

**YOUTH EXPERIENCES OF A RURAL SOUTH AFRICAN SPORT
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

by

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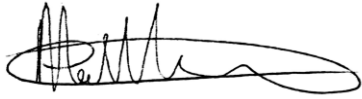
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February 2023

Declaration

I declare that the dissertation/thesis, which I hereby submit for the degree Philosophiae Doctor in Education the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.”



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Ethics statement

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this thesis, has obtained, for the research described in this work, the applicable research ethics approval. The author declares that he has observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's Code of ethics for researchers and the Policy guidelines for responsible research.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my wife Sophia Chanko Motlalepule, and my son, Reabetswe Neo. Their unconditional love and encouragement guided me through this endeavour. I also dedicate this work to my dear and loving mother the late Susan Jacobeth Boabewa Motlhaolwa and my father Baetsing Hans Motlhaolwa.

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to explore the youth experiences of a rural South African sports development programme to understand how and why the youth in rural South Africa experienced the sports development programme the way they did. This study followed a qualitative, descriptive research design. This study was grounded in a theoretical framework based on youth developmental experiences through sport (YDETS). The framework emanated from a positive youth development (PYD) framework and self-determination theory (SDT). Purposive sampling and arts-informed methods including drawings and photovoice combined with semi-structured interviews were applied for data construction. Qualitative data analysis computer software, ATLAS.ti (v.8.4.15), was used, and semiotic visual data analysis, photovoice data analysis, thematic data analysis and member reflection were employed as methods for the data analysis. The findings in this study revealed the potential of the Dreamfields sports development programme to enhance and develop the personal and social development skills of the youth. However, the sports development programme did not automatically produce positive results; instead, positive experiences associated with the programme were related to a combination of factors and contextual assets, such as the school environment, parental involvement and supportive teachers and coaches. Furthermore, the findings highlighted several adverse experiences and negative outcomes associated with the sports programme. These outcomes included physical injuries, social exclusion and negative interactions with peers, teachers and coaches. Despite structural inequity and socio-economic challenges experienced by the youth in rural communities, the findings in this study suggest that rural youth are a heterogeneous group of individuals with the aspirations, resilience and the determination to overcome their challenges and succeed.

Key terms: arts-informed, development methods, sports development, experiences, rurality, youth

Language editor's declaration

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

40-DAF	40 developmental assets framework
BPNT	Basic psychological needs theory
DBE	Department of Basic Education
FIFA	Federation Internationale de Football Association
GCT	Goal contents theory
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NYP	National Youth Policy
PYD	Positive Youth Development
PYDTS	Positive Youth Development Through Sport
SDT	Self-Determination Theory
SRSA	Sport and Recreation South Africa
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
SDG	Sustainable development goal
UN	United Nations
YDETS	Youth developmental experiences through sport

CHAPTER 1: CONTEXTUALISING THE PLAYING FIELD

1.1 Introduction

Internationally, since 2000, numerous organisations such as the United Nations (UN), Organisation of African Unity, International Olympic Committee and Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) have promoted human development and advocated for the use of sport for development and capacity building. Positive experiences of youth have become an eminent and integral part of the global thinking and research agenda (United Nations, 2015a; Burnett, 2021).

As a result of this thinking, most of the development initiatives targeted African countries based on the notion that the majority of the people living there are exposed to poverty. For example, the UN aimed at using its resources to eradicate poverty and promote gender equality and social inclusion in African countries (United Nations, 2015b). As a result, there has been a new wave of development and an influx of international agencies implementing development programmes in African countries to enhance youth experiences in society. The current academic discourse on the African continent has positioned development from a deficiency perspective, that is, highlighting backwardness and lack of progressiveness. This has fed into the view that youth development programmes in Africa should focus on positive activities that address problem behaviour (for example, crime, and drug and alcohol abuse). Similarly in South Africa, since 1994 (the post-apartheid era), several international and local organisations have initiated programmes focusing on the empowerment and development of youth.

South Africa's transition from apartheid to inclusive democracy was of enormous significance. It implied an end to colonial rule and the system of racial supremacy, and it presented an opportunity for South Africa to redress the imbalances of the past by promoting equal opportunities (Mattes, 2012; Tivenga, 2021). In doing so, it created an environment that supported the capacity development of youth development programmes (National Youth Development Agency, 2015). Since the dawn of democracy, South Africa has witnessed an increase in interventions and initiatives focusing on youth development through sport, for example, government policies and youth development programmes (Burnett, 2010). In the context of this development, these initiatives were implemented to enhance the welfare and experiences of the youth and to alleviate socio-economic challenges confronting them (Sport and Recreation South Africa, 2018). Furthermore, South Africa hosted mega sports events,

such as the Rugby Union World Cup in 1995 and the 2010 FIFA World Cup. These major international sporting events attracted several international sports development agencies and organisations to South Africa. The increase in interest in using sport as a vehicle for development in South Africa resulted in the emergence of international organisations, sports federations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) focusing on sports development programmes. Sport and Recreation South Africa (SRSA) initiated mass participation programmes (for example, Siyadlala) and school sports development programmes in partnership with some international organisations to provide sports participation opportunities for youth and address socio-economic inequalities. It is noteworthy that these programmes initiated by SRSA were channelled mainly to black townships and rural communities based on inconclusive pre-conceived ideologies that regarded rural youth as marginalised and disadvantaged in totality.

Currently, many of the organisations and agencies involved in youth and sports development in South Africa believe that sports provides the youth with a range of experiences, thereby enhancing development. Sports development programmes are, therefore, perceived as an effective means of encouraging youth development and providing opportunities to enhance youth experiences (Bruner, Hall & Cote, 2011). The major argument is that despite the benefits of sports development programmes and money having been invested in youth development by these organisations, youth experiences are diverse and cannot be assumed to be unitary. Therefore, sports development programmes cannot be assumed to provide the same benefits and outcomes for all youth participants. Furthermore, the top-down approach (pre-designed programmes) to youth development and the absence of youth voices in the context of designing sports development programmes that are based on the youth's needs and experiences are some of the challenges in articulating the contribution of sports development programmes to the experiences of youth.

Considering the perceived role of sports development programmes in enhancing youth experiences (Bruner *et al.*, 2011) and a number of international NGOs (Football for Peace, The German Agency for International Cooperation, and FIFA) and local NGOs (Dreamfields Project, Mavu Sport Development, Let's Play, and Sports Trust) advocating for the use of sport as a tool for development in rural communities, it is warranted to generate evidence and gain insight into the youth's lived experiences in their social context. It is also relevant to provide a voice to the youth so as to mediate contextual understanding of their lived experiences. The

multiplicity of development, experiences and dynamics of the social context in rural South Africa provides interesting perspectives from which to understand youth experiences and contributing factors to these experiences. The exclusion of youth in the planning process and the failure to capture youth voices pertaining to their experiences might be an oversight because a development programme that does not consider the social environment and individual needs of the youth does not automatically enhance youth experiences.

Against this background, this study has attempted to explore youth experiences of a sports development programme in the context of rural South Africa. In doing so, it may be meaningful to understand the youth's lived experiences and the contribution of a sports development programme to the experiences of youth in a rural context. Additionally, it should be interesting to understand why the youth experience the sports development programme the way they do. This qualitative study has responded to the advancement of knowledge and filled a gap in the literature by exploring the experiences of rural youth in a South African sports development programme.

This chapter provides an introduction and overview of the study. First, I discuss the background of the study by briefly presenting the context of development and youth experience. The motivation for my study is also explained, followed by the purpose and focus of the study. Thereafter, the research questions which guide the study are outlined. Then, I explain the theoretical framework and research methodology that guide this study. Furthermore, I provide a brief description of the concepts used and, finally, the structure of the study is outlined in this chapter.

1.2 Background

There has been growing concern in recent years about the youth's needs, experiences and healthy development. These concerns are amplified in the lives of youth globally due to the socio-economic and socio-political contexts in which the youth live (Cooper, Swartz & Mahali, 2019). Youth aged between 15 and 24 years constitute a significant proportion of the global population. According to the human development report released in 2020 by the United Nations Development Programme (2020), the youth constitute 16 per cent of the total global population. The largest proportion of youth is in Asia with 18 per cent in Central and South Asia and 13 per cent in East and Southeast Asia, followed by sub-Saharan Africa at 19 per cent (United Nations, 2019). In light of the high proportion of youth globally, the UN has raised structural

issues and challenges experienced by youth in the international context, including high levels of unemployment, inequality and poverty (United Nations, 2019, 2020).

Historically, research on youth is often characterised by conceptual flaws which view youth from a deficit perspective (Swanson, Spencer, Harpalani, Dupree, Noll, Ginzburg, & Seaton, 2003). The deficit perspectives stem from increased youth problem behaviours, such as delinquency, drug abuse and crime (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009). Youth experiences are not absolute, nor do they display homogeneity. The differences are influenced by multiple contexts (for example, geographical, individual, political, family, cultural and community) within socio-cultural systems (Cooper *et al.*, 2019). Similarly, South African youth experiences differ widely and the youth represent a heterogeneous group of individuals, regardless of their geographical location, be it urban, peri-urban or rural.

