country for

more than 16 years (see Mário 2002:2), as was explained in the first chapter of this study.

In addition to the destruction of infrastructure and the loss of human life, the civil war was directly responsible for the influx of millions of Mozambican refugees into neighboring countries and the internal displacement of millions throughout the country. Adult literacy and education efforts were then confined to the cities. The only exceptions were educational opportunities provided by non-government, religious institutions or private individuals who continued on a small scale to give literacy classes in the local languages. This phase ended with the disbanding of the National Adult Education Department (Direcção Nacional de Educação de Adultos – DNEA). The activities of this department were later taken over by the National Basic Education Department (Direcção Nacional do Ensino Básico). The third and last phase began in 1995 and is still in progress. It can be described as a process of the rediscovery and rescue of adult literacy and education (see Mario 2002:2).

#### **4.2.3 The education system in Mozambique**

Education has been an area of priority for both the government and the donors. Targeted public spending can alleviate the financial pressure on families by lowering both the direct and indirect costs to a household of keeping children, including girls, in school. The poorest households are most likely to take their children out of school if there is a decrease in household income or an increase in the cost of education. As a consequence, any crisis in the country can serve to perpetuate the situation of poverty and illiteracy. This directly affects the youth of Mozambique and their future, unless short term assistance is directed to the poorest amongst those whose livelihoods are under threat.

Primary education is free. It is sub-divided into lower primary Grades 1 to 5 and upper primary Grades 6 and 7. A new curriculum was introduced in 2004. Usually, primary schools operate in two sessions (and sometimes three) because of the shortage of school buildings and teachers. The number of children attending primary school has

increased dramatically since the end of the civil war. It has increased from 2.3 million in 1999 to 4 million in 2005 and 5 million in 2009. In 2010 about 92% of the country's children were enrolled in school. However, in 2011 alone, 300,000 children did not have access to primary school and about 29% of children who had completed the lower primary grades could not find a place in the upper primary classes. Unfortunately, the quality of primary education is considered poor (see Ravallion 2012:5).

In 2004, the Ministry of Education (MINED) introduced a new curriculum for basic education. Some critical aspects of the system were reformed. This included the requirement of 7 years of complete and integrated primary schooling. The 2 levels of basic education are currently in the process of being merged into a single tier (*ensino primário completa*, or EPC), comprising a 7 year cycle of primary education. The secondary education consists of 5 years of schooling and is also divided into 2 levels: the 1<sup>st</sup> level comprises grades 8 to 10 (*escola secundária geral do primeiro grau*, or ESG1) and the second level comprises grades 11 and 12 (*escola secundária geral do Segundo grau*, or ESG2). The first level should be attended by children aged 13 to 15 years while the second level should be attended by children aged 16 and 17 years. The curriculum reform process for secondary education introduced in 2007, as well as the Secondary Education Strategy drafted in 2008, was intended to make secondary education more accessible and practical. The aim was to develop life skills and competencies in school children (see Morakinyo 2012:9). World Bank Report (2012) summarize the state of affairs with regard to education in Mozambique as follows:

An evaluation of the levels of reading and calculating the discipline of mathematics of Mozambican's primary school children by the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality in (2012) found that Mozambique was the only country reviewed to have shown a substantial deterioration in both reading and mathematics between 2007–2011. This decline in standards is probably linked to the rapid structural changes in the education system during this period, which resulted in a massive rise in enrolment but did not provide corresponding increases in the human and material resources of the

schools. This unintended negative consequence of trying to meet the education for all challenge without catering for the practical implications, the World Bank highlights the need for education policy to strike a balance between increasing enrolment and maintaining, even improving the quality of education offered to students. Some elementary technical and vocational programs are offered to students at upper primary level. Post-primary education is available at lower primary (1st level) teacher training colleges, basic technical and vocational education (industrial, commercial or agricultural) schools and through secondary education. However, in 2011 less than 20% of those who completed basic primary education succeeded in enrolling in junior secondary education, students who enter secondary education frequently have to repeat grades 35% and 25% for junior and senior secondary school respectively, and drop-out rates are high.

Post general secondary education is available at 2<sup>nd</sup> level teacher training colleges. Middle level technical and vocational education institutions provide training for technicians. Higher education is available at public and private universities, higher institutions, schools of higher education and academies. Since places at this level are limited, candidates are required to write an entrance examination. Competition to gain entry is high. Young people face huge challenges to access education. Many are neither fit to enter the formal education system, nor ready for education or technical and vocational training. It has been estimated that approximately 80% of the available work force has not had any training at all. The National Institute of Statistics recently published an estimate derived from projections based on the 2017 population census combined with the 3rd March 2010 Survey. This is done annually to determine the number of students enrolled in different public and private education institutions from primary to tertiary level (see Morakinyo 2012).

It is calculated that 1,140 000 youths were currently not in school. Only 12% of them were employed, leaving a million of them without employment or self-employment.

Young people who have dropped out of school after some primary or secondary education lack both sufficient skills and the opportunity to gain access to means of development that can meet their needs. There is little appropriate education such as vocational training or lifelong skills learning to cater for their immediate and future requirements. There are too few successful role models to attract them and too few skilled educators who are able to help them. If young people are not equipped today with the education, skills and the necessary exposure to meet the challenges of the future, there will be no future for them (see Morakinyo 2012).

Interventions by the World Bank include the health and nutrition rehabilitation of malnourished children and educational support for selected secondary boarding schools in urban areas. The World Bank system recognizes that drop-outs from schools may not be happening only due to deteriorating poverty conditions of families. It can also be due to the need to generate income, which means that children work rather than attend school. The evidence indicates that this has been a growing trend in Mozambique over the last several years in general. Data from the recent Ministry of Education and Human Development provide a baseline for reports on child labour. It can also be utilized to identify areas with an increased concentration of child labour. A multi-pronged approach by the government will need to be considered for making schools councils and other authorities accountable for children who do not attend school (see World Bank Report 2012).

The World Bank system recognizes the need to support the government to turn a potential decrease in available funding into an opportunity by developing cost efficient programs that respond to the multiple challenges of child labour. This would give a clear signal to donors of the country's commitment to keep children in school while simultaneously combating child labour. In that context, advocacy will be required at the highest levels of government to communicate the effects of the long term loss in productivity and increased poverty in the country if the education sector should suffer financially. It is clear that the fiscal constraints which may be faced by the government can potentially lead to a scaling back of efforts. It is important to take a longer term view

of economic and social development. Assisting children to remain in school will ensure that they receive the necessary skills and training to equip them to attain work as young adults and contribute effectively to national development (see World Bank Report 2012).

The UNICEF Report (2016:5) describes the situation as follows:

The lack of clearly-articulated policy framework on youth education, affects the development of technical and vocational training and skills training of which would help young people to find jobs and generate income, there is no obvious forum in which to raise questions regarding youth education needs. Questions addressed to the Ministry of Education and Human Development is responded to a limited and uncoordinated way and other ministries appear to be involved. State interventions are not matched with appropriate investment in funding qualified and motivated teachers. So the extent of the government's commitment to literacy and education, out-of-school youth education and non-formal education remains unclear. However, Mozambique still finds extremely difficult to develop a sound policy framework that improves not only at literacy and education, but also youth education and non formal education. The government remains unable to link education to community participation in local development. Generally, such policy is restricted to a narrow, limited view of basic literacy and numeracy that regards reading and writing numeracy as eradicating illiteracy by providing access to the whole population to scientific knowledge and opportunities to fully develop their capacities. The schools attendance rate was only 43% in 2013 and the quality of education remains a challenge in the country. Most classrooms are overcrowded with about 70 to 100 children to just one teacher in a classroom, many of whom are unqualified. Children needing to repeat a year reached 51% in 2013. The proportion of girl's pupil attending schools remains lower than that of boys. However, literacy results for boys in 2013 were 67% compared with 38% for girls.

#### **4.2.4 Literacy**

Literacy plays a significant role in a country's economic progress and national development. However, the question arises whether literacy aids in development or whether development leads to increased literacy. The answer to this question will be a determining factor when the affectivity of literacy initiatives in Mozambique are taken into consideration. The issue of literacy in developing nations can be approached from the perspective of various paradigms. One such approach is that of Modernization Theory, which has to do with the effect of industrialization on the social and economic advancement of lesser-developed countries. The theory is that industrialization will increase material opportunities which, in turn will benefit individuals. Industrialization will stimulate the economic growth of the country. That will increase the capacity of the country to meet basic human needs such as education, housing and health care. It will create social affluence and prosperity which will provide the basis for the development and improvement of public and community services. Within such a paradigm, female literacy initiatives will not have a significant impact (see Wagner 1993:9).

Literacy, however, is not only about economic prosperity. It is also relevant for social development. In a social context and cultural practices people are motivated to acquire literacy especially where such competencies are necessary for people and communities to participate in the shaping of their world and their own development. Social development is about the capacity of individuals and communities to determine for themselves the direction of their own development. From this perspective literacy in the Mozambican reality can be seen as embedded in social and cultural practice. Also in this case female literacy initiatives in Mozambique will not be seen as a matter of priority since female development is not regarded as a matter of priority in culture. However, for UNESCO literacy is a way in which to assess economic progress and national development. UNESCO regards literacy as an important indicator of the extent to which people can effectively participate in and benefit from a modernizing economy and society. A national literacy programme should be viewed as a critical condition for economic progress and modernization (see UNESCO Institute for Education 2009).

#### **4.2.5 Technical and professional education**

Technical and professional education within the public education system takes place on three levels, namely the elementary level, the basic level and the middle level. The World Bank emphasizes that these three levels are equivalent to EP2, (*Escola Primaria do Segundo Grau*) ESG1 (*Escola secundaria Geral do primeiro grau*) and ESG2 (*Escola Secundaria Geral do Segundo Grau*). The training takes place over a period of two, three and four years respectively. On the basic and middle level it is possible to specialize in agriculture, industry or commerce. At the tertiary level there are over 30 institutions in Mozambique of which two are public universities: the Pedagogical University (*Universidade Pedagógica* or UP which trains educators) and Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM) as well as a number of other smaller higher educational institutions which provide education in a variety of fields. The requirement for entrance to these institutions is a completed ESG2 (Grade 12) and passing the entrance examinations.

Special education for children with special needs is aimed to be main-streamed through inclusive education, according to the objective set out by the Ministry of Education and Culture Strategic Plan. Special education had been mainly provided in a few special schools which are managed by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare. These schools have a limited numbers of children with special needs in the areas of hearing, visual and mental disability.

Since the education of many suffered severely during the civil war period, adult education has become a significant focus in recent years. New programs, such as distance learning through radio and television, have been introduced in order to provide basic education to adults; particularly women in rural areas (see World Bank report 2016).

#### **4.2.6 The impact of globalization on education**

The phenomenon of globalization requires of countries and their economies to be competitive in a large global market. Diversification is necessary in order that a variety of industries that have different advantages can participate in the global market

economy. The education and training of a country's workers is a major factor in determining how well the country's economy will perform. The study of economics, training and education involves an analysis of the economy of employers and workers. Two major influences are training and education. Well-trained workers with sufficient knowledge can become productive workers who earn a living wage, whereas workers with not or little training cannot compete. Despite the impressive progress that has been made in the past 10 years, Mozambique still ranks among the least developed countries in the world. The socio-economic return on investment in with regard to the education of individuals, families and society at large is not high (see Human Development Index, 2013, UNDP).

Education plays a key role in reducing poverty, ensuring better health, promoting gender equality, sustaining economic growth, and strengthening good citizenship and democracy. Various reforms have been made in the education sector since the independence of Mozambique, but many challenges still remain. A considerable number of Mozambican children still not have access to primary education. Those who enrol in primary school often do not complete the first cycle. They drop out of school without having accomplished appropriate reading and writing skills. The teacher to student ratio remains alarmingly high and results in teaching of a poor quality.

The effects of globalization on the African continent and Mozambique in particular have generally had a positive impact during the past 10 years, especially with regard to technology. On the negative side the disparity that is also a result of globalization has destabilized the nation state to an extent. Some such effects are socio-economic inequality and a disparity with regard to education which have brought injustice and a lack of human dignity to the lives of many (see UNESCO Institute for Education 2009).

According to the Education Strategic Plan 2012-2016 of the government of Mozambique, the main priority in the coming years will be to increasing the provision of quality education for all and to strengthening the link between the education system and the needs of the labour market through quality vocational and technical training. The

Education Programmes of ADPP Mozambique are focused on two areas: improving the quality of primary education and increasing access to quality vocational training. As a result of its long-term investment in these areas, the ADPP Mozambique today runs altogether 11 Teacher Training Colleges covering all provinces of the country and 3 Vocational Schools providing both 2-year training programs and a variety of specially designed short courses (Jorge Ferrão 2012:4). It also supports the network of graduated teachers called 400 Primary Schools. This network functions as a forum for practicing teachers. They meet regularly to share new pedagogical material related to inclusive and creative teaching methods. They exchange experiences and best practices in order to strengthen the quality of teaching and provide the country with a highly qualified work force.