Furthermore, South African youth continue to experience challenges similar to those confronted by youth in the Global North and other parts of the Global South. For example, while youth in South Africa, especially black, rural youth, endured great persecution during the apartheid era – that is, before 1994 – post-apartheid, the socio-economic conditions (including poverty, inequality and unemployment) in multiracial democratic South Africa are still prevalent (Tivenga, 2021). Although the historical experiences of the youth during apartheid in South Africa were characterised by pain, marginalisation and struggles (Mattes, 2012; National Youth Development Agency, 2015), post-apartheid, the youth confront a shifting world and experiences that are different from those experienced by the youth during the apartheid era in South Africa. Thus, historical circumstances and geographical contexts are important in understanding the development and lived experiences of youth in South Africa.

The youth has been emancipated from apartheid and have been exposed to a reformed school system (Mattes, 2012). While there are still challenges, there are more opportunities, freedom of choice, and cultural changes. The post-apartheid youth in South Africa position themselves as youth with aspirations, resilience, abilities and strengths (Lundgren & Scheckle, 2019). Consequently, structural inequalities and socio-economic challenges cannot be used to problematise the youth.

Efforts have been made by many scholars to understand the development needs and experiences of the youth based on their strengths and good qualities (Balfour, Mitchell & Moletsane, 2008; Burnett, 2015; Moletsane, 2012). However, despite this shift in the way rural youth are viewed, some scholars still view youth in rural areas as backwards, static-passive and not progressive (Chigbu, 2013). According to Moletsane (2012), these views are informed by Western epistemologies and ontologies that neglect individual variation and diversity in rural South Africa. Furthermore, lack of insight and understanding of the rural context and voices of the people living in those areas skews the realities and frames rural youth as problematic and in need of interventions to address their social problems. In this context, it is warranted that scholars researching youth development in rural contexts have a holistic view of youth experiences, focus on the dynamic interactions of youth within their social context, and understand youth lived experiences and complexities in their environment. Just as social and cultural contexts have changed globally, so they have changed in South Africa.

Furthermore, the social environment, development needs and contextual features of the youth have also changed. It is against such a background that research in youth development and sport challenges the ambivalent position of youth and world perspectives which regard youth as a problem to be managed. Qi, Hua, Zhou & Shek (2020) argue that the deficit perspective disregards human strengths, developmental plasticity, diversity and multiple contexts that shape the livelihood of youth.

Also, over the past two decades, a number of youth development initiatives and programmes emerged in Third World countries which sought to use sport as a tool to promote development and enhance the experiences of the youth. In South Africa, youth and sports development programmes that promote the development of young people are in abundance (Burnett, 2010). Yet, despite the proliferation of youth development programmes aimed at the youth, the majority of youth continue to face serious challenges, including high levels of unemployment, inequalities and social exclusion. Much has been said in youth development literature about the role of sport in enhancing the experiences of youth and positive development which, among other things, includes empowering the youth with social and personal skills, and enabling the youth to be effective and achieve adequate development in their lives (Blomfield & Barber, 2011; Bonell, Hinds, Dickson, Thomas, Fletcher, Murphy & Melendez-Torres, 2015). In addition, the UN views sport globally as a strategic tool to achieve specific targets such as gender equality, poverty reduction, education, health, development and peace (United Nations,

2015b). This has resulted in the UN and other sports development organisations advocating for youth development and initiating sport-for-development programmes to enhance the development of youth (Burnett, 2015).

In the South African context, SRSA acknowledged the importance of sport as a development tool by initiating mass participation programmes through partnerships with external developing agencies (Sport and Recreation South Africa, 2018). Burnett (2021) notes that the sports development programmes initiated by SRSA operate at all levels of society and aim to change the lives of youth, achieve the UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs) and empower the youth. An underlying assumption is that sports development programmes can contribute positively to the development of youth and improve their livelihood. However, despite the significant contribution of sports development programmes to the development of youth in South Africa, particularly in rural areas, many Global North scholars view youth development in rural contexts narrowly. Cooper *et al.* (2019) argue that some of the Global North scholars approach youth studies in the Global South from a deficit perspective without embracing the context of youth development and diversity. In this context, youth experiences vary widely and are diverse. Therefore, youth studies focusing on youth experiences and the development of the youth should embrace their strengths (for example, resilience, social competency and self-determination) and consider the social environment in order to understand youth experiences and factors contributing to those experiences. Furthermore, youth studies need to be foregrounded based on the youth perspectives on their lived experiences.

Against this background of youth experiences, a sports development programme and development in the rural context, this study set out to explore the youth experiences of a sports development programme in rural South Africa and discuss why the youth experienced it as they did. The following section presents the context of the study, which is the Dreamfields Project sports development programme and the geographical location of the study.

1.3 Context of the study

Considering the focus of the study, it is important to provide the context of the programme and environment in which the participants' lived experiences unfolded. This study was undertaken in conjunction with the Dreamfields Project sports development programme in South Africa. The study focused specifically on the youth in the rural areas located in Ingwavuma, north of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), South Africa. The context of rural areas in South Africa and the

Dreamfields Project sports development programme is an important point of reference to understand the youth experiences within their social context. In this regard, I describe the environmental context which reflects where the youth lived and how their experiences unfolded. In addition, I describe rural South Africa in relation to the post-apartheid era, community, family and school environments, and how the youth experiences were influenced by their social context. I provide a background of the Dreamfields Project to further provide context for this study.

1.3.1 Rural South Africa

Historically, South Africa experienced racial segregation brought about by colonial settlement. Between the 18th and 19th centuries, the colonial system resulted in the violent dispossession of the land of the indigenous people, forced labour and cultural suppression (Adhikari 2010). The white settlers appropriated more than 90 per cent of the land in South Africa, and through the 1913 Natives Land Act, indigenous people were confined to a marginal portion of the land (Ntsebeza, 2007:108). This Act prohibited black Africans from the right to purchase and own land. With the emergence of the Group Areas Act of 1950, which determined where people lived, the apartheid government alienated black African, Coloured, and Indian racial groups by removing them from areas occupied by white racial groups.

The physical separation and segregation of black people cemented the powers of white supremacy in South Africa, and black African people were required to live in homelands or Bantustans, namely Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, Venda, Gazankulu, KaNgwane, KwaNdebele, KwaZulu, Lebowa, and QwaQwa. The establishment of these homelands cemented the apartheid government's policy of racial segregation of the black African population from the white population. Furthermore, the homelands were established to marginalise black people into ethnic groups and disrupt the traditional economy and social order (Tivenga, 2021). The black people in the homelands relied mainly on subsistence farming and an informal economy to sustain a living. In the broader context, the homelands were characterised by poverty, lack of decent education and lack of a health system (Ntsebeza, 2007).

Despite the re-integration of the homelands into post-apartheid South Africa in 1994, the same issues incorporated into the homelands during apartheid are still experienced by these communities (Robinson, 2015). The majority of the rural areas in South Africa comprise the

former homelands. Even though rural South Africa is characterised by poverty, limited employment opportunities and declining infrastructure, most people in the rural areas are not culturally subservient. They remain committed to their society and customs (Beinart, 2012) and earn a living through the informal sector and subsistence agriculture.

Owing to the socio-economic challenges in rural South Africa, such as the high rate of unemployment and poverty, people migrate to the cities for better economic opportunities, which is exacerbated by the slow development process in rural areas. The majority of men from rural areas are migrant workers in mines and urban areas. According to Statistics South Africa (2020), three-quarters of the people living in rural areas in South Africa live in the poorest households or below the poverty line. According to a Quarterly Labour Force Survey, over 46 per cent of the youth in South Africa were unemployed during the period 2020-2021 (Statistics South Africa, 2021). Statistics South Africa (2021) reflect that the unemployment rate was highest among youth living in the rural areas of South Africa.

Although the historical legacy of apartheid remains prominent in most rural areas in South Africa, rural areas in South Africa are diverse, and complexities differ from context to context. Different researchers point out the different tensions and contradictions that co-exist in rural areas in the South African context (Balfour *et al.*, 2008). For example, on one hand, rural areas are viewed from a perspective of deprivation and backwardness, while, on the other, rural areas are believed to be transformative and progressive. These interpretations, which are based on the historical background (apartheid and post-apartheid), highlight the contradictions between the different perspectives of rural South Africa. The literature on rurality is starting to challenge the deficit paradigm and pervasive view that rural youth are marginalised and backwards by highlighting the strengths and resources that are harnessed by the youth (Moletsane, 2012).

Post-apartheid, rural South Africa is steadily transforming, and the social context has changed through the abolition of apartheid laws. The post-apartheid youth living in rural South Africa have different experiences and continue to embrace their cultural wealth, ingenuity and resilience.

1.3.2 Location of the study

The previous section provided the context of rural South Africa. This section deals with where the research was conducted. The aim is to provide a broader context in relation to the participants of this study.

The three high schools selected for this study were situated in the rural area of Ingwavuma in the north-eastern part of KZN. The Ingwavuma area is located along South Africa's borders with Eswatini and Mozambique (see Figure 1.1). Like most rural areas in KZN, Ingwavuma is mainly inhabited by isiZulu-speaking people. As a form of their identity and strong cultural and traditional inheritance, the people in the area continue to practice indigenous laws. For example, most of villages in the area are under traditional leadership. Ingwavuma has a high proportion of poor households, and the majority of the people in the area are unemployed (Statistics South Africa, 2019). Furthermore, most of the people in this area depend on subsistence agriculture (farming and livestock) and social grants for living. In the area, people still go to the rivers to collect water because there is limited access to piped water.



Figure 1.1: Map of South Africa showing Ingwavuma rural community in KZN

The physical dwellings are dominated by rondavels (circular huts). The huts have thatched roofs and floors made of mud. The socio-demographics of the Ingwavuma area are similar to other rural areas in South Africa. There is a high level of youth unemployment and lack of access to quality education. However, the area is demographically stable and engages in activities that encourage strong community bonds amongst the community members.

The schools in the area are under-resourced and characterised by a shortage of classrooms, pit toilets, limited physical space for sport, and a lack of basic sanitation infrastructure. Despite the limited resources in most of the schools in the area, the community and schools in Ingwavuma strive to overcome many challenges and rural hardships by showing educational resilience in order to enhance the culture of teaching and learning. The youth in Ingwavuma reflect a diverse range of skills, and their identity is influenced and shaped by their strong cultural wealth and traditions. Some of the youth in this area are living in child-headed

households and are expected to navigate their way in life without parents. Despite the circumstances and challenges that the youth in this area face daily, they continue to show immense resilience and engage in youth development programmes that focus on capacity building, such as sports development programmes. The next section explores the sports development programme the Dreamfields Project.

1.3.3 Dreamfields Project

To contextualise the sports development programme in this study, this section describes the Dreamfields Project and its sports development programme. The Dreamfields Project is a South African non-profit organisation that aims to enrich the educational environment in schools, empower the youth, and develop individuals and the community through sport. The Dreamfields Project currently engages in 24 major programmes in six provinces across 284 primary and high schools and 63 community sports clubs in South Africa. The organisation is working with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to develop sports development programmes consisting of regular league-based matches known as the DreamLeagues¹. These DreamLeagues are played in schools every week. The funds raised from corporate organisations are used to sponsor rural communities and township schools with sports kits and equipment, to upgrade and build football and netball fields, and to create inter-school soccer and netball leagues.

The DreamLeagues aims to encourage youth to participate in soccer and netball activities. In addition, the sports development programme strives to enhance sports and social development skills. The sports activities in the sports development programme include regular netball and soccer league matches played within the school. The sports development programme also incorporates good practices in sport and youth development. For instance, coaches and teachers in the programme are trained explicitly in sports skills development, that is, in technical skills and coaching principles amongst others. The boys and girls are given equal opportunities to participate in sport.

Furthermore, there is an implicit focus that youth in the sports development programme will develop sport-specific skills through sports participation and interaction. Thus, the sports

¹ DreamLeagues is the Dreamfields Project sports programme focusing on the five-a-side football and mini-netball leagues played in the schools. Mini-netball is the modified form of the netball game. It is played on a smaller field, with smaller goals. The game follows the same rules as traditional netball.

development programme promotes social interaction and strengthens friendship networks amongst the youth participants. The Dreamfields sports development programme in Ingwavuma served as the context for this study.

1.4 Researcher identity and positionality

The integration of the identity and epistemological background in a study can provide insight into the researcher's identity positioning. Walshaw (2008) refers to the researcher's identity as the 'performance of self as a researcher', which supports the notion of placing the researcher in the research as a way of informing the ideas of what it means to know and what it means to know others. My epistemological assumption is that knowledge production is situated within a cultural, social, economic and political context. Therefore, I believe that knowledge is produced through interaction with the participants. I was aware that the participants of this study constructed a positioning that might have been different from my views and assumptions. However, intersubjectivity, multiple contradictions and different perspectives can create a coherent understanding of how the participants and the researcher construct and position themselves in the research.

According to Foote and Bartell (2011), the researcher's positionality is shaped by personal experiences, cultural background, gender, race and the position of power in which the society has placed the researcher. Some aspects of positionality, such as sex, nationality and race are regarded as fixed, while other aspects, such as personal life experiences and political views, are more fluid and subjective (Holmes, 2020). Therefore, positionality provides insight into the researcher's values, beliefs and position in the study. I used self-reflection and a reflexive approach throughout this study to critique and articulate my positionality. This consisted of my previous personal and professional experiences, perspectives and theoretical foundations related to this study. The self-reflection and reflexive approach are consistent with the interpretivism paradigm of this study.

At this point, it is important to provide information about my identity and background and how my personal and professional experiences influenced my perspective and development of this study. My journey to academia co-evolved with my educational and professional background in sports and youth development. I am a black South African male. My interest in sport and youth development began in Tsakane, a township situated east of Gauteng, where I was born. My father was a reverend at a Baptist church, and my mother was an administrator at the local

clinic. As a young boy growing up in the township during apartheid in the 1980s, I was always aware of the inequalities, social exclusions and racial segregation that existed. My parents also shared stories of being forced to live outside the cities in the rural and township areas. During this period, I became aware of the poor living conditions, limited resources and violence in the townships compared to the urban areas.

I often visited my grandparents in Taung, a small, predominately rural town located in North West, a province of South Africa. I observed that the area was different from where I lived; the houses were different – they were mud houses with thatched roofs – and they were located far from each another. Most people worked on farms and used donkeys and horses to provide transport. However, the people in the community seem to be happy, friendly and content with their living conditions. I spent most of my holidays in Taung playing games and sports with friends and my cousins in the streets. Some of the games we played included dibeke², kgati³ and diketo⁴. We also played soccer on the open grounds covered by gravel. These activities were not different from activities in the townships. The boys played soccer, and the girls focused more on dibeke and other indigenous games such as kgati and diketo. I realised then that the difference between the township and rural areas was mostly related to the economic activities and infrastructure, that is, the houses, roads and school buildings. However, young people's aspirations and interests seemed to be dynamic and diverse. For example, my friends and cousins enjoyed participating in sport and some had aspirations of becoming teachers, nurses, doctors and lawyers. This shaped my views about young people living in rural areas, which refutes the societal narratives of rurality which assume that the ways of knowing and being of rural youth are lesser and more backward.

My first experience of a structured soccer programme was in primary school when I was in Grade 6 and was selected to play for the school soccer team. I was also chosen to represent my school at the local school athletics meeting. This made me realise that I was talented. The teachers at the school encouraged me to join a community soccer club, which I did. My parents supported the idea and encouraged me to continue participating in athletics. My interest in sport was sparked even more when I started winning fun runs like five kilometre races and soccer

² Dibeke is a multi-running ball game played by two teams. Both teams takes turn to attack, while the other team defends.

³ Kgati is a rope- skipping game played by three participants. Two participants swing the rope while the third jumps in the middle.

⁴ Diketo is a game that is played with stones and the aim is to pick up a certain number of stones.

tournaments. I went to high school in 1992 during South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy. Two years later, I had the opportunity to enrol at a private school which was located in an urban area. The school had good infrastructure, such as more classroom space, a library and sports facilities. It was a massive transition for me. I had to adapt to the new environment and interact with learners from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. During this time, I developed an appreciation for the value of quality education offered at the school and was also intrigued by how physical education and sport were interlinked.

Physical education and sport were considered a significant part of the school curriculum, and it was mandatory for all learners in the school to participate in sport. Wednesday was dedicated to sports activities, and I participated in both soccer and athletics. The teachers were very knowledgeable about sport and provided good quality coaching. Through my participation in sport at school, I was awarded various awards for sports achievement, and, later, I was chosen to be the school's Head Boy in sport. I felt honoured to serve my school at this level. The role required me to organise sports events, address learners' issues and present the learners' views to the school principal. I was exposed to the organisational and participation aspects of sport, which made me realise the role of sport in the development of young people. In the process, I started wondering how young people in the rural areas were affected by the lack of access to quality sports facilities, lack of structured school sports programmes and limited opportunities for participation in sport.

I thus decided to further my studies in the field of Sports Sciences. As a student, I continued participating in sport, especially soccer. I have fond memories of playing for the university's student team and participating in the university's residential soccer league. Participation in sport provided me with opportunities for social interaction with different people, and I learned a lot about teamwork and discipline. The soccer team was diverse and included students from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. For example, some students in the team came from rural areas and others from urban areas. However, we had cooperation and tolerance regardless of our diverse backgrounds and challenges. Through the interaction with my teammates from rural areas, I heard how they were marginalised and economically excluded under the apartheid system. Considering all these elements, I perceived sport as a tool that could be used to redress the imbalances of the past and address inequalities. Furthermore, I began to realise that sport was more than just a game but that it could also contribute to learning and personal development.