In 1998 the Instituto Superior deTecnologia in Changanane, Maputo Province was established as an institute for higher education. Annually 60-90 students graduate with a Bachelor's Degree in Pedagogy or Community Development. In addition, the ADPP Mozambique gives priority to strengthening access to education and inclusivity in education. The ADPP has established 2 primary and 2 secondary schools for orphans and vulnerable children and youth. It also offers teacher training for students with a disability at the Teacher Training College of Nhamatanda in Sofala. An adult literacy programme has been implemented in the Zambezia province at the North of Mozambique (Jorge Ferrão 2012:4).

Globalization in Africa has brought with some challenges. Globalization tends to lead to the removal of restrictions with regard to the movement of capital in and out of the country. The following have been implemented in Mozambique:

- the deregulation of interest rates;
- the removal of credit control;
- the privatization of previously government-owned banks;

- the removal of restrictions with regard to the entry of the private sectors and foreign institutions into the domestic financial market.

Globalization has given rise to tension between political elites who live in the cities and those who live in rural areas and are disadvantaged because of their low level of education. Suburban people have been affected by a decline in the employment capacity of manufacturing industries. Socio-economic fragmentation and educational inequalities have become a cause for concern and have led to unrest. Only the rich are able to send their children to private schools or to other countries where they can acquire a better quality education. The lower socio-economic strata of society are not even always able to send their children to public schools to acquire a basic education. Some children drop out of school to assist their parents by working to earn an income. Female children mainly drop out of school so that what resources the family has can be used for the education of male children. This attitude is due to cultural influences in Africa (see Henry 2008:23).

#### **4.2.7 Education as reform and reforming education**

Education has been recognized as a priority area since it is key to the improvement and transformation of the lives of people. In Mozambique young people generally lack education. They also often find it difficult to distinguish between what is right and good and what is detrimental to themselves, their community and society. They lack the guidance and insights that come through education. Many are influenced by the wrong people and become a burden to society. If young people grow up in an environment where conditions are not conducive to their development, this deprivation will to a large extent determine their future. If youth are not educated and do not receive the necessary care but are left to their own devices, they can become troublemakers or criminals. Therefore, the accessibility of quality and affordable education is of central importance to transform lives of young people and contribute to their positive development (see Oliveira 1998:2). Bhola (2004) explains the situation of education in Mozambique as follows:

Literacy and basic education are led by different legal instruments and development policies. The most outstanding instruments are the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique which stipulates rules of every citizen has a right to education (Article 88) and that education constitutes a means of achieving national unity, eradicating illiteracy, mastering science and technology, providing citizens with moral and civil values (Article 113); the government's 2000-2004 Education Program provided for a wide-ranging and realistic prelaunch of literacy and aimed to cut rates by 10%; which modernized the National Education System, bringing into line with the new economic and political model enshrined in the 1990 Constitution; the 2001-2005 Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty defined literacy and adult education as primary goals in the education program. The National Strategy for Adult Literacy and Education and for Non-Formal Education, designed mainly to eradicate illiteracy in the country; and the new Government Program (2005-2009) reaffirming the 10% poverty reduction goal. All these standard-setting and political documents reflect the combined will of the government and society to ensure that literacy plays an ever-increasing role in poverty reduction and in the development of the country.

Education is the heart and soul of a country. It is the main factor in making it possible for a country to:

- eradicate poverty;
- create a sustainable and equitable economy;
- facilitate sustainable development;
- facilitate wealth creation;
- become a globally aware society;
- to provide stability and security for its citizens.

Education can contribute to the achievement of an individual's objectives. Positive and constructive behaviour and tolerance for diversity are two other key developments that the youth can achieve through education. Similarly, through education youth can develop abilities such as analytical precision, envisioning future scenarios and decision-making. The gender gap is another principal issue that can be reformed by means of education. How to sustain good health and contribute to peace and security in the country can be imparted to young people through education. With proper education the youth of the country can become productive, scientific-oriented, open-minded good citizens who influence society positively (see MINED 2005:3). Lind (2004) explains the situation as follows:

Mozambique has the high average for the Sub-Saharan region. According to data recently published by the National Institute of Statistics (Instituto Nacional de Estatística), the average rate of illiteracy among adults nationwide is about 53.6%; it is higher in rural areas (65.7%) than in urban districts 30.3% and more marked among women 68% than men 37.7%. In a country as large and diverse as Mozambique, regional variations are to be expected; from 15.1% in Maputo Province (in the south of the country) to 68.4% in Cabo Delgado Province (in the north). These figures for young people are alarming, with 37.9% in the 15 to 19 years of age; 48% among young women and 50.7% in the 20 to 29 years age (61% among young women). There is another factor in addition to unequal opportunities, which may discourage women from taking part in adult literacy and education programs, namely the type of program on offer. Adult literacy and education should be as key components of poverty reduction in the country and links successful action to programs that specifically target women in rural areas. The government initiatives to redress disparities in terms of access and retention have fallen far short of achieving gender differences. The rates of access and more markedly, of retention of women and girls in literacy programs remain relatively low.

Access to the few existing higher education institutions in the country is limited. Most students who have complete high school do not immediately continue with university studies. They often choose instead to study at an institution that specializes in agricultural, technical, or pedagogical training after grade 10. Illiteracy and lack of educational opportunities is a huge challenge, especially to children who grow up in families that consist illiterate people. It becomes doubly difficult for them to access schools. The majority of children between the ages of 15 and 18 are still in primary school. A variety of problems force them to drop out of school due to their age.

Government initiatives to redress disparities in terms of access and retention have fallen far short of achieving gender parity. In addition to unequal opportunities for girls to go to school and women to take part in adult literacy and education programmes, there is another reason for their struggles to attain an education. One of the factors that contributes to the low enrolment and high drop-out rate in adult literacy and education programmes in Mozambique is the fact that most of the population is of Bantu. They do not have an adequate command of Portuguese, the official language of the country which is also the language of instruction. In 1997, only 40% of the Mozambican population could read and write Portuguese. Most of them were men living in urban areas.

In 1991, the Mozambican Government, concerned by this state of affairs, decided to introduce a Literacy Programme in Mozambican languages (*Programa de Alfabetização em Línguas Moçambicanas*) as part of the Women's Bilingual Education Project (*Projecto de Educação Bilingue de Mulheres*). Initially, two languages from the north of the country (Emakhwa and Nyandja), two from the central region (Sena and Ndau) and one from the south (Changana) were selected. Similarly, the Strategy of the Adult Literacy and Education Subsector (*Estratégia do Subsector de Alfabetização e Educação de Adultos*) 2001-2005 required that teaching materials be made available also in the following languages: Portuguese, Emakhuwa, Changana, Nyanja, Mwani, Sena, Ndau, Makonde and Yao. These materials were reviewed, updated and additional material added. The programme was then made available in other

Mozambican languages, such as Lomwé, Nyungwe, Tewe, Bárue, Copi, Tonga, Xitshwa and Chuwabo. This initiative is evidence that the relevance of national languages in the various learning settings has been acknowledged (see Mário 2002). Today the youth are the learners, but in the future they will be the ones who lead or teach. Education encompasses all walks of life. Knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation. Therefore, if the present generation is appropriately educated and instructed, the following generations will benefit, as will the country as a whole. The youth should be properly educated as they will shoulder the leadership and carry the responsibilities in future. Education provides the opportunity for young people to follow their interests and choose their own direction in life through which they will make a contribution to society. Given the opportunity, they can set goals for themselves and strive to achieve them. Education transforms youth in a positive direction. However, presently such opportunities are not available to all. The following factors cause many children to not be able to attend school:

- long distances to schools;
- a lack of means to buy what they need for school;
- a lack of understanding of the importance of education.

The UNICEF report (2016) highlights that 24% of Mozambican children between 7 and 18 years are severely deprived of education. They have never attended school and have little prospect of ever doing so. Many children face challenges because of not having completed even a junior primary education due to poverty. The most common reason which forces children to drop out of school is a lack of resources. Daily survival is the struggle of extremely poor people. Many poverty-stricken families keep their children at home to help out or they send their children to work in fields, or to seek employment, rather than sending them to school. Therefore, many children are deprived of a basic education which would enhance their lives. Because of the financial inability and sometimes also the cultural attitudes of parents and guardians, children are forced to suffer under their present conditions and have no hope of a better future. Even if school tuition were free, uniforms and stationery would still have to be bought. If families cannot afford this basic thing, children will no longer be able to attend school.

The Mozambican government provides free primary education but the materials needed for school have to be bought by the families of the children. This can become a significant financial burden for many families. Children who can present a certificate that shows that the income of their parents is below a certain level do not pay any matriculation fee. However, the limited number of educational facilities necessarily limits enrollment. Primary schools are overcrowded and there is widespread corruption in the school system. Parents have to bribe teachers or officials in order to procure enrollment for their children. Sometimes girls are forced to engage in sexual activities with teachers in order to receive a passing grade. Only a small number of children are able to continue with secondary studies. Girls perpetually have less access to education than boys see (Acemunglu and Johnson 2014:1367-1375).

Children have a right to education. The state should provide the necessary facilities for primary and secondary education to be free and compulsory (Lamprecht 2007:1833-1838). School discipline should be administered in a way that respects the child's human dignity. Article 29 of the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) articulate the aims of child education as: fully developing the child's personality, talents, mental and physical abilities. Education should prepare the child for an active adult life in a free society and foster respect for parents and elders. Children should retain their cultural identity, language and values, and respect the cultural background and values of others.

Education often comes under duress because of natural disasters, which in Mozambique are mostly seasonal floods and droughts. National and sub-national authorities do not have sufficient resources and the capacity to resume educational activities after an emergency and provide some normalcy and stability to the lives of affected children who often have been displaced from their original places.

According to Capehart et al (1997:10) the program of education should aim to increase the number of Mozambican children who receive primary education. The focus should be on increasing access to schooling by building classrooms and latrines. This can be done by mobilizing communities. The objective is to train and support teachers,

promote basic literacy, provide books and learning materials, and improve children's health and nutrition in order that they can concentrate better and learn more effectively. Education should be supporting people to improve their own learning. Children are by nature curious. They want to know themselves and their environment and make sense of things. If children are frustrated in this endeavour, they can become aggressive and misbehave. There are many factors which contribute to their frustration. One of these can include attending school. Teachers need wisdom and skills to engage children in a productive process of attaining knowledge and developing skills as they develop themselves as human beings.

Thousands of young people who fled Mozambique during the war years had little or no education. They joined the throng of migrant workers to seek work in any form just to survive. The government encounters many problems in their response to a situation of this magnitude. There has been and still is a serious lack of accurate and coherent data on youth education. The Education for All Report (World Education Forum) pointed out in 2000 that the government's commitment to literacy with regard to the youth and their education remained unclear. Government intentions and plans are not always put into practice. If the promises are to be fulfilled, a much greater effort should be made to ensure that these programmes work and are implemented on a much larger scale; see (Cree, Key and Steward 2012:18).

Youth education at present has a narrow focus. It is mostly concerned with literacy and primary school education. The broader field of education and training which should be a concern across all ministries and throughout civil society is neglected, particularly in the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Public Works. The current curriculum that is used in conventional literacy programmes should be evaluated in terms of their affectivity and relevance to the youth, especially with regard to both their immediate and future needs. The lack of accessible and verifiable data on youth who are not going to school and are not receiving education, remains a serious hindrance to any attempt to provide adequate educational services to this disadvantaged group (see Chou and Lawson 2002:16).

#### **4.2.8 Education and the community**

The community should be involved in children's education. This includes parents, brothers, sisters, friends and teachers. Faith communities can also play a significant role. Children start learning from the day they are born, not on the first day they go to school. Every day children have new experiences when they discover their environment or make friends with someone they did not know before. New experiences often occur when they socialize with other people. Education is vital to prepare children for adult life and the future. Under the Portuguese regime, educational opportunities for Mozambicans were limited which resulted in the larger part of the population remaining illiterate. Many could not speak, read or write in Portuguese. Political leaders were mostly educated in missionary schools. After independence, the government placed a high priority on expanding education, which reduced the illiteracy rate to about 2/3 as primary school enrollment increased. Unfortunately in recent years, school construction and teacher training enrollments have not kept up with population increases. With post-war enrollments of children reaching all-time highs, the quality of education in the country has suffered (Abrahamson1995:3).

The impression is that all the challenges and constraints referred to above can and should be addressed not by formulating new policies, but by implementing existing policies, which, for the most part, have never amounted to more than a declaration of intent. The direct consequence of excluding children from attending primary school is a rise in the number of illiterate adults later. Ever increasing numbers of adult illiteracy can do tremendous harm to the country's development. To prevent this from happening, the government, faith communities, international agencies and other stakeholders should coordinate their activities in order to address the issue more effectively. In this connection, the Ministry of Education and Human Development should play a role in creating conditions for all children, young people and adults to gain access to quality basic education which should be free for vulnerable children.