In my career, I worked for the Dreamfields Project as a project coordinator. My role included coordinating sports programmes and organising events. I also implemented rural sports programmes in northern KZN and the Northern Cape in South Africa. The role enabled me to work in rural South African schools and communities. I was positioned to interact with the teachers, parents and youth regularly. I facilitated coaching workshops for the teachers and local coaches and I had an opportunity to train learners in the schools. Several schools in most of these areas lacked sports facilities, and some of the sports fields were in poor condition. There was also a need for sports equipment, which was highlighted by the teachers as a concern and a barrier for learners to participate in sport. The information from the teachers confirmed my perceptions that rural youth participated in sport, however, they had limited resources and poor infrastructure. Regardless of these challenges, the learners had various personal attributes, such as competent sports skills and social competence.

Against this background, my interest and journey in researching rural youth development through sport started when I enrolled for a master's degree in Human Movement Sciences. My research was titled 'The significance of sport in youth development through youth camps in rural communities in South Africa'. The study aimed to explore the contribution of sport to the development of rural youth. The participants in that study shared their perceived experiences of how sport had contributed to their development. The findings highlighted that the youth believed that sport had contributed to their personal development. Furthermore, I observed how NGOs, government departments and the private sector used sport to address issues impacting the youth. In this context, I was intrigued by the interest and influx of international organisations donating money for sports development initiatives in South Africa.

Owing to my previous personal experiences and involvement in the Dreamfields Project's sports development programme, I acknowledge that I brought certain assumptions about rural sports development programmes and multiple positions as an insider and outsider to this research process. I further acknowledge that the participants in this study might have viewed me as an insider as a result of my familiarity with their culture, the programme and the area being studied. However, I understood my responsibility as a researcher was to ensure objectivity throughout the research process and I believe that the study was strengthened by my insider status and understanding of rural communities' cultural dynamics and social structure.

I commenced this study with the view that sport should not be perceived as a magic box that could address all social problems but rather as an experience with different outcomes and functions for different people in a specific context. Therefore, this view compelled me to explore the youth experiences of a sports development programme and the interpretation of the data and findings were obtained through collaboration with the participants.

1.5 Rationale and motivation for the study

The motivation and rationale for this study emanated from contextual, policy, academic, personal and theoretical reasons. First, the historical perspective of South Africa in relation to time and space provided the context for this study. Since 1994, South Africa has undergone a political, social and economic transformation. The objective of the post-apartheid South African government was to create a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic society (National Youth Development Agency, 2015). Furthermore, the intention was to reduce poverty, inequality and unemployment in South African communities, especially in rural communities.

To address the injustices of apartheid, the South African government implemented several policies, including the Reconstruction and Development Programme of 1994, the National Development Plan 2030, the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Policy, and the National Youth Policy 2020–2030 (NYP 2030) (Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, 2020). These were intended to tackle socio-economic challenges. Despite the efforts by the South African government and the plethora of interventions from international agencies, such as the UN's Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, to address socio-economic challenges and create opportunities, South African rural youth are still confronted with high levels of poverty, inequality and unemployment (Statistics South Africa, 2021). The challenges faced by the youth cannot be denied and remain prevalent in rural South Africa. Yet, in the midst of the adversity, discontent and challenges experienced by rural youth in South Africa, they continue to show resilience in their quest to construct their own social experiences and improve their position in society. Therefore, it becomes important to explore how the youth in rural South Africa experience a sports development programme. Furthermore, their experiences should not be viewed from a deficit perspective but rather through the youth's personal perspectives. Moletsane (2012) argues that research and development initiatives in a rural context should provide voices to the individuals who are affected and recognise their abilities to understand their conditions. Considering this argument, this study embraced the

notion that youth experiences are constructed and understood through the viewpoint and perspectives of youth in their social environment.

Secondly, as a strategy to enhance youth development through partnerships between government, NGOs and civil society in South Africa, the introduction in 2020 of the NYP 2030 by the South African government was a reflection of how it intended to empower and strengthen the capacity of South African youth. According to the South African government (National Youth Development Agency, 2020), the NYP 2030 aimed at contributing to the positive youth development (PYD) outcomes and harnessing the potential of youth in South Africa. The NYP 2030 policy is cognisant of the historical realities and challenges facing youth in South Africa. Since the introduction of the NYP 2030 in 2020, there has been very little research on it, and no empirical evidence has been provided on the effectiveness of the NYP 2030 policy in enhancing the experiences and development of youth in South Africa, especially in the rural context. This highlighted the need for a study that explored how youth experienced a sports development programme in South Africa.

The third motivation and rationale to conduct this study related to an academic consideration. My interest in youth experiences in rural South Africa came from my educational background. My master's degree on the significance of sport in youth development in the South African rural context revealed how sport in the sport and recreation youth camps in South Africa had contributed to youth development. The recommendations emanating from the findings of that study were that further research was needed to examine barriers to participation in youth sports development programmes and to understand how personal development experiences could contribute to the long-term personal development of youth in rural communities. Hence, I constructed this study around those recommendations.

Youth development and sport for development on the African continent have become a significant focus for many scholars and international organisations. According to Burnett (2015), the interest in research in the field of sport for development has been perpetuated by an increased need for empirical evidence and scientific validity in the field of sport. Most of the time, sport and development narratives are based on positive outcomes, the voice of funders, NGOs and government institutions. Therefore, the stories of the people who participate in these sports development programmes are seldom documented. The use of sport remains the priority of policymakers and various agencies, such as government and non-profit organisations, but

the understanding of the potential of sport as a tool for youth development has not yet been fully realised.

This highlights the debate around the complexities of development and youth experiences associated with sports participation both internationally and in South Africa. Kay (2012) has argued that the empirical evidence and knowledge generation in sport for development is dominated by Global North narratives and Western ideological paradigms. This reflects not only the domination of Global North researchers in the context of sport for development on the African continent but also a lack of authentic knowledge constructed through individual voices within their social context. Furthermore, there is a gap in the literature concerning how youth experience sports development programmes in rural South Africa. This study served as an opportunity for me to construct authentic knowledge through collaboration with the youth and respond to tensions and debates about youth development and rurality in the African context.

The fourth motivation to conduct this study related to my personal experience and previous work experience. I worked for different sports organisations in South Africa as a project coordinator and was intrigued by the resilience of the youth in rural communities. Despite all their challenges and adversities, these young people's inherent strengths and potential remained noticeable. Throughout my work in rural communities, I realised that the community sports clubs and schools in these communities had poor sports facilities and sometimes struggled to find qualified coaches and teachers who could administer sports development programmes. With these experiences in mind, I decided to embark on a study that would provide insight into the experiences of the youth and show how they experienced sports development programmes in their social environment in a rural South African context. Furthermore, this study was an avenue to advance my knowledge and understanding of the theory of youth development, sports development and rurality discourse.

The fifth motivation to conduct this study related to the formulation of a theoretical framework underpinning youth experiences and development. By exploring youth experiences and why those experiences emerged, this study proposed a theoretical framework that emphasised the personal strengths and potential of the youth and reflected how their lives are constantly shaped and re-shaped by interaction with their social environment. Furthermore, this study recognised a need for the construction of a theoretical framework that related to both international and African contexts, especially in the broader context of rural South Africa. This will assist in the

future to contest and disrupt misconceptions pertaining to the experiences of youth in rural communities.

Finally, considering the many international and local organisations involved in youth development through sports initiatives, it is important to generate knowledge and evidence relating to the youth's experiences and to understand the effects of sports development programmes on their wellbeing in their social environment. Therefore, the rationale for this study was based on the need to understand the youth experiences of a sports development programme from the youth perspective. This is important for the future direction and decision-making of sports development programmes in South Africa.

1.6 Focus and purpose of the study

The focus of the study was to explore how youth in rural South Africa experienced a sports development programme, and how and why they experienced the sports development programme the way they did. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to identify factors that contributed to youth experiences of a rural South African sports development programme in order to understand the way in which youth in rural South Africa experienced a sports development programme. By engaging in research into youth experiences, I hoped to shed light on the influence of the social context on the experiences of youth in rural South Africa. Furthermore, this research has contributed to the development of proposed youth development through a sports framework that is specific to the rural context in South Africa.

Therefore, this study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- To describe youth experiences of a rural South African sports development programme
- To determine the contribution of a sports development programme to the personal development and social development of youth in rural South Africa
- To identify the factors that have influenced and contributed to the youth experiences of a sports development programme
- To analyse and theorise the PYD and SDT frameworks in relation to youth experiences of a rural sport development programme

1.7 Research questions

The following research questions were designed for this study in order to understand youth experiences of a sports development programme.

- How do the youth experience a sports development programme in rural South Africa?
- Why do youth experience the sports development programme in rural South Africa the way they do?

1.8 Concept clarification

This section will provide a description of the different concepts underpinning this study.

Youth

The concept of youth is embedded in the notion of life stages and biological and cognitive development that informs the process of life through various stages (Harlan, 2016). The term young people is used synonymously with the term youth. Youth is defined by the United Nations (2015a) as all persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years. According to the NYP for 2015–2020 (NYP 2020) (National Youth Development Agency, 2015), the South African National Youth Commission Act (1996) classified youth as individuals in the age group of 14 to 35 years. According to The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs (2010), the youth are a heterogeneous group characterised by differences, such as cultural background, gender and personal experiences. For the purpose of this study, the term youth has been used in the context of the South African National Youth Commission Act (1996).

Experiences

The term experience implies a representation of events through which a person has lived (Hohr, 2013). Therefore, the experiences of individuals are different and are not only rooted in the observations of the events but are also entrenched in the knowledge resulting from these experiences. Hohr (2013) points out that experiences are a historical and cultural phenomenon. Experiences are characterised by individual feelings, relatedness to the world and relationships to the environment and community. Therefore, in this study, the term experience has been used to describe the life events lived by the participants in rural South Africa.

Development

According to Bellu (2011:2), development is a multidimensional, broad concept that refers to a human, economic, social, physical and political system that concerns the process of growth, empowerment and positive change to enable people to reach their full potential. Therefore, development is intended as something desirable in the socio-economic system. Bellu (2011) identified the following dimensions of development: (a) economic development, which is based on the systems to generate new goods and services to improve the standard of living and quality of life; (b) human development, which is focused on improving the wellbeing of the individuals in the society, such as health, and education; (c) physical development, which is about the growth of the body, physiological changes and functioning, such as motor abilities and physical signs of growth; and (d) psychosocial development, which explores changes concerning the individual personal and interpersonal aspects of development. These aspects include self-worth, self-concept, discipline, respect and interaction with family, friends and society.

Rural community

The rural community is classified according to the residential population, farming, and geographic classification based on the size and population density (Statistics South Africa 2001). The rural development framework of 2007 classifies rural communities as densely populated areas where people rely on farming and natural resources (National Treasury 2011:192). Rural communities are characterised by communal land tenure, villages or scattered groups of dwellings and are located in former homelands (National Treasury 2011:193).

Rurality

There is no universal definition or measurement of rurality. In essence, rurality is often viewed from a geographical spatial and centres around low economic activities, cultural homogeneity, low population density and traditional lifestyles (Chigbu, 2013). The ideas of rurality are typically related to economic deprivation and deficiency, such as poverty, isolation and backwardness (Balfour, Mitchell & Moletsane, 2008; Moletsane, 2012). In the context of this study, rurality is positioned not only as a geographical space where people live but as a dynamic environment that embraces the diversity of people's lived experiences.

Sports development and sport for development

Sports development is used interchangeably with the sport for development. The terms are not synonymous. Sport for development uses sport to promote positive social change by enhancing the youth's self-concept, self-efficacy, and positive youth development (Coalter, 2010; Holt, 2008). Sports for development programmes promote social inclusion, health and are viewed as an avenue to enhance positive experiences, such as self-worth, discipline, respect and teamwork (Blomfield & Barber, 2011). Sports development focuses on promoting sports activities, and create opportunities for sports participation, and developing sports-specific skills (Houlihan & Green, 2010). Furthermore, sports development programmes provide a site for socialisation experiences for youth to interact.

1.9 An introductory overview of the theoretical framework

This study integrated a positive youth development (PYD) framework with basic psychological needs theory (BPNT) and goal contents theory (GCT) combined with self-determination theory (SDT) to develop a theoretical framework of youth development through sport. PYD frameworks are based on the premise that community-based sports approaches promote positive behaviour and competencies that could lead to positive experiences for youth (Camiré, Trudel & Forneris, 2014; Lerner, Lerner & Benson, 2011).

SDT provides a theoretical framework which suggests that sports development programmes and the development of youth cannot be understood in isolation as the social contexts are different and could lead to different developmental outcomes. SDT embraces the viewpoint that the social environment can enhance or undermine people's sense of initiative to engage in activities and experience quality of life (Standage & Ryan, 2012). There are several concerns relating to gaps in the application of PYD frameworks in the context of sport, especially in the South African context.

PYD frameworks have failed to highlight the negative outcomes associated with the social environment and how a negative interaction between youth and the social environment could lead to negative experiences. To address the limitations of the theoretical framework and strengthen the youth development framework efficacy for youth in South African rural communities, I have proposed a new theoretical framework, youth developmental experiences through sport (YDETS). The proposed theoretical framework was developed through the

integration of PYD frameworks and sub-theories of SDT. The theoretical framework of YDETS is explained in detail in Chapter 3(p.56).

1.10 Research methodology

This section provides a summary of the research methodology and phases used in this study for gathering data. A detailed discussion of the research methodology is provided in Chapter 4(p.63).

This study followed a qualitative, descriptive research design. To gain insight and understanding of the youth experience of a rural South African sports development programme, the arts-informed methods of drawings and photovoice were used to gather and construct the data. The data gathering was conducted in two phases in March 2021. I used the arts-informed data gathering methods to promote interaction between me and the youth participants in this study and to give them the voice to share their experiences. I believe that a meaningful reality is constructed through interaction between people and their environment. The methods used for data gathering are outlined as follows:

Phase 1:

In this phase, semi-structured interviews and drawings were used for the data gathering process. The participants were asked a few questions prior to the commencement of the drawings and interviews to ascertain that they were eligible to participate in the study. The questions were related to whether they had participated in the Dreamfields Project sports development programme and how long they had participated in it. Each participant was asked to create a drawing on a blank piece of paper that reflected their experiences of the Dreamfields Project sports development programme. The semi-structured interviews were based on the drawings conducted with each participant and were audio recorded.

Phase 2:

In this phase, semi-structured interviews using photovoice were used for data gathering and elicitation. Photovoice is a method whereby participants take photographs to capture images that document the reality of their lives and experiences (Plunkett, Leipert & Ray, 2012). Photovoice provided the participants with an opportunity for creative engagement and enabled them to freely express their views and share their experiences of the Dreamfields Project sports

development programme. Purposive sampling was applied because the database of all the participants in the study was available from the schools. There were 31 participants in the first phase of the research process. However, not all the participants were available for the second phase and they eventually withdrew from the study. Therefore, the total number of the participants in the second phase of the research process was 23. The qualitative data analysis computer software ATLAS.ti (v.8.4.15) and the data analysis techniques of thematic analysis and member reflection aided in the data analysis in this study. The research design and methodology will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

1.11 Outline of the study

The outline of the study is as follows:

Table 1.1: Outline of the study

Chapter 1: Conceptualisation of the playing field	Introduction and background of the study
Chapter 2: Journeying into the playing field	A comprehensive review of literature related to the study
Chapter 3: The systems of play	Discusses the theoretical framework of the study
Chapter 4: Highlighting the formation on the playing field	Focuses on the research design and methodology, data analysis techniques and ethical considerations of the study
Chapter 5 and 6: Youth experiences and the causes of their experiences	Analysis of drawings and photovoice, and presentation of the research findings linked to the literature and theoretical framework
Chapter 7: Concluding the game on youth experiences of a rural South African sport development programme	Summary, thesis and conclusions of the study

1.12 Conclusion

This chapter focused on introducing the research topic and placed the study in context by giving the background, purpose and focus of the study. The theoretical and methodological considerations of the study were also presented. Thereafter, I explained the concepts and, finally, I presented the research questions and the outline of the chapters of the study. The next

chapter explores the literature related to my research topic, and I briefly discuss the current landscape of rurality and youth experiences. I also provide the context regarding the role of sports development programmes, school sports development programmes and the Dreamfields Project sports development programme. The Dreamfields Project sports development programme will be explored to provide an additional lens to better understand the youth experiences in the context of a rural South African sports development programme.

CHAPTER 2: JOURNEYING INTO THE PLAYING FIELD

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive view of the literature relevant to the study. Initially, the literature pertaining to rurality and community development discourse is discussed. Thereafter, I will examine the issues around sports pursuit towards SDGs and youth development. The context of sport development programmes is discussed to provide a perspective on the role of sport in the development experiences of rural youth in South Africa. As this study aimed to understand how youth in rural South Africa experienced a sports development programme and the factors that influenced and contributed to their experiences, I will briefly explore the role of the Dreamfields Project sports development programme in providing the context within which the youth experiences emerged.

2.2 Rurality and community development

Youth experiences and life events do not occur in a vacuum; they do so within a context in which the youth grow, interact and engage with the community. Therefore, this study has recognised the role of the context in which youth interacted and engaged with the community. The study was embedded in rurality discourse and community development. According to White (2019), youth in rural communities are confronted with a range of social, economic and environmental challenges, such as lack of employment opportunities, poverty and lack of education.

To understand the youth's challenges and the situation in the rural context, we need to draw on the conceptual underpinnings of rurality, community development, youth and sport. The concept of rurality in literature is conceptualised as a social construct reflecting cultural values (Frost, Lightbody & Halabi, 2013). Therefore, the notion of rurality centres around social issues, and people's lived experiences in their social and cultural context (Nkambule, Balfour, Pillay & Moletsane, 2011). The people living in marginalised communities, such as rural communities are often under-represented and living on a low income. The Human Development Report 2019 of the United Nations Development Programme (2019:68) reveals that 83 per cent of all poor people live in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, 85 per cent of these people reside in rural areas, and 46 per cent live in severe poverty. Many countries in the world are faced with harsh economic hardship due to growing inequalities in the quality of

education and enhanced capabilities and unevenness in the distribution of physical resources (United Nations Development Programme, 2019).