In contemporary societies young people should learn to create their own vision for the future, rather than following the ideas of others and internalizing their purposes, beliefs, judgments, and feelings. Gaining self-understandings is the cardinal goal of education.

Learning will help young people to acquire the skills of reasoning and the confidence to be autonomy in their lives. The aims of educating children are to prepare them for life. For this they need to be able to construct new interpretations what they experience in order to find their direction in life. Education opens the minds of people. Communities should understand their role in maintaining structures of class and gender realize that change is necessary and help to bring about that change to the advantage of all. The impact of education is, among others, to enable individuals to change their attitudes through open discussion and reflection on their assumptions and beliefs. They can then consciously make and implementing plans that bring about new ways of defining their place in the society (see Mezirow 1996:162).

#### **4.2.9 Education and the faith community**

The contribution of the faith community should enable young people to take advantage of the existing resources that the faith community has to offer. Youth group meetings, camps, sports, Bible studies and social activities can be safe spaces for young people to learn and grow in interaction with others. The local faith community can contribute to the development of a family-based youth ministry, developing programmes and activities that include the youth, their parents, and the whole family. In this way not only the young people are educated and can grow as a person and in their faith, but also the adults. The family can move forward together.

During a child's adolescent years the family plays a particularly important role to provide a safe and stable environment for the young person to develop a strong identity and find a positive and constructive way to their future. Together the faith community and the family, parents and children should attain knowledge that is necessary for life, build relationships in which they can experience nurturing human connection and build a relationship with God which can sustain them throughout their lives and in all circumstances. The youth ministry of the faith communities should offer young people the opportunity to participate as integral members and leaders of the community. They should participate fully in liturgical ministries, service projects and social activities. Such an approach to youth ministry recognizes that young people need the community of

faith for their own growth and also to develop their own ministry. The community also needs the young people. This is a mutual relationship. Since young people spend a significant part of their lives in the schools setting, faith communities and schools can work together to offer joining programmes. School already teaching religious education as part of the school curriculum (see Adams 1993:5).

According to Lamas (2006:21), the faith community is an inclusive space where everyone who believes in Jesus and who has been accepted by God unconditionally should be welcome and welcomed. Before God culture, social status and place of origin are not of consequence. These factors should also be of no consequence in faith communities. When children join a particular church they should be included and fully part of a community where they can live out their faith and worship God. They should be able to experience how the faith community functions as one body, which it is structured and organized in such a way that everyone has his or her place and role to play. All children should be accommodated and are part of the community gathered in Jesus' name. All persons are equally valuable in the sight of God. From this foundation they should go out into the world and believe in their own worth and value as God's creation as they recognize the value of every person they come across.

Faith communities should support the basic rights of all persons to equal access to housing, education, communication, employment, and medical care. Every person should have recourse to legal help for grievances and protection. Faith communities should, together, deplore acts of hatred or violence against groups or persons based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, or economic status. Matthew 19:3, 15 demonstrates the generosity of Jesus towards little children, those who were unimportant in the society of Jesus' time.

Benson and Wolfe (1981:136) point out that a primary function of children's ministries in the faith community is to enhance the development of their personal and corporate self-capacity. Space is needed for children to participate in making their own history in the present and future, both as individuals and as group. A misconception of youth ministry

is to approach children and youth as “the church of tomorrow”. Children are a vital part of the faith community today. Children and youth are the church at work. God can choose to do God’s work through them as well as through the adults. Therefore it is vital that children and youth have access to God and experience a sense of belonging both to God and the faith community.

Youth ministry is a special calling, because children and youth are today’s and tomorrow’s church. The faith community should motivate children and youth to build a strong self-esteem and to go and be a contributing member of society. Therefore, the United Methodist Church theological seminaries should continuously equip their student pastors with skills to work effectively with children in order to ensure their inclusion and participation in the life of the community and also in decision-making. The faith community should ensure that children and youth are considered and included in the life of the community. There should be a vision and plan to advocate for children, particularly in the areas of faith development, safety, and discipleship. The faith community should listen to the needs and concerns of children. With a deeper understanding of children’s issues the United Methodist Church develop models and programmes to improve the quality of life for children and youth and to invest in ‘n positive future with and for them.

### **4.3 Summary**

This chapter has focused on youth education and the hopes, concerns and needs of young people and children in the context of present-day Mozambique. The aim was to develop a model for a holistic youth ministry which is specific and appropriate to this particular complex context.

There are many reasons why illiteracy rates in the country remain stubbornly high. These reasons were explored and the study found that one of the causes of illiteracy is the lack of integration between government initiatives. An analysis carried out by the Ministry of Education and Culture with regard to the proposed 2010-2015 Strategic Plan revealed some successes and challenges in non-formal and adult education. The

successes included the expansion of literacy units and the development of a strategy for adult literacy and education. The challenges included a lack of viable partnerships and the lack of coordination with regard to the programmes. There is poor retention particularly of women and girls, and inadequate supervision, monitoring and evaluation. The lack of qualified staff and the lack of funding for the implementation of education programmes were pointed out. Contracting and the sufficient remuneration of literacy workers are reasons why the programme is struggling. Such conditions discourage both literacy workers and learners (see The UNICEF Report 2016).

The chapter has highlighted that education is the most important element that contributes to the transmission of knowledge and skills to young people. These are necessary for them to have the opportunity to lead a productive and responsible life. The faith community and government should work together as a team to set policy and make provision for responding adequately to the realities of the youth. They should be enabled to achieve their goals. For this the education system, schools, the private sector and religious communities should work together to foster formal and informal vocational education. Faith communities and the government together can make a realistic assessment of what is needed to support youth to develop strategic plans to achieve their objectives. The Ministry of Education is responsible for coordinating activities and involve other stakeholders who participate either by doing research or development (for example Eduardo Mondlane University, Universidade Pedagógica-UP, and the Instituto Nacional de Desenvolvimento da Educação-INDE). NGOs, religious institutions and grassroots community associations as well as international agencies can become involved in the funding of projects and programmes. The National Institute for Adult Education has as its main purpose to train competent staff. This is crucial to the provision of adequate education for youth across the country.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THE SOCIO-CULTURAL MILIEU OF YOUTH IN MOZAMBIQUE TODAY**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter will focus on the socio-cultural milieu in which the youth find themselves today in the context of post-civil war in Mozambique. The chapter presents the empirical part of the investigation. The study has opted for a qualitative approach with interviews rather than a quantitative approach with questionnaires. The aim is to gain a deeper understanding of the socio-cultural milieu of children and young people in the context of post-civil war Mozambique rather than to gather more statistics. This deeper understanding will be facilitated by bringing the data gathered through interviews into dialogue with the theoretical framework of the study. The dynamics of the situation will be interpreted with the utmost respect for contextual differences (see Dunn and WuDunn 2009:10).

Interviews will be conducted with representatives of youth leadership in the United Methodist Church and other denominations which belong to the Christian Council of Mozambique, the Youth League, and donors for youth programmes in Maputo. These interviews will be conducted over a period of 6 months. The main aim is to ascertain how these role players see and interpret the current situation of young people in the country. Semi-structured interviews with only a few questions will give interviewees the opportunity to voice their opinions, share their views, ideas and feelings freely (see Mouton 2001:196). They will be asked to comment on the issue of young people in Mozambique.

The study will include local leadership from the government. Church leaders, youth groups, and parents or guardians of young people as well as traditional leaders will be asked to contribute their narratives. Films and photographic notes will be used to

capture the data. In-depth interviews will be conducted with persons who will share their personal histories, perspectives, and experiences with regard to sensitive topics. Open-ended questions will be asked in order to give participants the opportunity to respond in their own words, rather than forcing them to respond to a fixed set of questions or choose from a fixed set of responses. The study will investigate problems relating to the situation of young people in post-war Mozambique in order to gain in-depth insight into people's reaction on issues such as sexual and gender-based violence. There will be interviews with traditional and religious leaders, members of community-groups, and partners. Group discussions with chiefs, victims of child marriage, sexual and gender based violence will be conducted.

## **5.2 Listening to the voices**

### **5.2.1 Child headed homes**

On 7 of December 2017, in Cambine Theological Seminary of the United Methodist Church, an interview was conducted with the chaplain of the seminary Reverend Mapswanganhe and 11 students of third and fourth year respectively including 7 women and 4 men. During the group interview the following questions were raised:

- Which factors in the Mozambican community contribute to child headed homes?
- Have UMC strategies for the reduction of the number of children in child headed homes been successful?

In this session a voice recorder was used to capture the information provided by the various participants. The theology students responded by relating s in the the community. They have observed that children who live in these conditions are generally treated badly by the local community. They have seen evidence and the effects of social isolation. The students observed that there was a lack of consideration for these children who take care of others. The community no longer treats' them as children, because they assume the role of an adult. The need was expressed to reflect on how

children were being taken care of after the death or separation of their parents in the Cambine area.

In addition, the students indicated that children in child headed homes suffer bullying in school because of their situation. Girls in particular are no longer considered to be children. They are treated like adults who have to work in order to provide for their siblings. The chaplain of the Seminary indicated that the UMC has initiated a ministry with the aim to protect and take care of these children and youth. However, these ministries are not well structured, well funded, well planned or well co-ordinate. They do not yet work well, but something is being done. Some orphanage centers are taking care of vulnerable children and youth. However, this care initiative is still in a development phase. Young people who find themselves in this situation should be included in the programs of the church in order to share ideas and opinions about their own lives. Together mechanisms should be sought to resolve the problems that affect them. They should be able to contribute to the development of programmes that help them to improve their quality of life(Interview conducted on 7 of December 2017 in the Cambine Theological Seminary).

### **5.2.2 Youth with disabilities**

According to Singer (2004:32-33), the isolation of youth with disabilities and those who take care of them and provide for them is a particularly difficult issue. It is necessary to support the caregivers who have to take on additional responsibilities. This is often impossible for children of a very young age to care for people with a disability. The people with a disability also face difficulties. They must find their own identity as a fully human person even if they are not always treated as such. They must be included in the family and community. Parents worry about the future of children with a disability, especially when they are no longer there to care for the child.

### **5.2.3 Reproductive health**

The situation of reproductive health was discussed in a group interview conducted on

5 October 2017 at Malhazine United Methodist secondary school in Maputo.

Participants' were 12 men and women of both sexes between the ages of 18 and 25.

The interview lasted for 1 hour. If the 3 teachers are included there were 15 participants.

The question posed to the group was:

- What alternatives to direct verbal communication can the faith community use bring the issue of reproductive and maternal health to the attention of families?

The method used in this session to capture the data was a voice recorder and notes were taken. The aims of the interview were to better understand:

- the nature of relations between and among men and women before, during and after the marriage;
- to identify social tensions that impact negatively on their relationships;
- to hear their opinions on the problems with regard to reproductive health.

The issue of maternal health and the impact of gender-based violence were discussed in terms of the nature of social relations and their connection to sexual violence. The teachers indicated that many young women in the Malhazine community were suffering ill health due to pregnancy at a young age, gender-based violence and child marriage. In order to improve the reproductive health of young women in the region it would be important to engage with parents and the young people themselves. Women's circles where awareness is raised and training is provided can help young persons to cope better with their reality.

On 8 April 2017 at Bungane United Methodist secondary school in Gaza province, an interview of 90 minutes was conducted with a group of 20 people between the ages of 19 and 28 years. The group included both men and women. Their local female pastor represented the district superintendent. The people had gathered to attend an executive meeting at the district level to prepare for a youth conference which would take place

during the following month in that area. I had written a letter to ask permission from the superintendent to conduct an interview after the executive meeting. A voice recorder was used to capture the data. The following questions were raised:

- How does the UMC in its biblical and theological ministry attempt to counteract the negative impact of reproductive health issues that affects young girls?
- How does the UMC contribute to and implement strategies and interventions to advocate for women and girls with regard to reproductive health?

Respondents were encouraged to bring their views and ideas to the discussion. The researcher emphasized that the objective was not to judge and that there were no right or wrong in answers. However, some cultural aspects in the communities were identified that affect people differently. The respondents had different views on and reactions to the issue. The discussion between men and women was rather useful. They explored perceptions about topics of reproductive health and the role of power between men and women with great openness. The impact of socio-cultural factors that shape notions of what it is to be a man and woman were also discussed. Practices and social tensions with regard to the issue of reproductive health in Gaza province were identified.

Communication can play a key role to raise the awareness of families and members of the community in order to enable them to discern the negative elements with regard to reproductive health. Faith communities can use media to make women and girls aware of their rights. Education with regard to rights and dignity of women can be given to men. Faith communities can use its access to different means of communications to facilitate open, honest, and positive conversation with the aim to create good public relations, promote an attitude of critical self-awareness and to provide insight into positive and negative aspects regarding reproductive health (see Interview 8 April 2017 at Bungane United Methodist secondary school in Gaza province).

#### **5.2.4 Child marriage**

On 2 May 2018 Nyeleti Mondlane, the Minister of Youth and Sports, released a report which exposed the practice of child marriage in Mozambique and called it the most urgent human rights and development challenge today. Child marriage harms female children, their families, communities, and economies all over the world. Governments and faith communities should urgently address the situation of the great number of female children who will be forced into marriage by 2020 and work to improve the situation of the millions who are already married. Donors, national governments, multilateral institutions, private enterprise, philanthropic investments and civil society can cooperate to exert pressure on communities who need their funding and services to end this human right abuse. The faith community and the government should work together to end the practice of child marriage and promote gender equality in order to meet the pressing needs of at-risk female children who are already married. They are among the most difficult populations to reach.

Faith communities and the government should involve boys and girls, community members, family members, religious and political leaders to combine efforts to empower and protect children who have been or will be forced into marriage. Working together in partnership and in a spirit of collaborative learning, efforts can be made to respond in a strategic manner to the problem while taking into account factors that influence the situation at the local level. Evidence-based action can directly improve the lives of a huge number of Mozambican girls who are forced to marry (Mondlane 2018).

On 20 July 2017 at the Chicuque Teachers' Professional Center at Inhambane Province an interview of 2 hours was conducted with 20 female and male students aged between 18 and 30 years. The deputy principal of the Center and 4 teachers participated in the interview. A voice recorder was used to capture the data. The aim of the interview was to identify the causes and consequences of child marriage, sexual and gender-based violence, and potential strategies to delay the age of marriage and meet the needs of girls in the community. The group also considered what possibilities for change would most be feasible.

In this session, the method used to identify the problem was the drawing of a tree on a flip chart. The causes of the problem were discussed and drawn in as the roots of the tree. The consequences of child marriage were discussed and drawn in as the branches of the tree. The deputy principal emphasized that the roots nourish the whole tree, therefore, the practice should be eradicated from the root causes. This method proved to be accessible to all members of the groups, irrespective of age and social position. At Giletene United Methodist secondary school at Zavala district in Inhambane province, an interview was conducted on 9 August 2017 with 15 students and 2 teachers. The following questions were discussed:

- How has the UMC's approach of monitoring and educating thus far impacted on the practice of child marriage in the community?
- Which activities are effective for bringing about change with regard to knowledge, attitudes and practices in the Zavala community?

A voice recorder was used to capture the data. One of the teachers mentioned the traditional practice of initiation rites for girls. The aim of initiation is to teach female children how to take care of a home and children, how to satisfy the needs of the husband and how to submit to the rules and decisions of the husband. On completion of the initiation process a girl would be eligible for marriage and practicing sex. The purpose of initiation is to make women submissive, obedient, non-assertive, and respectful to the husband and his relatives. The life of a woman is confined to bearing and taking care of children, cooking, washing and doing other household chores.

In order to advocate against the human rights violation of child marriage, the government and faith communities should work together with other organizations, especially the education network to lobby for change with regard to the harmful cultural practice of child marriage.

### **5.2.5 Polygamy**

In traditional cultures and communities a woman's power to challenge household decisions depends on the number of male children she has produced. She has some power if her father is a traditional chief. When the husband dies the widow, along with all the assets she and her husband have accumulated, is taken over by the husband's family. In some areas in the Gaza and Inhambane provinces, a woman by tradition has no choice after the death of her husband. She is expected to accept the second marriage because she belongs to the entire family of the deceased husband. Only in some rare occasions, if a woman comes from a rich family will she be sufficiently empowered to challenge such inheritance arrangements (see Pengo 1986:208-212).

Polygamy is rooted deeply in culture. Some people were brought up in polygamous families. They tend to accept and maintain this as their heritage and an age-old tradition. This study has examined polygamy from an anthropological, sociological and pastoral perspective. In a polygamous relationship the woman's status in the marriage is also determined by the number of male children she has produced.

Cidalia Chauque(18 October 2017) the Minister of Gender Children and Social Action, was invited by the United Methodist Women (UMW) to speak at their gathering in Maputo on the topic of "United Methodist Women Transforming the World". Chauque challenged the UMW with regard to polygamy. Transforming the world, she said, should include the transformation of polygamous communities. Negative effects of polygamy include high levels of stress and depression. The strategy to deal with polygamy should begin at the grassroots level in order to influence the broader society.

Faith communities and the local governments should devise strategies for action in order to help local leaders to decide on the programs and aid from the appropriate social agencies in order to advocate for the rights and wellbeing of women and children. Self-reliance projects should be initiated to assist women in polygamous marriages to avoid total dependence on the rich men who marry them. Training programmes should be devised to empower women and girls to achieve a greater measure of independence from traditional cultural settings and practices.

On 9 December 2017 an interview was conducted at the Massinga United Methodist Church in the Inhambane province. That day there was a joint executive meeting at the district level. The interview was done with church members between 20 and 45 years of age. They were persons who had specific duties in the church. At this gathering the traditional leader of the area was invited to be part of the executive and the interview. The question that was raised was:

- Have the approaches of the UMC achieved the planned results with regard to advocacy against child marriage and polygamy in Massinga?

The method used for gathering data was a voice recorder. The traditional leader by the name of Gidione, referred to a time when, in rural communities, marriages were arranged according to customary tradition. Throughout communities in Mozambique the practice of polygamy was fairly widespread, with a greater prevalence in rural areas. Marriage was seen as an arrangement between families and, at times, between tribes, rather than as a relationship between two consenting adults. Marriage arrangements were usually concluded by way of payment of bride wealth to the woman's relatives. In a polygamous union wife were considered the husband's personal property, essentially there to procreate, care for the family and support the husband in his own productive activities, especially farming. Sometimes the number of wives resulted in a high number of children, which not only conferred social and economic status on the man, but also served as a team of unpaid workers on his farm.

On 23 September 2017 an Annual Men's Conference took place at the Chicuque Mission in the Inhambane province. The question posed to the executive was:

- "Do the men of the United Methodist advocate against polygamy in the community?"

The meeting consisted of 12 men including the Bishop, Joaquina Nhanala of the United Methodist Church in Mozambique. A voice recorder was used to capture the data.

Nhanala explained that polygamous marriage is deeply rooted in culture and affirmed by Scripture. This phenomenon can be seen in different religions. Nhanala indicated that polygamy has never been recommended or approved by the United Methodist Book of Discipline. As a church leader, he said, pastoral care and counseling in the faith community should work in partnership with Church doctrine on marital unity.

According to Al-Shamsi and Fulcher (2005:45-46), polygamy is deeply rooted in cultural values that sometimes are contrary to the principles of the Christian faith community. The faith community should be prudent in speaking against polygamy. Dialogue, listening to people who live in polygamous unions, understanding the men and women in their cultural context, attempting to understand their values are the first step. Then the necessity for women and girls to also be able to live a life of dignity can be emphasized. Strategies to foster justice and peace in polygamous households should be divested in order to decrease the levels of stress and depression. Every family member should be able to live a healthy and dignified life. Faith communities cannot but accept the reality of existing polygamous unions and should remain sympathetic to the people who live in such arrangements. However, the protection of women and their children should always remain the first priority.

On 22 August 2017 at the Cambine Mission of the United Methodist Church a youth district conference took place. This provided me with the opportunity to conduct a group interview with 20 men and women between the ages of 18 and 35 years. The questions raised were:

- “Does the United Methodist church empower leadership advocate against
- polygamy and for the dignity of women and girls in Mozambique?”
- “What are the possible areas in which the UMC needs further reflection and development in order to empower women and girls?”

The 20 people in the group included two representatives of the Annual Conference and the a traditional leader by the name of Sergio Matsinhe was also present. Special care

was taken to ensure that people were able to speak and participate freely. They were motivated to speak openly in the presence of senior and experienced men and women who represent the Annual Conference. This gave them the opportunity to raise their concerns and be heard by senior people in the church. The 2 hour long discussion was engaging. Participants expressed their opinions and exchanged constructive ideas. The representatives of the Annual Conference raised some concerns with regard to the impact of polygamy on the physical and psychological health of women who are forced into marriage as children and have children while they themselves are only children. They pointed out that married girls are unable to make decisions and take up the responsibility of a family. The traditional leader, focused on the implications of polygamy and child marriage with regard to the negative effect they have on the economic empowerment and development of women. Therefore, it is important to encourage girls and boys to collaborate and to become champions for a dignified life for girls.

#### **5.2.6 Gender-based violence**

On 20 January 2017 at the T3 community of the United Methodist Church, there was a workshop with a topic: “Skills building, self-awareness and solidarity with women and the impact of sexual violence”. There were 15 women at the district level, 3 female pastors and 1 male superintendent and 1 woman who represented the local government. There were a total of 20 participants. The question for the interview was:

- “Are the strategies of the United Methodist Church effective in response to sexual and gender-based violence?”

The superintendent, Reverend Zunguze had invited Maria Sopinha from the Government to the workshop. She is an advocate for women on issues of sexual abuse and violence. The method to capture the data that was used in this session was a voice recorder. Sopinha emphasized that sexual and gender-based violence was a common occurrence in many households across the country. Where domestic violence and other forms of gender violations are reported by victims, the cases are usually settled in the

faith community in cooperation with traditional leaders and elders. They discourage and discipline those who perpetuate these practices in the community. The women respondents spoke out about their own experiences and memories of what domestic violence. For a number of the women who were present there, the violence was ongoing. Sometimes women remain in situations of violence and abuse because they lack knowledge of their human rights and consequences of such violence.

On 2 February 2017 in Maputo City the Baptist Church had a youth conference with the topic: “The contribution of the Baptist church on women’s empowerment and self-reliance”. I had requested an appointment in order to obtain permission to conduct an interview, which was granted to me. The following questions were raised:

- “What strategies should be used to address the issue of violence against women and girls in the community?”
- “How does the Baptist faith community deal with the perpetrators of sexual violence and abuse?”

The interview was conducted with a group of 17 participants consisting of men and women aged between 19 and 30 years. The church leader, Reverend João Xiziane, was also present. The method used to capture the data was a voice recorder.

During the discussion women emphasized that violence against women was a common occurrence because women lack the opportunity to be educated and gain greater independence. They also lack knowledge of their basic human rights. Female respondents mentioned that in Moamba in the Maputo province, some families send their young people out to go through initiation for a period of 3 to 4 months. During this time they miss school. During their initiation women are taught how to be housewives and serve men. Men can say or do what they please, women should just accept this. During initiation women are taught to be submissive to men. These rights are harmful to the self-esteem of women.

On 16 November 2017 an interview was conducted at the Cambine Technical School of the United Methodist Church in the Inhambane province. The group consisted of 16

people between the ages of 18 and 30. Of the participants 12 were and 4 teachers. A voice recorder was used to capture the data. The question raised was:

- “What strategies can be implemented by the United Methodist Church for youth advocacy to end the vulnerability of an injustice toward women and girls who are abused sexually?”

The teachers were of the opinion that sexual abuse and gender-based violence was related to the erosion of traditional beliefs and the power of authority. The disintegration of traditional sanctioning mechanisms and the loss of control of elders in the community over the youth is what cause much of the social atrocities that are currently taking place. When comparing the behaviour of past generations of young people and how things are going today, communities are no true to their own history and culture. People in society have a lack of trust in the formal legal system to deliver justice to the majority.

Despite some changes of the infrastructure in Maputo city which aimed to make the justice system accessible, only the poor are held accountable for their crimes. For men how influential and affluent in society there are no consequences for their abusive and violent behaviour. Therefore, the United Methodist Church should work in partnership with the government to advocate for the protection of women and girls. Affluent perpetrators of sexual abuse are often involved in corruption. They bribe the justice officials in order to get off without any repercussions even if they have raped a woman. However, is a poor man rapes a woman, he will be sent to jail.

Sexual abuse is often perpetrated by influential people who are known to the victim and the victim’s family. Girls are more likely to be abused by step-fathers, uncles, cousins, older brothers or fathers. Sometimes, this sexual abuse occurs in conditions of overcrowded spaces where parents and their daughters, family members are forced to share a common sleeping space. When a girl is abused by a person who is not relative, the perpetrator is more likely to have influence, wealth and power. The sexual abuse of girls is often motivated by the cultural belief that once a girl has had her first menstrual period she is ready for sex. The problem of sexual abuse and violation is connected to the belief that the blood of a young girl can bring power and prosperity to an old man.

As a result, men who abuse girls sexually tend to seek them out for ritual purposes, believing that the blood of a girl, if treated by an experienced traditional healer, will provide the man with all manner of rewards such as wealth, abundant harvests, and increased political or religious power (see Briggs and Joyce 1997:575-582).