According to Bertolini (2019), very few interventions have succeeded in addressing rural poverty and the economic and social growth of both developed and developing countries. The rural challenges and situations might be different in developed Global North countries such as the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia and countries of Western Europe from developing countries in the Global South, such as South America, Mexico, Africa and the Middle East. The challenges and differences in the Global South and Global North are predominantly driven by structural constraints, such as social and economic environments.

The social challenges experienced by rural communities in South Africa, whether by level of education, infrastructure or income, are often linked to a wide range of social problems, such as social exclusion, child-headed households and lack of access to quality education. Poverty remains prominent in rural communities in South Africa, and, with most of these communities being far from the cities, they have poor infrastructure and limited services. According to a report by the World Bank (Statistics South Africa, 2018), the poverty rate increased from 36 per cent to 40 per cent between 2011 and 2015. Thus, 33.8 million South Africans live in poverty of which 59.7 per cent live in rural areas (Statistics South Africa, 2018). South Africa remains the most unequal country in the world, and a high level of multidimensional poverty is prominent in rural communities (World Bank, 2018). The lack of quality education, proper infrastructure and structured sports development programmes could result in youth from rural communities missing out on quality early experiences of sport.

Given the context of poverty and unequal socio-economic conditions in rural communities, sport plays a significant role in addressing some of the challenges that relate to youth development in the rural context. The intersection of youth development and rurality from both a Global South and Global North perspective is of importance to the current study.

2.2.1 The nature and perspective of rurality

The research conducted by Yi and Li (2017) explores the notion of countermeasures of rural sports construction in China. According to Yi and Li (2017), rural sport is facing a rare historical opportunity and challenge in the construction and development of rural sport. Their study reveals that sport can be used as a vehicle for social benefits and to promote rural sports, improve quality of life and impact interpersonal relationships. Similarly, Trussell's (2009)

study focuses on organised youth sport in the context of rural communities. She argues that rurality may be constructed as a positive way of life, a good moral foundation of a caring community and a peaceful environment. Moreover, the rural landscape may be isolated and organised sport could provide youth in rural communities with an opportunity for socialisation and interaction. The role of sport in rural communities could be viewed in the context of social capital, that is, as a mechanism to bring the community together and provide solidarity. Yi and Li (2017:573) outline the following countermeasures of rural sports construction:

- Sport is an important thrust to promote the development of a new rural economy
- Sport is an important carrier of the construction of spiritual civilisation in new rural areas
- Sports which stimulate new rural sports consumption promote industrial development
- Sport and physical education are important ways to improve the quality of life of new farmers

Public investment in sport has significant social benefits and is reflected in improved quality of life, health and physical well-being of the people in the community. Sport as a social culture is used to optimise the social environment by promoting spiritual civilisation in rural development (Yi & Li, 2017). This was also noted by Tonts (2005) in his study of the Northern Wheatbelt of Western Australia, where the findings indicate that sport in the rural community not only provided an opportunity for physical activity but also the opportunity for social interaction and engagement.

The determinants of rural community challenges in developed countries may be different, based on the social and economic circumstances, infrastructural network and the distribution of the population (Bertolini, 2019). Youth living in rural communities are at risk of poverty due to the low levels of education obtained, living in lower-income households, social exclusion and unemployment (Bertolini, 2019; Coakley, 2011; White, 2019). Another study conducted by Tonts (2005) in the Northern Wheatbelt of Western Australia highlighted the contribution of sport to community identity and social capital and showed how sport could be used to overcome social barriers in rural communities. Research has shown that rural youth in developed countries appear to be vulnerable, have limited resources and lack social interaction

due to limited opportunities. Despite these disparities, youth in rural communities participate in sport.

The challenges facing rural youth in the Global North might differ from their urban counterparts, thus placing them in a vulnerable position and exposing them to wider social problems such as social exclusion. Previous research has demonstrated that youth in rural communities experience poverty, difficulties accessing productive assets, lack of quality education and limited employment opportunities. Several studies have been carried out to explore the challenges and contributions of sport in the development of youth in South America, the United States of America, Canada and Australia. They include studies conducted by Edwards and Matarrita-Cascante (2011), Falls (2017), Frost *et al.* (2013), Guiskin *et al.* (2019), Lee and Macdonald (2009), Tonts (2005) and Trussell (2009). These studies have demonstrated that youth in rural communities experience poverty, difficulty accessing productive assets, lack of quality education and limited employment opportunities. Furthermore, they have indicated that rurality maintains an important position in most of these countries, therefore, sport could be used as a tool to address social issues, reform youth and improve quality of life in the rural Global North. The complexities of rurality and rural settings might be different in all the countries. Structural problems common to the Global North and Global South countries are manifested differently due to political ideologies, and social and economic challenges (Cloke, Marsden & Mooney, 2006).

The perspective of rurality in the Global South countries of Latin America, Africa and Oceania is rooted in a history of colonialism, neo-imperialism, socio-economic inequalities in living standards, and limited access to resources (Dado & Connell, 2012). Rurality is viewed from the perspective of poverty, traditional values and strong community bonds, and at the same time it is perceived as an object of pity leading a less progressive life (Edwards & Matarrita-Cascante, 2011; Nathan, Bunde-Birouste, Evers, Kemp, Mackenzie & Henley 2010). These socio-economic constructs of rurality should be examined from a community-cultural perspective and the lived experiences of the individuals in rural communities. A study conducted in Latin America and the Caribbean by Guiskin, Yanes and del Castillo Negrete (2019) highlights gaps between rural and urban youth concerning poverty and education. The study further indicates another problem faced by youth in rural communities which relates to the lack of development opportunities and social exclusion. According to Guiskin *et al.* (2019), rural youth in Latin America and the Caribbean were often not awarded the attention they

deserved in terms of knowledge of their living conditions and aspirations to maximise their capacities to influence social change.

While rural communities are assumed to be disadvantaged and poor, Balfour *et al.* (2008) argue that rural communities could still experience challenges similar to those in urban communities. Therefore, there are several compelling reasons to explore the experiences of youth in the rural context. There is a steadily growing body of research on rural youth in the context of Global South countries and South Africa (Balfour *et al.*, 2008; Burnett, 2015; Mukucha, 2017; Whitley, Wright & Gould, 2013). Scholars in the field of sport and youth development have researched various issues on rurality and youth development in a rural context in South Africa. However, little is known about the youth experiences of a rural South African sports development programme.

There is a gap in the literature on rural research reflecting the experiences of the youth through sport. Research based on rural settings could assist in illustrating rurality as a multifaceted community which is both transformative and representative of a diversity of youth lived experiences. The majority of rurality studies in the context of the Global South focus on socio-economic challenges, deprivation and deficiency, such as poverty, social exclusion and backwardness. Rurality as a discourse should be viewed from a structural and rural transformation perspective. This is due to the economic, social and environmental changes that create new opportunities for community development in a rural context (Rural Development Report, 2019). Youth in rural communities are not necessarily disadvantaged, and sport could contribute to already enhanced experiences of youth.

2.2.2 The landscape of community development

The notion of community development relates to learning, change, and building physical and economic resources that improve the quality of people's lives (Green & Haines, 2012). The purpose of community development is to remove barriers that affect people from functioning effectively within their communities and support individuals to develop the skills required for them to participate in the decision-making process (Gilchrist, 2019). According to Coakley (2011), sport could be used to address social issues, revitalise communities, reform youth, solve community problems and improve quality of life. The research conducted by Schulenkorf, (2012) on sustainable community development through sport demonstrates that sport

contributes to community empowerment and social capital, and it impacts positively on people's lives.

Several studies have been carried out to investigate the contribution and value of sport in community empowerment (Jones, Edwards, Bocarro, Bunds & Smith, 2018; Rosso & McGrath, 2017; Schulenkorf, 2012). Schulenkorf (2012) notes the role of community sports organisations as important agents for promoting community development, individual development and the social integration of youth in rural communities. The study conducted by Rosso & McGrath (2017) in Australia highlighted two distinct contributions of sport, social inclusion and social exclusion, which are discussed below.

Sport inclusion relates to inclusive sports activities, sports development programmes focusing on removing barriers to participation, advancing sporting skills and facilitating connections between schools and communities (Rosso & McGrath, 2017). On the other hand, social inclusion is based on using sport in the community to attain social outcomes, such as reducing crime, facilitating employability and contributing to individual personal development outcomes such as respect, responsibility and leadership skills (Coakley; 2011; Coalter, 2015).

A good example that illustrates the focus of sport on social inclusion in the community is the UN's use of sport to support the achievement of SDGs and its focus on social capital, particularly on personal and social inclusion, for example, strengthening education and social cohesion (Coalter, 2015). Similarly, there has been a distinct shift in the Australian sports agenda towards using sport for social inclusion, community development and as a tool to address social issues such as gender equality (Australian Sports Commission, 2018). However, Coalter (2015) cautions against making overly generalised assertions about the contribution of sport to achieve social development outcomes in the community. Rosso and McGrath (2017) also note that sport could lead to unintended outcomes such as marginalisation and social exclusion. Therefore, a comprehensive approach is required to understand the community and social dynamics and the context in which sport is being presented (Coalter, 2015). There has been a determined effort by the UN to use sport in combination with existing social efforts to promote community development and achieve specific targets set in the SDGs document. The SDGs of the UN are discussed in detail in the next section.