### **5.2.7 Employment opportunities**

The lack of transparency when it comes to the announcement of job opportunities is a huge problem that affects a high number of people in Mozambique specifically in provinces where the projects of Coal and Rio Tinto are run. The positive impact of these mines on the Mozambican economy and communities is slow. There is a lack of transparency when it comes to the announcement of the availability of jobs. The citizens do not know what the government and the mining companies have agreed in order to operate their companies in the province. Local investors are not included in the negotiations. There is a lack of transparency and accountability on the side of the government. The companies that provide services in the Tete province come from Brazil and South Africa. These companies came to explore the mineral resources in the area and were supposed to provide work for the local people and contribute to reducing the high rate of unemployment that affects especially young people(see Casse and Jensen 2009:122).

### **5.2.8 Community displacement**

According to Castelo-Branco and Goldin (2003), the people in Tete complain that the managers of the mining companies fail to consult them with regard to issues of land occupation and the relocation of the local people. When the companies did consult the people with regard to relocation, the consultation was not taken seriously. The government had already negotiated with the mining companies and the local people had no opportunity to communicate directly with the companies. When the local people heard that they will be resettled it was the government officials who brought the message to inform them about their imminent relocation. The construction of houses for the mining companies began even before people were informed that it was going to

happen. The local people were not given written notice of the agreement between the companies and the government about their relocation. The government and the companies did not give local people the opportunity to discuss the social, economic and cultural impact of their resettlement.

When the two companies arrived in Tete the local people were happy because they thought there would be new job opportunities available. They expected to have employment with the mining companies (see Cherif and Hasanov2012). However, the companies moved the people 40km away from the mines which prevented them from applying for work on the mines.

The government had promised that the companies would bring development and employment for local people, especially for the youth. The problem is that the local people were not able to ask questions to the government on how they would benefit from employment while they are being moved far away. The relocation made was intended to avoid the inclusion of local people to become part of the staff at the mines. There was no way for the local people to claim their right to benefits from the mining companies who had taken away their land. The relocation of the local people will not only leave them economically poorer, but this kind of resettlement will also undermine the authority of their leaders and respect for the local people.

Large scale community displacement occurred when the Companies of Rio Tinto and Vale wanted to occupy the land to build their factories (Castelo-Branco and Nuno 2007). People who were about to move from their original places were afraid that if they did so before the construction of the new houses in the area were completed, their demands would not be met by the owners of the companies and the government. People learned this from the experience of the first group that was resettled. The companies had not fulfilled the demands of the communities when they have relocated.

The Rio Tinto company moved people to new areas before completing the infrastructure such as schools and a health care centre in those areas. Children and sick people had to walk long distances to reach schools and a health care facility. There is also a lack of

water in the area to which the people were relocated. The community has to rely on a water truck. They have to pay for the water.

The Vale Company was accused of building houses of poor quality. When people were given their new houses, they were already showing signs of disrepair. The Vale Company had also promised to build a water system for the community, but this promise was not fulfilled, even though the community had already moved into the houses. The Vale Company is now using the railway to transport its products from Tete to Beira port. The railway which connects the two provinces is not able to carry the heavy loads. As a result, the company sometimes uses the Zambezi River to transport the products to Beira (see Anderson 2017).

Due to the limited capacity of trained people and the effect of the civil war the government does not have sufficient qualified local personnel to enforce labour standards to extract and explore the natural resources in the country. That is why outside companies are used to do the work. Rather than empower the local people, they are simply exploited further. The central government controls the resources. Local people are not trusted to work without being monitored by the central government. The government should provide training in order that local men and women can have the opportunity to work for and build up their own country.

### **5.2.9 Sanitation and disease**

On 6 July 2017 an interview was conducted at Nelson Mandela secondary school in the area of the Matola Municipality. Seven men and women between the ages of 25 and 30 were interviewed. They were students of the Pedagogical University in Maputo. The method used to capture the data was a voice recorder. The aim of the gathering in this school was that students could work for the election census of August 2017. After they had completed their programme I was given an hour to interview them. The questions raised were:

- “What is the impact of poor sanitation in your area?”
- “What is the contribution of the youth in the area of the Matola municipality?”

The aim was to engage with people who are students at a higher education institution in order to procure their perspective on the topic of investigation. The respondents emphasized that a substantial number of residents in the Matola municipal area do not have running water in their homes. They have to get water from alternative sources such as non-public suppliers. The standard of the quality control of this water is not clear.

The education students emphasized that in urban and suburban areas of the Matola municipal area there are serious problems with regard to sanitation. There are no functioning public toilets in Mozambique and poor people do not have adequate sanitary facilities in their homes. Sanitation should be a key priority in the community education programmes. In the Inhambane province for example, in the districts of Zavala, Inharrime and the City of Inhambane, people contract cholera at certain times during the year because of the lack of sanitation facilities. It is common for people to urinate on the streets. Dead animals are commonly found in trash piles. Garbage is not removed regularly. The result is a plague of flies and cockroaches. The focus has been so much on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, but there are other diseases related to unhygienic environments that tend to be forgotten. As a consequence people are dying from living in an unhealthy environment (Interview of 6 July 2017 at Nelson Mandela Secondary School).

#### **5.2.10 Socio-economic situation**

According to the Report of the Ministry of Planning and Development (2017:2-5), regarding the socio economic situation, Mozambique has improved substantially with regard to agriculture in 2 provinces, namely Manica and Zambezia in the north. In the other 8 provinces people still live below the poverty line. In those provinces poverty levels are the highest where people are not working or economically active. Child headed households and people with disabilities in rural areas are more likely to live in abject poverty. Where young women are affected by dire poverty they become involvement in unprotected sexual activities in order to survive. Traditionally women

endure a lower standard of living than men due to a lack of education and skills. They cannot fend for themselves and their families. Women who do have employed are mostly small traders. They earn much less than men who have seasonal employment.

The report shows that children and women are still disproportionately located in the least productive informal sector of agriculture and other commercial activities.

On 19 October 2017 an interview was conducted with 7 women and 3 men between the ages of 19 and 35 years at the Malhampswene Market in the area of the Matola municipality. Two additional people, a woman and a man from the Municipality of Matola joined the group so that the total number of people who participated in the interview was 12. These people work in the informal sector as vendors of non-essential goods. The 7 women included 2 domestic workers. The question raised was:

- “Which factors in the Mozambican community contribute to the vulnerability of women and youth”?

The women said that one of the factors was that they had lost much of their market in the past years because of stringent competition. They were not able to afford better goods to attract a better clientele. The man who represents the municipality who is named Mario, emphasized that youth who are employed in Chinese supermarkets and other enterprises are forced to take on extra work such as house painting or plumbing in order to supplement their income. The domestic workers who participated in the interview also needed to supplement their income. They did so by selling sweets and biscuits after work. The issue of changing jobs was raised by 1 domestic worker who was planning to resign her job because the salary she received was not sufficient to cover her basic needs. The cost of goods and services had escalated in recent times. Maria who represents the Municipality at the market indicated that a number of young people work in the informal sector, without a contract. The government does not control and monitor their activities. Abuses are widespread. They tend to disrespect working hours and abscond from their work job without warning. Most young people there participate in the informal market and they mostly only last there for a maximum of 3 months.

The goal of the study is to investigate the situation of young people in Mozambique in order to gain a better understanding of their problems. The high rate of unemployment in the country mostly affects the youth. The role of the faith community and the local government together is to train people in the area of entrepreneurship so that they can be able to fend for themselves. Faith communities should help to reduce the vulnerability of young people, especially if people have no other way of making a living than sex work. These young women are prone to infections and at risk of contracting HIV. Providing young people with education, training and the opportunity to make a decent living, is the responsibility of the government. In a country such as Mozambique collaborative efforts between government, faith-based communities and other enterprises are needed if a viable difference is to be made. Faith communities should encourage people with HIV to be involved in the development and implementation of strategic programmes by the government for the prevention and treatment of HIV. The strategic program to fight poverty should also be a collaborative effort. Faith communities should collaborate with local communities to identify their problems and seek solutions. Together they can learn from their experiences, examine their needs and identify priorities of which education will probably be first. Through education people can be freed from dependence.

#### **5.2.11 Economic opportunities**

On 29 January 2018 an interview was conducted at Liberdade at the office of the Christian Counsel of Mozambique with 8 women and 4 men between the ages of 23 and 35 years. This gives a total of 12 respondents, which included the president, Joana. These people are employed by the Christian Counsel. The method used to capture the data was a voice recorder. The question raised was:

- “What are the causes of the lack of economic opportunities and the struggle for a livelihood in Mozambique?”

The respondents named unemployment as the main cause of the dire poverty in the country. In communities parents are more likely to become dependent on their children that to be the breadwinner for the family. Before the civil war, things were different. The

civil war changed people. Attitudes became negative. However, with limited opportunities for education and skills development the opportunity to earn a good living is also limited. Young people rely on selling products on the streets to increase the family income. Respondents also mentioned that girls who rely on selling goods on streets are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Joana related that men sometimes buy the entire stock a girl is selling in exchange for sex. On the other hand these young girls are under pressure from parents who expect them to generate as much income as possible.

In Mozambique, immediately after the proclamation of Independence in 1975, Frelimo the ruling party established a politically and economically centralized state. The state was to play the key role in the economy. A decade and a half after independence there was a disruption by Portuguese colonizers and thereafter civil war erupted in the country. Local chiefs were recognized as rural patrons by the colonial administration. The socialist system introduced by the ruling part of Frelimo restricted their roles. Corruption was low immediately after Independence owing to strong political commitments and dedication to the liberation struggle. Since liberalization, corruption has increased. This is mainly due to the inability of the state to bring about reform. This created opportunities for illicit gains through corrupt privatization without regulation. The elite of Mozambique who are largely based in the main cities such as Maputo pursue their interests with little accountability to poor urban and rural citizens. There is no commitment from the side of the wealthy to share development and reduce poverty (see Francisco de Marrule 1998).

### **5.2.12 Food security**

Food security is associated with factors such as employment of the adult members in the household, the number of people in the family, whether their livelihood depends on small-scale agriculture. Poor households rely on annual or seasonal informal activities and self-employment. Poor households do not have access to quality food that is healthy. Poverty causes people to become vulnerable to food insecurity, especially

those families who cannot afford to buy food of adequate nutrition. The government should have a policy on food security in order to combat hunger and malnutrition in communities (see Bias and Donovan 2002).

In Mozambique, rural incomes are generally not sufficient that the level of poverty is high. Though agricultural production and productivity are improving somewhat, it is taking too long to be of much help to the people. The use of chemical fertilizers and other modern technology is limited. The government needs partners with whom to collaborate to play a constructive role in providing human capital and infrastructure for the country. The private sector should be responsible for securing economic development and contribute to putting an end to poverty. A high number of people in rural areas are living in dire poverty. Their agricultural production is too small to have anything left to trade and earn an income. They barely produce enough for their own use (see Cunguara and Hanlon 2011). Mosca (2011:9) describes it as follows:

Farms in the socialist era were trying to encourage foreign companies to invest in big farms of the state. There is a curious alignment of interest between Frelimo the ruling part and some donors who want big foreign owned plantations as a development strategy to help subsistence peasant farmers as a form of social welfare. In 2006 the strategy of agriculture in the rural area was aimed to enhance the growth to the poorest segments of the population and the elite argued against helping the poor. If poverty is not reduced it will force questions like: can Mozambique and its donors pay more attention to Millennium Development Goal of food income and jobs creation? That is related to agricultural growth and the green revolution which in turn requires a recognition that markets do not spring up by magic, but instead are created by the state.

Due to the ongoing political instability in the country, the government has missed the opportunity to develop the agricultural sector, especially in the centre and south of the country. A new method should be created and implemented to benefit poor households

by giving priority to the importance of agriculture in order to increase economic growth for poor rural families. This study explored the trends in creation of informal employment opportunities and examined the use of improved technologies. The base line of the situation of Mozambique has been described. The situation of poverty Mozambique is rather challenging (see Donaldson 2008: 212).

### **5.2.13 Climate change and diversification**

The problems in Mozambique do not have a single cause. Neither the civil war, nor the natural disasters to which the country is prone, nor the effects of climate change alone can take the blame. Mucavele (2011:3) explains it as follows:

Mozambique is a country recovering from the effects of the bitter strife from the 1976s to early 1990s civil war that left a legacy of poor physical infrastructure, and challenges for the government to offer effective services to the community. Mozambique has not been seen rapid economic growth over the years in response to peace agreed in 1992 in Rome. There is a question over whether if the growth happens can be sustained over and above to repair the war damage, and whether the growth will translate into jobs and incomes for the majority. Mozambique may have been the most affected country by the regional crisis of 2001 to 2003, although its problems began earlier. In 2000, flooding displaced many people in the south and central regions, out of the country's total population of around 24.6 million, prompting the Government to declare a state of emergency. Poor rains in the subsequent 2001 and 2003 – 15 seasons led to estimates of yearly needs for food aid.

Bila and Salmi (2015:45) emphasized that Mozambique faces increased droughts and floods that always cause consequences for the nation's water resources. Mozambique is particularly vulnerable to the flooding because it is situated downstream of the major river systems which are already affected by climate change. From the year 2000 to 2001, 2007 and 2015 Mozambique experienced severe flooding in many of its rivers

due to torrential rains in the country. Other waters came from neighbouring African countries, such as Zimbabwe and South Africa. The great variability of flooding in Mozambique it is related to poor dam management. Some provinces are classified as semi-arid, such as Gaza, Inhambane, and Maputo. There the rainfall average is inadequate which results in critical water shortages and leading to limited agriculture productivity.

The Inhambane province is prone to natural disasters such as cyclical floods and droughts, which have become more frequent over recent years. The Provincial Directorate of Agriculture has set some priorities with regard to natural resource management. These priorities are to promote the sustainable use of land and forests. The plan aims at an increase in the capacity at the local level for the mitigation of and adapting to climate change. Specific activities include the promotion of agriculture. Planting coconut trees should help to preserve soil. Promoting drought resistant crops and providing education and training with regard to natural resource management for forests and lands, are other strategies that have been planned.

The government should investigate alternatives such as using water harvesting and conservation technologies. Those technologies can be adapted to meet the socio-economic conditions of small holder farmers. Food security is measured according to two components, namely food availability and access to food. In order to improve household food security, farms should implement a mixed intercropping system, primarily designed for home consumption, but also using agricultural techniques. This strategy should be supported through agricultural education to farmers in networks of community (Cunguara and Hanlon 2011).

In addition, to improve food security production and marketing, the government and faith communities together should promote participation in household and producers groups that focus on a combined livelihood diversification effort. One such effort could be the processing of cashew nuts for both household and commercial purposes. This is an example of a non-farm and non-natural resource income generating activity. With

regard to social equity the youth and women should be empowered to control different stages of the cashew production.

The principal objective of investing in food security is to contribute to urban poverty reduction and the sustainable development of the municipalities. Through the improvement of municipal governments and administration a number of gains will follow: improved service delivery, greater resilience to climate change, greater social accountability and citizen participation. The main objectives include the improvement of urban and rural management in order that citizens can be more aware of their rights and duties and that they will be accountable (see Cunguara and Darnhofer 2011:378). The government should invest in road infrastructure for economic growth. This will also create employment opportunities and reduce poverty (Donaldson 2008: 2127-2143). The government should improve the infrastructure that connects agricultural areas in the north and center of the country to provide food in provinces and to stimulating trade.

### **5.3 Summary**

In conclusion, this chapter has focused on the empirical part of the investigation. The interviews in dialogue with the literature on child marriage provided a deeper understanding of the profound and far-reaching impact of such human rights violations and prolonged violence and abuse on the lives of female children and young women in Mozambique. It aimed to come to a better understand of the experiences of the people on grassroots level and how cultural practices and the consequences of poverty affect their lives and social relations. The study examined the effect and impact of polygamy. It is clear that there are no immediate solutions to the problems associated with polygamous families, but a concerted effort should be made toward facilitating conversion between traditionalists who accept polygamy as a cultural way of life and other parties, including faith communities, that can provide education as to the right of women and girls to live a dignified life.

Development efforts in the country have not always yielded the desired results. Such efforts have not been effective in reducing poverty. The population should be

empowered, educated and made aware of their rights and responsibilities. The study also has shown that decision making with regard to poverty reduction remains in the hands of the government, the donors and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The food security discussion should be broadened to include areas other than agriculture. Diverse livelihood opportunities should be explored in order to increase the resilience of households in response to different natural disasters that affect the country.

The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church represent an effort on the part of this particular faith community to address human issues in the contemporary world from a sound biblical and theological foundation. They are a call to faithfulness, are both instructive and persuasive and in a prophetic spirit. The Social Principles are a call to all members of the Church to a prayerful dialogue of faith and practice. Mozambican society is characterized by a large population of young people who frequently find it difficult to participate fully in society and faith communities. Therefore, it is necessary to encourage inclusion of young people in decision-making processes that eliminate discrimination and exploitation. The Church encourages the creation of appropriate employment opportunities for young people see (the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church 2012:1).

## CHAPTER SIX

### YOUTH GOING FORWARD: A LIFE OF DIGNITY FOR ALL

#### 6.1 The role of the church and effective youth ministry

This chapter is the concluding section of the study in which the gathered data will be integrated and interpreted from a theological perspective. The role that the church can play will be indicated and possibilities for effective youth ministry that can contribute to the healing and development of young people in this particular context will be explored. The findings of the study and some recommendations as to how faith communities and churches can cooperate with the state to improve the situation of children and young people in Mozambique will be presented. With a greater measure of cooperation among the various institutions, progress can be made with regard to the education, quality of life and faith of children and youth in the country. This chapter will highlight the role of the church and the impact of inclusive programs of social responsibility regarding the youth of the country.

The study has aimed to come to an understanding of the dynamics of the transition from youth into adulthood in the particular context of post-war Mozambique. Since religion and faith form an important part of life in this context the study is particularly interested in whether and how churches include youth leaders and parents in the decision making processes and the implementation of these decisions in the church and community. The study will conclude by examining the socialization of young people and different factors that determine their successful integration into society. Young people need stability in order to balance out the effects of personal and contextual change. They need to gain self-esteem in order to overcome the powerlessness they have often experienced in the course of their young lives.

The approach that was chosen is that of a qualitative investigation. In order to provide an appropriately diverse range of participants for this study while taking the time and

budget constraints into account, it was decided that data would be collected from both rural and urban areas. The locations, event and participants were chosen to obtain a diversity of views from across Mozambique in order to adequately represent the context that is investigated.

The aim was to interview people with a range of life experiences and across a variety of socio-economic situations on the situation of the youth in the country. The study involved young men and women from different cultural and language backgrounds, those in the work force and those unemployed, young people at school and those in tertiary education, young people who were homeless, some who live independently and some who live with their families. Youth ministry literature emphasizes that youth ministry is about much more than just programs; it is about reaching out in relationship to the young people in the community, trusting them, entrusting tasks and responsibilities to them, thereby giving them the opportunity to use their gifts in the community and the faith community. Youth ministry is therefore goal-driven, rather than program driven. Youth ministry should have a long-term positive effect on the lives of young people if it deals constructively with the root causes of social and economic injustices in partnership with government and other institutions.

In a previous era there was a strong emphasis on transmitting good morals from generation to generation through the family and the church. Later the youth became an established and recognized group in society. Their way of life and ideas became a youth subculture. This subculture became a source of social change. For some older people in the churches and faith communities it was experienced a potential threat to the existing social order. South African youth ministry scholar, Malan Nel, applied the insights regarding youth subculture and youth ministry to the South African context with its many divisions, conflicting presuppositions and contradictory worldviews that had divided the country in the past and continues to undermine and affect the present. In that country the democratic elections of 1994 marked the year that the first generation of young people could participate in democratic elections. To a large extent these young people did not experience the struggles of apartheid first hand. However, the effects of it

on their families still had a severe influence on them. Similarly, as this study has shown, the context with its political, economic and social challenges affected and still affects the young people in Mozambique. Where South African youth are a post-apartheid generation, Mozambican youth are a post-war generation.

## **6.2 Education for a life of dignity**

Illiteracy in Mozambique is an on-going problem that affects mostly young people and mostly those who live in circumstances of poverty. From the time of Portuguese colonization, educational opportunities for Mozambican people of low socio-economic status was limited. The result is that today most of the vulnerable population is illiterate, and not able to speak, read or write Portuguese, the official language of the country. Most of the political leaders in the country were educated in missionary schools. After independence, the government placed a high priority on expanding education, which reduced the illiteracy rate to about 2% as primary school enrollment increased. However, in recent years, the construction of new schools and the enrollment of teachers for training have not kept up with the increase in the population. With post-civil war enrollments of children reaching all-time highs, the quality of education in the country has declined. All Mozambican children are required by law to attend primary school. However, many children do not go to primary school because they have to work on the family's farm for a living. Enrolment in university is extremely limited. Most students who complete high school do not immediately continue with tertiary studies. Some choose instead to study at an institution that specializes in the fields of agriculture, technology, or pedagogy to acquire the necessary skills to sustain themselves as soon as possible.

Illiteracy and a lack of educational opportunities is a huge challenge in the country. Some children grow up in a family of which all the members are illiterate. It is especially difficult for them to gain access to schools. The majority of children between 15 and 18 are still learners at primary school. They are often forced to drop out of school because of their age. Literacy and numeracy are key essentials in order for young people to attain knowledge and skills.

There is a great need in the Mozambican context to implement an ongoing learning effort which provides young people with the opportunity to acquire skills. Only then can the current situation in the labour market be improved and occupational demands in the work force met. Many children face the challenge of not being able to complete even a primary education because of poverty. Daily survival is the plight of extremely poor people and many families keep their children at home to help out, send them out to work in the fields, or to seek employment rather than sending them to school. Many children are deprived of a basic education which could have enhanced their lives and given them a more hopeful future. Even if school tuition were free, uniforms and stationery would still have to be bought. If the family cannot afford this, children would not be allowed to attend classes. In a country where government resources are not abundant, the faith community can work with the government and other institutions to provide education to all young people, regardless of their social background.

According to the report of Action Aid Agency (2012), the local government should continue to engage parents in their children's education. This should be done through training, capacity building, awareness-raising and other activities that inspire parents to be involved in the education of their children and to provide the opportunity as well as the space and support needed for children to learn effectively. Parents can develop activities that are aimed specifically at improving learning outcomes. Parents can collaborate with the private sector to advocate for a rights-based approach to measuring and assessing performance. When parents collaborate with other organizations that have specific expertise, such as Save the Children, Plan, and Raising Voices, to develop good training for teachers and the parents themselves provide a supportive environment home, they can contribute much to the education and well-being of the children.

Parents and children should also be educated on how to deal with and report school-based violence and abuse. Parents can work in collaboration with teachers to create the necessary procedures to deal with situations of abuse. Good practices with regard to the education of male children that are already in place should be expanded to include

female children. Parents, teachers and faith communities should teach girls and boys how to engage respectfully in joint activities.

The condition of educational infrastructure in Mozambique remains critical. Many villages have inadequate school buildings that do not even provide adequate shelter against rain or wind. The number of students per class is usually extremely high. Language is a serious problem in rural areas: Most children speak at least 2 to 3 local languages but only encountered Portuguese for the first time when entering school. Under these conditions, literacy is extremely difficult and typically students of Grade 5 or 6 are unable to speak or understand Portuguese. The education system does not equip young people with skills to compete in the labour market, and does not prepare them for self-employment enterprises. Today, education which still consists of making children learn things by heart is not regarded as sufficient. The contents of their education should be relevant to the context. Children should develop the ability to critically reflect on the world around them and they should be adequately prepared for the challenges of the adult world and the situation in their particular context.

From a theological perspective the matter of preparing children and youth for the world in which they should be able to function well as adults was addressed by Andris Salter, the Associate General Secretary of the United Methodist Women in the opening session of the African United Methodist Women Gathering in Maputo in October 2017. The Associate General Secretary identified three aspects that function interdependently and are to be achieved in order to strengthen an effective ministry of young people in Africa and Mozambique in particular, namely *empowerment*, *participation* and *growth*. It is necessary to empower young men and women by giving them autonomy so they can live as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world today. The United Methodist Women (UMW) today should invite the youth to participate responsibly in decision making and in a creating a vision for the life of the faith community. The United Methodist Women should contribute intentionally and positively to the spiritual growth of each young person in the community. Education is not enough. All aspects of humanity, the physical, rational, relational, psychological and spiritual, should be developed and

nurtured holistically. The United Methodist Women should empower marginalized communities, particularly women, children and youth to gain access to information technology (speech by Andris Salter, Maputo October 2017).

According to Chang (2005:3), a former minister of Finance in Mozambique, the importance of strengthening technical schools in Mozambique is a way of transmitting knowledge, skills and the capacity of youth for self-employment. The government and faith communities should continue with their efforts to promote access to primary, secondary and technical education in order to support and facilitate initiatives that have already been implemented by private sector in the framework of technical education. There is a need to build capacity by giving youth sufficient experience of their field of choice in order for them to be able to enter into the labour market and be equipped to make a good contribution from the very beginning of their career. It is important to develop both theoretical and practical courses that are aimed at addressing what is relevant to the context of labour market. It is necessary to support young people to have the capacity to compete in the labour market. Some associations have already been formed in the area of technical training. These associations have the task to establish new technical training institutions. There is a need also for private training centers to work with public training facilities in order to maximize the opportunities for technical training for young people who choose a technical career. Good technician will contribute much to the development of the country.