2.3 Sport for the pursuit of sustainable development goals

The role of sport as a tool to promote health, education, development and peace is reflected in UN Resolution 58/5 of the General Assembly of November 2003 (United Nations General Assembly, 2003).

This resolution encourages governments to recognise sport as a tool to achieve international development goals (United Nations, 2015a). The resolution has been reinforced by a range of organisations at national level which are forming partnerships and cooperating with government in focusing on youth development to pursue the 2030 agenda on sustainable development. The SDGs under the banner of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development were adopted at the UN summit in New York in September 2015 (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). Seventeen SDGs were adopted to promote environmental, social and economic development.

The United Nations General Assembly views sport as an important enabler of sustainable development by contributing to social inclusion, health and empowerment of women and youth (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). Lindsey and Darby (2019) draw attention to the need for understanding the interlinkages and inconsistencies between sport and SDGs in the context of communities and sports development programmes. The SDGs and targets linked to this study are youth-specific. They relate to Goal 4 – education; Goal 5 – gender equality; Goal 10 – inequality; and Goal 16 – inclusive society (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). These SDGs relate to social and economic problems facing youth, especially in rural communities. According to Raikes, Yoshikawa, Britto and Iruka (2017), researchers have contributed to the achievement of community and youth development, and this is reflected in the SDGs and the targets set by the UN. The identified goals and targets of the UN could be considered to be a guideline for youth development in sport. The following section focuses on youth development in sports and sport development programmes.

2.4 Youth and development through sport

Youth development is an ongoing process in which the youth are engaged by the community to grow their capacity and enable them to understand and act in both physical and social environments (Hamilton, Hamilton & Pittman, 2004). The concept of development in youth is a continuous process that enables individuals to lead healthy, productive lives. The youth

development approach is framed to empower youth to thrive and build young people's competency and success.

The goal of youth development programmes is to promote positive development and social development (Coalter, 2010; Holt, 2008), for example, building self-esteem, fostering self-efficacy and changing gender attitudes to address issues of gender inequality. The development process in which sport is used as a tool could lead to PYD outcomes, namely competence, character, connections, confidence and contribution (Taylor, Oberle, Durlak & Weissberg, 2017). These PYD outcomes relate to building youth social skills and personal competencies through community and family support to help them flourish in their communities. Therefore, the youth could gain competence, confidence and character through their interaction with sport.

Sport is recognised as a simple and effective means of achieving the SDGs, addressing social challenges and improving the health and social well-being of the participants. To gain a better understanding of youth experiences of a sports development programme, it is important to review the literature on youth development through sport and sport for development programmes. From a development perspective, sport can provide opportunities for developmental experiences, such as character building, social interaction and teamwork (Holt, 2008). Developmental experiences in sport will be discussed in detail in the next section.

2.5 Development through sports

Development in sport can be defined as a process in which individuals may acquire positive experiences through their involvement in organised sport development programmes (Holt & Kacey, 2011:300). Hansen *et al.* (2003) identifies two categories of experiences associated with sport participation: personal development and social development. Personal development is a developmental process that occurs within the individual, such as self-worth, self-concept, discipline and respect (Blomfield & Barber 2011). Social development is associated with social connection to others, such as teamwork, leadership skills and improved peer networks (Hansen *et al.*, 2003).

Sport is viewed as a mechanism that leads to both personal and social development experiences. Therefore, sport can positively affect youth experiences and improve their quality of life (Singh, Uijtdewilligen, Twisk, van Mechelen & Chinapaw, 2012). Sport thus plays an important role in creating a healthy environment (Wright, Duquesnay, Anzman-Frasca, Chomitz, Chui, Economos, Langevin, Nelson & Sacheck, 2016). Coakley (2011) has stated

that sport is perceived as a social tool that leads to multiple forms of development and improves the quality of life for people. However, sport outcomes depend on multiple factors, such as social relationships, the context in which participation occurs, and personal sport experiences (Coakley, 2011). However, Coalter (2010) warns that the popularity of sport as a tool for development and the proliferation of sport development programmes is often poorly articulated and he raises concern about the narrow conception of the contribution of sport to development. It is important to acknowledge that a social system is complex and that sport should not be viewed in isolation or proposed as a magic box, but rather understood in a specific context within society. The assumption that sport contributes to positive outcomes often leads to the allocation of private and public resources to sport for development programmes, participation in sport, and justification for initiating sport development programmes (Coakley, 2011).

According to Coakley (2011), those who advocate for sport for development assume that sport can be used to address social issues, revitalise communities, reform youth, solve community problems and improve quality of life. These assumptions are based on narratives that sport can be used to reduce drug abuse, the crime rate and violence, and, at the same time, guide youth to be responsible citizens. The claims that sport provides experiences that lead to personal development and civic engagement are informed by neoliberal ideologies that do not consider social issues but focus on personal development and progressive change at community level (Darnell, 2010). Therefore, school and community sport development programmes can be used to revitalise communities and improve quality of life.

2.6 Sport development programmes

Structured sport development programmes can be regarded as a way to promote development because youth are perceived to be motivated to participate in sport (Camiré & Trudel, 2013). Sport development programmes should be inclusive to ensure equal opportunities for participation regardless of cultural background, gender and ability (United Nations, 2015).

The development in sport development programmes is defined based on providing socialisation experiences for youth to interact. Vosloo (2014) regards sport development programmes and interventions as tools for the development of disadvantaged communities by providing opportunities for social interaction, addressing societal needs and promoting personal development, which is needed by the youth in rural communities. A recent study conducted by Craike, Wiesner, Hilland and Bengoechea (2018) revealed that sport development programmes

were effective in improving physical activity among children in rural communities. However, Bruner *et al.* (2011) warn that caution should be taken against unrealistic expectations of the youth and sport development programmes and that environmental and social factors, such as coaches, peers, families, schools and communities, should be taken into consideration.

A wide spectrum of NGOs and non-profit organisations are involved in sport development programmes. According to Sanders, Phillips and Vanreusel (2014), there are 389 sport development organisations registered globally on international platforms on sport and development. NGOs and other civil society organisations play a critical role in partnership with the government to ensure that expected initiatives and outcomes are achieved. These organisations are needed to fill the gap where the government fails to deliver sport development programmes (Sanders *et al.*, 2014). The notion that sport contributes to the social agenda has a wider social function and it has been embraced by a number of international organisations, including the UN, the International Working Group on Women and Sport, the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, and the International Council for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sport and Dance. The literature highlights a wide range of organisations using sport as a tool to address social challenges and which are essential for reproducing societal norms and values (Coakley, 2011; Coalter, 2010; Darnell, 2010). This belief is underpinned by a view of sport as a social connector and progressive instrument for social change, and as a means to deliver a wide range of personal development and positive outcomes. However, Coakley (2011) and Darnell (2010) warn against being over-optimistic about the assumption that sport could provide experiences that lead to personal success, civic engagement and indispensable development outcomes.

There has been a rapid growth of sport development programmes in South Africa using sport as a vehicle to promote gender equality, individual development and to deal with health and social issues such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Burnett, 2010). Some of the sport-for-development initiatives in South Africa include the School Sport Mass Participation Programme, active community clubs and youth development through football programmes, Sports Coaches' Outreach, Right to Play, and StreetFootball World (Burnett, 2010; Langer, 2015). According to Langer (2015:68), since 2000, there have been more than 100 sport for development programmes in South Africa. These programmes were initiated to increase participation in sport activities, build capacity through education and sport, and address social and community development issues in South Africa (Burnett, 2010). In 2003, the UN General

Assembly adopted a resolution recognising sport as a tool to promote health, education and development of peace (United Nations, 2003). The resolution of 2003 and the declaration of 2005 as the International Year of Sport and Physical Education by the UN positioned sport as a universal development strategy of global donors and NGOs to contribute to achieving its SDGs and to address social challenges such as drug abuse and crime (Burnett, 2010). The UN Resolution of 2003 and substantial resourcing by government and international donors resulted in the rapid growth of sport for development initiatives. However, despite the continuous growth in organisations using sport as a medium for development, NGOs and sports organisations still encounter challenges, such as lack of resources and government support, in implementing sports development programmes in South African communities and schools (Sanders *et al.*, 2014).

The sports development programme discussed in this study is situated within the broader context of the community and school environment. The following subsection will provide the context of the school sports programme in which the Dreamfields Project sports development programme is located and operates.

2.6.1 The context of school sport development programmes

The lack of physical activity, poor health, and social challenges such as youth unemployment are among the greatest socio-economic challenges facing the youth in South Africa. Socio-economically disadvantaged communities are characterised by a high level of poverty, physical inactivity, low socio-economic status, low income levels and low education (Craike *et al.* 2018:2). Therefore, a lack of quality sports development programmes focusing on the development of youth could result in the youth missing out on better quality sports experiences. According to Kirk (2005), early learning experiences are important to continue one's involvement in physical activity, sports and school is the most important institution in society to promote sport and physical activity in the youth (Sallis, Mckenzie, Alcaraz, Kolody, Faucette & Hovell, 1997).