### **6.3 Economic growth for a life of dignity**

The challenge of economic growth is a particularly difficult one with regard to the youth. The literature on poverty has shown that the most vulnerable are always the ones to suffer most in a context of extreme poverty. Young people are vulnerable. Different perspectives have been given and theories with regard to poverty reduction have been widely discussed in Mozambique. In this context poverty alleviation is particularly challenging because of different and sometimes conflicting approaches to development programs that focus on agro-ecology and access to the markets. As a result, actions that have been taken are not always effective. Therefore, the development strategies for

reducing poverty among the youth should find a balance and cohesion in the implementation of the different theories.

Mozambique is rather prone to natural disasters. Nearly every year droughts affect the south of the country, and floods the central and northern regions. Rather than simply recognizing and acknowledging this to be a fact, the strategies and approaches applied to reduce poverty should actively and creatively take the occurrence of droughts and floods into account. The development of employment opportunities that are not related to agriculture should be intensified in all provinces of the country. In the meantime, more investment in the market is required in order to make use of improved technologies that are profitable and can benefit youth especially in the country's efforts to stimulate economic growth (Adato speech, May 2006:226-247).

People from drought and flood-stricken areas of the country can focus on finding a source of income from areas other than agriculture and equipping themselves by studies in other fields. Studies that could be of benefit to the volatile agricultural sector would include water management and conservation technologies. Food security is measured by two components, namely food availability and access to food, also by vulnerable people. In future research on food security, it will be crucial to improve the government's strategic plan of the "green revolution" which is aimed to end rural poverty. Mosca (2011) emphasizes that a high percentage of Mozambican peoples are peasant farmers who still rely on farming with equipment such as a hoe. They do not make use of modern technology to produce their food, but farm as their ancestors did. Having said this, the study has shown that people are losing faith in the possibilities of making a good living and becoming upwardly mobile in fields other than that of agriculture. Great importance is still attached to employment in the agricultural sector and receiving a fair price for agricultural products in order to alleviate poverty in Mozambique is a necessary first step.

Unemployment in Mozambique is the greatest problem for the youth. The only areas with some demand for workers are seasonal agricultural work, short-term contracts as

construction workers and short-term work on development projects. The frustration of young people with regard to employment opportunities cannot be underestimated. Official youth unemployment figures in Mozambique are not available. Most young people have nothing to do from the day they leave school. They try to survive by cultivating a field, doing occasional jobs or establishing small businesses. Young women who get married as a survival strategy by their parents and themselves, will remain bound to household and work in the field for the rest of their lives. Young men mostly leave the village and try and find employment particularly in South Africa or they try to set up a business at the local market. Those young men, who leave the villages in order to search for employment as a means of survival, later establish their own families. They build a house and look for a wife. Often they and their family then barely survive by farming, fishing, hunting and trading. A farmer's life today is in general very similar to a farmer's life in the past.

The difference is that young people today are more aware of new and accessible opportunities such as like education, better means of transport, communication technologies and modern goods. On television they are introduced to the way of life of youth in other parts of the world. They gradually begin to claim their own personal freedom. They are no longer willing to sacrifice their time and energy for the benefit of the community, but rather give priority to themselves and their own life. An important practical factor is money. Households today need an income in order to get access to modern goods and services. However, to earn sufficient money in a rural area is difficult. Young men and women sometimes turn to illegal activities to acquire or supplement their income.

A considerable number of poverty stricken young men and women no longer have a home. They move between villages and countries in search of occasional jobs or business opportunities. The number of youths, who are required to provide means for their own survival and often for other family members as well, is on the increase due to the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS that has affected the Mozambican population negatively. The exchange of workforces over the borders and immigration differ in the

various provinces of Mozambique. It depends on the neighbouring country to which that Mozambican province is the closest. In Machipanda in the Manica province which is close to Zimbabwe, there are increasing numbers of immigrants coming over to Mozambique in search of work due to the difficult economic and political situation in Zimbabwe. These immigrants compete with young unemployed Mozambicans for work. They often accept lower wages because they have no choice. The border police are increasingly controlling illegal immigrants from Zimbabwe and deporting them back to their country, despite the strong ethnic and personal connections between the communities at the border. Many young men and women in Maputo and Gaza provinces go to South Africa in search of work and business opportunities. They experience similar constraints as the Zimbabwean immigrants in the Manica Province in Mozambique.

From a theological perspective, the issue of sharing wealth is highlighted by Paul in 2 Corinthians 8:1-15. The importance of work and sharing resources among desperate communities is emphasized. In this way, a new equality or mutuality should be created in which the abundance of some will help to meet the needs of others. It is necessary to ensure a fair distribution of wealth among vulnerable communities. The community's Christian love is shown to be genuine insofar as they mirror the work of Christ who became poor so that through his poverty those who believe in him might become rich.

Barriers of all kinds generally separate relatively prosperous people from those who live in dire poverty. The reshaping of the church and the proclamation of the gospel cannot take place separately from the community. The church should be involved with and build relationships with communities of economically impoverished and most vulnerable people. God has chosen the poor, the vulnerable, and the powerless as the means of grace of transformation. Today the church is called to engage with the community and with the poor, those whom Jesus called "the least of these".

The first community of faith was constituted as a fellowship of prayer and praise of sharing of life and substance with among the impoverished as it reads in Acts 2:43-47 and 4:32-35. When the community shares its wealth with the poor, it demonstrates

continuity with the early church, the community of faith established by the followers of Jesus. The inability to discern or recognize the community as the body of Christ was encountered when prosperous Christians in Corinth separated themselves from indigent Christians in the enactment of the Lord's Supper and communion meal (1 Cor11:17-34). The unworthy way in which the Corinthians practiced Eucharistic fellowship was that their table fellowship reflected not the community of solidarity but the class divisions of the Greco-Roman society.

Economic growth in Mozambique necessitates better training opportunities for young farmers in order to teach them how to meet higher product quality standards. This will include meeting the food security standards and fulfilling the contractual requirements on delivery times. It is necessary to promote investment in agricultural technology and seed production. Qualified personnel are required to improve farm administration. There is a need to provide transportation and communications to support the training of producers. The involvement of the private sector will further help to ensure efficient production. It is crucial to further develop the system of irrigation and focus on the maintenance of infrastructure such as the tertiary inter-district roads.

Short and medium courses for training entrepreneurs should be established in order that young people can receive a quick basic training that can facilitate them to begin to earn a living. Financial support should also be provided. Through training the possibilities of young entrepreneurs to compete effectively in the market place will be enhanced. The construction and maintenance of roads in rural areas, electrification, and the introduction of new production technologies are needed if entrepreneurial developments are to advance in the country.

#### **6.4 Media and the future**

The media both create and maintain the dominant discourse. This contributes to the way in which young people are currently perceived and how they perceive themselves and their place in the world today. The media contribute to the formation of attitudes and perceptions of young people themselves and about young people. It is necessary to

identify the extent of the stereotyping of young people and to assess the impact of factors that influence attitudes about them. It is necessary for the wellbeing of the youth that a sense of accomplishment and confidence in themselves are strengthened in order that they can experience the positive power of good self-esteem in their lives. They should feel that their voice is being heard and that they form an important part of the community and of society. They should be able to discover in their interaction with the world around them that they have achieved an understanding of others and of their own culture. The media in Mozambique can contribute to this. Youth love to see their dreams, their local place, as well as their culture and realities portrayed in the media.

Social media play an important part in the lives of young people today. The role of social media includes connecting them with learning and job opportunities. The function of social media is to enhance communication with friends, family and the outside world. The study has shown that social media can also have a negative impact on young people. This includes health problems and the erosion of their culture. When the youth use social media, they should not be alienated from their cultural values, social norms, and religious values. The study concludes that social media can and should be used constructively and for positive purposes. It is an informative way to enhance the skills and abilities of the youth. However, there is also a need to minimize the potential negative effects of the media. The youth should be taught and inspired to use media wisely, rather than becoming addicted to it, wasting their precious time on it where they could have invested their energy in building a good life for themselves and secure their future. Teachers and parents play a crucial role in this kind of constructive education.

Existing research on how networking sites affect the youth has evaluated both the positive and negative aspects. Studies have shown that the youth of today are not only aware of what fits best with their personality, but are also keen and enthusiastic to determine their priorities and actively pursue what they find to be most important to their lives. Social media serve to connect people across the world. Social networking offers the youth a platform for connecting with others, sharing experiences and to be exposed to different ways of life and being in the world. Youth are able to gain relevant

information quickly thanks to the media and social media. They are in touch with what goes on in the world. Negative aspects include that more time is often spent on entertainment and updates on the lives of family and friends than gathering knowledge and useful information that could improve their lives and benefit their future. The outcomes of the study have shown that the youth should be encouraged and taught to determine their own boundaries and set their own limits as how and when to use social media in order for this time-consuming aspect of their lives to also make a positive contribution to their future.

## **6.5 Overcoming vulnerability**

Existing research has found evidence of extraordinary resilience and sacrifice among some young people who grow up without adequate adult care and supervision, who have to fend for themselves, who care for siblings or are cared for by siblings who themselves are still children. Often these youth who are utterly vulnerable, are exploited by members of their extended family or by outsiders. The study has shown a willingness by many older siblings to come forward to care for their younger brothers and sister after the separation or death of their parents, despite the difficulties and many uncertainties as to what is going to happen to them. There is not much help forthcoming from official government support services. What makes this difficult is the large geographical area that government services will have to cover, since these cases are spread across the country. Communities and faith communities can work together to identify families in need of mentoring and provide adult support to such child-headed families.

The United Methodist Church, along with other churches and faith communities, is challenged to offer adequate and effective care for vulnerable children and young people. Whereas government services often find it difficult to reach outlying areas, the churches are already there. The faith community should be effective servants of the Divine mission of transformation. An aim of the United Methodist Church should be to develop ongoing relations with impoverished children for whom there are not many

opportunities in life. Jesus' presence in this world is to be found in the faces and needs of those who were hungry and naked, sick and imprisoned, abandoned and excluded (Matt 25:31-46). His promise was to be with his followers always, calling them toward his future where God will be everything in all and every tear of suffering will be consoled and transformed into joy.

## **6.6 A healthy socio-economic environment**

Poverty is generally more critical in rural areas than in cities, because in cities there are more opportunities for social advancement. Younger people question the legitimacy of elected government officials who fail to deliver equal resources to all the people of the country. In the big cities of Maputo, Nampula and Beira, the central areas are known as "urban" whereas the informal settlements are known as "suburban". Municipal services are only delivered to the so-called "urban" areas. This discrimination creates a divide between what is colloquially termed "sons and step sons". Those who reside in the so-called "urban" areas are regarded and treated as full citizens with the rights and duties of full citizens, whereas those residing in the "suburban" areas are more like "half citizens" who have many duties, but cannot claim any rights at all. This is one of the most significant weaknesses of the ruling party. Donors are often suspicious of the misuse of foreign aid. State maladministration is widespread. Since state employees are linked to the ruling party, this becomes a problem.

According to Shikhani, foreign aid is specified by donors to give priority to the suburban and rural areas. Often those who live in the cities still have strong ties to their rural origins. Even their family structure and numbers are much related to the rural ways of life. In the city environment they come up with various initiatives in order to survive. They often work in what is commonly known as the "informal sector". Some of their enterprises are not necessarily legal. As a result, new kinds of wealth and new enrichment processes are emerging. This is a phenomenon that should be further investigated from a sociological, economic and theological perspective. This has implications for ministry in general and specifically youth ministry in Mozambique.

## **6.7 Reunited families**

Graça Machel, the former first lady and widow of President Samora Machel, in her opening speech at a National Conference of Women and Peace (*Movimento da Mulher e Paz*) in the Beira province on 20 August 2018, emphasized that, when the General Peace Agreement was signed and it brought an end to the civil war in Mozambique, the former combatants needed to be reunited with their communities. Tracing soldiers' families and reunification programs were established in many provinces to run alongside the process of demobilization in Mozambique. The reunification of soldiers with their families and communities was done fairly successfully, despite it being an expensive process which in some cases required the involvement of the media and the provision of transportation to local communities by planes and helicopters.

The Tracing and Reunification Programme in Mozambique was conducted by the United Nations. It was established in 1994. It was carried out in all ten the provinces of Mozambique and the process is still ongoing. The program directly facilitated the reunification with their relatives of more than 12,000 children and youths who had served as soldiers in the war. Those whose families were not found or were no longer alive, were placed in foster care. Therefore, Graça Machel challenged the movement of *Mulher e Paz* to work in partnership with the government to provide effective follow-up support. Help was also needed to facilitate access to finance, to train young people for entrepreneurship, and to develop their skills by providing training. Still today there is a higher number of men and women soldiers who need to be demobilized and reunited with their communities.

## **6.8 Health care for all**

The report of Action Aid Organization in Mozambique (2012) emphasizes that the government should provide aid for individuals living with HIV and provides training in communities on how to make informed decisions and change their behaviour to prevent contracting the virus. It is important to the country and the population that the numbers of vulnerable people who are HIV infected be greatly reduced. The community should understand the risk of HIV infection and increase its capacity to respond effectively so

that it can work toward a significant reduction of the problem. The government should create a positive environment to support those people who currently live with HIV and their families. Such people should be included in development initiatives and in the implementation of programmes aimed at preventing the disease. The government should encourage people to learn from the experience of others and determine their own needs and priorities.

Harriett Olson, the General Secretary of the United Methodist Women, at the opening of the consultation of the United Methodist Women's African Gathering in Maputo 18 October 2018, emphasized that a great challenge faced by African women today is the increasing number of youth who live on the streets and are involved in the street economy. A reason for this phenomenon is the fragmentation of families which, in turn, is on the increase because of conflict, disease, urbanization, an increasing gap in income between the rich and the poor, and a lack of employment, housing, and food security.

Homeless women and youth are more likely to have experienced significant neglect and abuse. They are separated from their original family. The multi-generational effects of this can be seen in a lack of positive role models during early life and social exclusion. Homeless women and youth face some of the worst health outcomes in society. They are also at a higher risk of succumbing to substance abuse and contracting HIV or other sexually transmitted infections. They have poor or no access to health services. In order to reduce the spread of HIV, gender and cultural issues as well as issues of sexual orientation should be addressed. The United Methodist Women, the state and faith communities should work together to foster respect for others and a high standard of moral behaviour in all citizens and members of communities. They can also work together to promote life skills development. Respect for the self and other, respect for the rights of others, self-esteem, and knowledge with regard to sexual and reproductive health should be prioritized and fostered by governments, faith communities and other institutions all over the world.

A prevalent problem in Mozambican society is alcohol or drug abuse. This problem has a direct effect on children and young people. It exacerbates all kinds of risk behaviour of which children are often the victims. The study has identified several aspects of how alcohol abuse by parents and caregiver contributes to the abuse or neglect of children. Studies have shown that women who had experienced childhood abuse and neglect were more likely to have problems with alcohol or drug abuse as adults. The study has identified different types of alcoholism, one of which is characterized by high levels of antisocial behaviour that frequently begins to manifest during adolescence. Children whose parents have a history of alcoholism are more likely to be abused during childhood than others. Those children are, in turn, at increased risk of themselves exhibiting of antisocial behaviour and having problems with alcohol. This is often the result of both a genetic predisposition and the experience of substance abuse.

## **6.9 Marriage and sexuality: A life of dignity**

### **6.9.1 Marriage, choice and dignity**

The study has shown the detrimental effects of child marriage and children whose bodies are forced to bear children. Concentrated efforts should be made by both the state and faith communities to end the practice of premature marriage. Advocacy for family planning and support for already married children and young women can contribute to empowering girls and women. These women should have the opportunity to gain knowledge about sexually-transmitted infections and should have access to quality health services. They should be able to count on support from the community and their families when it comes to their reproductive health, especially in the case of very young married people. Faith communities especially can identify and train peer educators to mentor young couples and serve as a role model to them. The faith community can provide training with regard to health care and support local health facilities to ensure that quality youth-friendly services are available and accessible to the many young people in need.

The implementation of such programmes should not only focus on mentoring those very young people who are already married, but should also focus on educating the communities in which these practices are perpetuated with regard to the great harm that is being caused. Committees can organize conferences and workshops on early marriage in communities to identify together how harmful practices can be eradicated. The health of young people should be the first priority of adults, communities and faith communities. The decision to marry girls off while they are still children is often in the hands of family and community leaders. These persons should be invited to cooperate and play an active role in addressing the issues that result from this practice. If such people of influence in the communities discourage the practice of child marriage they can contribute much to the health and well being of young people.

The study has highlighted some strategies that the government can use to work toward putting an end to the practice of child marriage. Such strategies include: strengthening social and educational policies to postpone marriage for females to an age where when they are adults who make their own decisions with regard to marriage and child-bearing. Economic opportunities should be created for young men and women so that they can have the capability of constructing a dignified life for themselves. Better social services such as health care, education and protection will also serve to combat the need for this practice of child marriage. Such strategies can be combined with communication and discussions at national and local level to reduce social support for this practice. As the social support for the practice of child marriage dissipates and laws are increasingly enforced, this can put an end to this problem of which female children are the victims.

The government and churches together should advocate for change in public policy and legislation in order that young people, especially girls, can be effectively and adequately protected. The government and churches should offer support services for women who have already been forced into child marriage and are now bearing the consequences. Faith communities can use religious media, such as radio and television, to disseminate the message that forced child marriage is a violation of human rights and should be brought to an end so that both men and women can live their life with dignity. The

government can introduce the necessary laws and policies to regulate the minimum age of marriage and mitigate the harmful reproductive health issues that impact on girls who are married prematurely. The government can implement programmes aim at raising awareness about the risks of early pregnancy and giving girls who have already been forced into marriage the knowledge to at least delay pregnancy. There should be a provision of and access to information about contraceptives and maternal health services. Safe abortion in the case of unplanned pregnancy should be provided.

The government should ensure that women and girls who seek to revoke child marriages can do so. There should also be access to psychological therapy for survivors of violence. They should have access to shelters, legal support, counseling, and various educational skills development programs. The government should have strategies to engage in dialogue about concrete efforts to prevent child marriage and the abuse of female children.

### **6.9.2 Polygamy, culture and dignity**

One of the aims of this study was to better understand the cultural roots of harmful cultural practices that specifically affect children and young people. One of these practices is marriage of people who are still children and another is polygamous marriage, which is still generally practiced in Mozambican communities. The study investigated the origin, prevalence, positive and negative effects of polygamy on the family life of Mozambican people. The civil laws on polygamy were also perused.

The study has identified the challenge with regard to harmonizing a cultural matter such as polygamous marriage with the views of the Christian church, because there is always some tension between them. However, beyond the inevitable tensions that arise when a polygamous culture is stretched to express and embrace religious faith, a more positive outcome is when people who become members of the faith community begin to recognize harmful cultural practices and cooperate to eradicate such elements. There will always be some tension between culture and faith. However, harmful practices can be changed by communities. Culture is not stagnant or rigid. Wherever the light of the

gospel message of Jesus Christ with its message of radical respect for the other, falls on culture, people as agents, not victims, of culture can use their agency to bring about change. Such change expresses the needs identified by a community of a society. Factors that can bring about change in a polygamous culture include contact with people of different cultures, widespread acceptance of Christianity, and social development.

### **6.9.3 Free from harassment**

In the document, the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church (2008), it is articulated that sexual harassment destroys community. It is termed “alienating and sinful behaviour” which leads to broken relationships. Being sexually harmed and hurt in any way stands in direct opposition to God’s intention for God’s children. From the first biblical stories of human community in the Garden of Eden to the letters of Paul addressed to the first Christian communities, both men and women are said to have been created in the image of God, and have equal value before God. The United Methodist Church and its members are called to be stewards of God’s community of hospitality where there is not only an absence of harassment and other forms of sexual harm done to women and children, but also an attitude of welcome, respect, dignity and equality. The General Conference of the United Methodist Church calls for intensified efforts worldwide to eradicate sexual harassment in the denomination and its institutions.

The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church urge Episcopal leaders to devise and implement plans to address and eradicate sexual harassment in each Episcopal area. Such efforts would include regular training for clergy, early intervention where there are problems that involve clergy, as well as regular training for lay men and women, especially in smaller membership churches.

The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, in collaboration with appropriate agencies, should develop and distribute resources to facilitate training on issues of sexual harassment specific to those in ordained ministry and to lay leaders, students, faculty, and administrators of United Methodist related educational institutions. The

Annual Conferences of the United Methodist Church should encourage their local and national governments to collect accurate data on the incidence and nature of sexual harassment in their workplaces, and encourage their national governments to adopt laws, policies, and procedures for eradicating sexual harassment. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, in collaboration with appropriate agencies (including the General Board of Discipleship's Safe Sanctuaries Ministry), should continue to develop and distribute resources to reduce the risk of abuse in local churches and increase the United Methodist understanding of and action in response to sexual harassment in church and society.

The United Methodist Women should continue to monitor and assess the church's progress with regard to the eradication of sexual harassment. A report will be brought to the next meeting of the General Conference in 2020. This report will specify areas that should be attended to within the life of the Church, such as policy development, prevention, education, and training. There should be continued assessment of the United Methodist Church's progress to eradicate this behavior from the Church worldwide. The General Board of Church and Society and the General Board of Global Ministries are called to advocate for laws against sexual harassment in the workplace and in the community in general, and should continue to provide resources to the denomination to eradicate harassment and other forms of violence against women, children and youth. The United Methodist Church is called to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of youth, as well as those who work with children and youth. The United Methodist Church should implement operational procedures in all programmes and events. Those who work with the youth should be educated regarding the policies.

#### **6.9.4 Free from discrimination**

A speech by Harriett Olson, the General Secretary of the United Methodist Women, at the African women's gathering in Maputo October 2017, emphasized that all children, women and youth should be treated equally without discrimination, and that vulnerable people should have the same opportunities as others. A national policy and strategic

plan for action should be developed. This should target priority areas with effective economic interventions such as micro-finance services. Access to education should be provided also for the poorest women and children, especially girls. Psycho-social interventions should be incorporated into all activities. In Deuteronomy (10:18) Moses challenges the children of Israel to remember their God upon their entrance to the Promised Land: “The Lord your God administers justice for the fatherless, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” The United Methodist Church in Mozambique too should remember those who are less fortunate in the society, caring for those who still suffer discrimination.

The Social Principles of the United Methodist include the principles of equality and non-discrimination as articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinctions such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, is encouraged. The General Conference affirms that all peoples and individuals constitute one human family, (see the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church 2008:168). In addition, Paul in Ephesians (2:19.) says “so then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God”.

The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church (2012:123) emphasizes that the Church should recognize the fundamental importance of nations in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related expressions of intolerance. Nations should adopt and utilize all relevant international human rights instruments. Complete international adherence to this should be encouraged.

The United Methodist Church should recognize that religion, spirituality and faith can contribute to promoting the inherent dignity and worth of all human persons and the eradication of discrimination. The United Methodist Church should recognize that racism often reveals itself in a different manner for women and girls. It can be one of the factors that lead to the deterioration of their living conditions, poverty, violence, multiple forms

of discrimination, and the limitation or denial of their human rights. The United Methodist Church should create a mechanism to develop a more systematic and consistent approach to evaluating and monitoring discrimination against women, children and youth.

#### **6.10 Youth, culture, faith and agency**

The study strongly recommends that, as one of the strategies to improve the situation of youth in Mozambique, the United Methodist Church should identify possible entry-points and opportunities for self-employment for women and youth in close cooperation with the private sector. Women and young people should be encouraged and supported through entrepreneurship programmes so that they can set up a business and make a living for themselves. Young employment seekers can be equipped with the technical skills that are needed by the private sector. If the government makes resources available for alleviating the crisis of young people in Mozambique today and the church responds to the problems that affect women and youth, a constructive change can take place.

The youth, especially in rural Mozambique, face many problems which are all interlinked in a complex socio-cultural system. Problems faced by young people are often related to culture, cultural views and cultural practices. When challenging culture, an effective strategy is to raise awareness of where harm is done to vulnerable people and to raise awareness as to how the youth can be empowered to embrace their cultural identity in a healthy and constructive way. In the rural areas of Mozambique, a higher number of the population is illiterate than in the cities. Rural people often do not have much confidence in themselves and their ability to take the initiative to change their living situation. However, they too have the ability to encourage and empower people to take the initiative with regard to their own development.

The study has found that young people in communities are often not included in an open dialogue about relationships, gender norms, future perspectives, conflicts and violence. The government and faith communities can work together to include young

people so that they can learn to take part in the formation of their own future. This will increase their self-esteem and confidence to enhance their social abilities. They can be inspired to learn new skills, expose themselves to new experiences. They can be stimulated and motivated to pursue education and become knowledgeable about their personal rights and responsibilities.

The Government and faith communities can work together to create a healthy environment for youth. In such an environment they can make new friends, develop social networks, promote tolerance among groups and transcend generational and ethnic differences. They can be encouraged as Christian believers to respect the worth and value before God of all human beings and work consciously to integrate the marginalized members of the community. The government and the church should work together to empower the youth of the country through training so that they can have a sense of self-determination. They can be empowered and supported in establishing local projects to strengthen community co-operation and networking toward a more healthy society.

As a faith community that can have a positive impact on Mozambican society, the United Methodist Church is called to develop strategies to meet the needs of vulnerable men and women, families, and communities in order to ensure that they are adequately cared for, and that they are protected from all forms of abuse, violence, exploitation, human trafficking and the loss of their inheritance. Faith communities who engage with society from the perspective of the gospel message of God's redeeming, reconciling, and transforming grace in Jesus Christ, have a vested interest in the liberation of the oppressed, whoever they might be.

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