The recent study by Craike *et al.* (2018) revealed that school sports development programmes effectively improved physical activity in children from socio-economically disadvantaged communities in European countries. However, the findings have not been tested in the South African context. SRSA and the DBE recognise that sport is an important part of the education system and school sports development programmes are the foundation of sport in South Africa.

In recognition of this, SRSA and the DBE have signed a memorandum of understanding focusing on school sports development programmes (Sport and Recreation South Africa, 2018). The current school sports development programme which was implemented at provincial and national level has enabled more than 6,000 schools to participate annually (Sport and Recreation South Africa, 2018). However, the scalability, sustainability and implementation of this programme have not been assessed. The model focuses on the inter-schools competition format, which could be a barrier for sports participation, especially for those who are interested in sport but only wish to participate for fun. The competition format might unintentionally exclude individuals and groups that are eligible to participate in sport.

The highest level of development in youth could enable individuals to lead healthy and productive lives because they develop the ability to interact with others and establish social relationships (Hamilton *et al.*, 2004). Integrating physical activity and sport in schools should, therefore, focus on outcomes that promote social interaction, personal development and health. According to Singh *et al.* (2012), physical activity and sport could have a positive effect on the physical health, personal development and health-related quality of life of the youth. The role of sport through formal and non-formal education in a school environment is important for physical, social and health development. School sport thus plays an important role in creating a healthy school environment (Wright *et al.*, 2016). According to Wright *et al.* (2016:2), evidence suggests that youth from rural communities are mostly exposed to sport and physical activity at school. However, most of these schools are under-resourced, lack sport equipment and infrastructure, and offer limited activities. School is an ideal environment for the development of youth in rural communities. The school provides a structured and supportive environment for learning experiences and for youth to develop skills. Therefore, structured and well-coordinated school sports development programmes could be used to promote participation, schooling for learners, and teaching basic values and life skills.

Structured school sports development programmes can be regarded as a way to promote sport and physical activity because youth are perceived to be motivated to participate in sport (Camiré & Trudel, 2013). Sports development programmes should be inclusive to ensure equal opportunities for participation regardless of cultural background, gender and ability (United Nations, 2015). Camiré and Trudel (2013) further state that the strength of these programmes is based on being able to utilise physical activity and sport as a vehicle to promote education, and personal and social development.

2.6.2 The Dreamfields Project sports development programme

The Dreamfields Project is a non-profit organisation that was launched in 2007. Its objective is to use sport to create a vibrant and positive educational life environment in rural communities. The organisation works with the DBE to develop sports development programmes consisting of regular football and netball league-based matches, known as the DreamLeagues, which are played weekly between schools. The organisation has invested over R61 million in South African schools and their communities since 2007 (Dreamfields Project, 2018).

The purpose of the DreamLeagues as part of the Dreamfields Project sport development programme is to create an inclusive sport development programme by getting as many children as possible involved in football and netball activities within the schools and rural communities. The sports development programme in the community and local schools is intended to promote sports participation and enhance sporting skills, personal development and social skills in the children. The Dreamfields Project believes that good quality teaching is matched and reinforced by a rich and inclusive life outside the classroom. Therefore, the DreamLeagues aim to enhance the learning atmosphere at schools and increase interest in school life through participation in sport.

The Dreamfields Project is currently engaged in 24 major projects at 284 schools and 63 community sports clubs in six provinces in South Africa. During 2019, there were 41,038 registered participants in the DreamLeagues. The number of participants includes learners and participants from primary schools, community clubs and high schools across the six provinces in South Africa. These figures are based on the 2018 and 2019 participation figures recorded by the Dreamfields Project but are in flux because some participants dropped out of the sports development programme and new ones joined during this period. The 2020 and 2021 figures are not available owing to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions which resulted in limited sports activities in South Africa. Figure 2.1 shows the map of South Africa and highlights the number of Dreamfields Project participants in the different provinces in South Africa.



Figure 2.1: Dreamfields Project participant figures according to province
 (Source: South Africa's provinces, 2022)

Figure 2.1 indicates that Mpumalanga had the highest number of participants (15,962), followed by KZN with 11,542 participants. The following section provides the context and background of the Dreamfields Project in the Ingwavuma region in northern KZN. The rural schools in the Ingwavuma region were the basis for this study. The Dreamfields Project currently does not have active sports development programmes in North West and the Western Cape, however, sports development programmes have been implemented in partnership with the Cape Town-based NGO, Life Zone Soccer.

In May 2017, the Dreamfields Project in the Ingwavuma region of KZN implemented the football and netball DreamLeagues programme in 12 schools (nine primary and three high schools). This programme was funded by the Breadsticks Foundation and Dreamfields Project works closely with the local organisation Zisize Educational Trust to implement it.

Ingwavuma is situated in the uMkhanyakhude district and is classified as a rural town; it is the second poorest district in South Africa. The estimated enrolment rate at the 12 schools in the programme is over 5,000 learners. A general concern in these schools is the lack of sufficient

opportunities for sports participation and social interaction. The DreamLeagues programme was initiated to increase access, provide wider opportunities, promote inclusiveness within sport and create a vibrant school atmosphere for learners in the area to participate in sport. The Dreamfields Project has in the past provided netball and football equipment to all the schools participating in the DreamLeagues programme. It has also provided coaching workshops to increase coaching capacity, and it continues to provide administrative support to schools. The success of the partnership between the Dreamfields Project and the Breadsticks Foundation has allowed Dreamfields to increase the coaching capacity of the local netball and football coaches and teachers, promote inclusiveness amongst the participants and increase the number of netball and football participants in the schools.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter provided an in-depth literature review of the complexity of rurality, community development and youth development through sport. It introduced the concept of sport as an effective means of contributing to the UN SDGs, addressing social challenges and enhancing the social and personal development of youth. The chapter emphasised how sport could be used as a vehicle to promote development experiences. The chapter concluded by discussing the sports development programme and the context of the Dreamfields Project sports development programme. The next chapter will focus on the theoretical framework of the study.

CHAPTER 3: THE SYSTEMS OF PLAY: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, the background of youth development through sport and rurality was presented in detail. I also highlighted the role of the Dreamfields Project sports development programme in promoting youth development. My aim in this chapter is to use the body of knowledge in the context of youth development, rurality and sport to contextualise and position this study within a theoretical framework. Furthermore, this chapter integrates different theoretical frameworks within youth development to formulate a theoretical framework specific to the context of this study.

This chapter deals with aspects of theoretical frameworks employed to theorise and describe youth experiences of the Dreamfields Project sports development programme in South African rural communities. The chapter further aims to elaborate on how the youth experiences and individual experiences were influenced by multiple constructs, such as family, society and community. This chapter concludes with a discussion on how the proposed theories for this study were integrated to explore youth experiences of a sports development programme. The concepts of youth development and rurality are complex thus multiple frameworks can provide context to the issues surrounding youth experiences in rural communities. Hence, the study integrated multiple theories to construct a theoretical framework that addressed the different conceptual levels of the study (individual and social context).

This study is underpinned by the PYD framework and SDT. The PYD framework is based on the principles that facilitate and promote positive development of youth (Lerner *et al.*, 2011). There are several PYD approaches identified in the literature which focus on the development of youth. For the purposes of this study, I focused on the five Cs (5Cs) of the PYD framework through sport, and Benson's 40 developmental assets framework (40-DAF). These PYD approaches, which were considered relevant for the study, are discussed in section 3.4.1.

SDT is based on three basic psychological needs: (1) autonomy, (2) relatedness and (3) competence (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Furthermore, SDT is concerned with the social factors that enhance or hinder human development. In relation to social factors, such as school, community and sport, SDT is related to how these factors enhance or undermine individual capacities for development and motivation to flourish (Standage & Ryan, 2012). SDT will be elaborated on in detail in section 3.4.2. The PYD framework and SDT were deemed the most relevant to

provide a theoretical framework for this study. The rationale for the integration of SDT and the PYD frameworks will be discussed in section 3.5.

3.2 An overview of research theory

A theory is an abstract concept formulated to understand and explain the phenomena and relationships between concepts (Neuman, 2014; Schneider, Whitehead & Haber, 2013). Furthermore, in a philosophical context, theory provides a description and understanding of the natural world and can be used to predict possible future occurrences through empirical observations (Kawulich, 2016; Maxwell, 2013). Apart from explaining the relationship between a set of concepts and assumptions, theory can inform how the existing knowledge is challenged and extended. Therefore, theory is an important tool to study and guide the interpretation of a social structure and phenomena and draw ideas from different disciplines to extend existing knowledge and understand relationships between different concepts in the study (Neuman, 2014).

Theories are the broad and philosophical basis of the research, which often stems from a philosophical assumption or paradigm (Kawulich, 2016). Therefore, research is guided by ontology, epistemology and methodology (Schneider *et al.*, 2013). The philosophical position will vary from one researcher to the next; however, internal consistency and logic can be achieved if the link between ontology, epistemology and methodology are clear. This study is informed by the PYD frameworks and SDT, and the concepts discussed in the literature review are consistent with these theories. The theories and paradigm chosen for this study provided the opportunity to explore the youth experiences of a sports development programme in rural communities and to illuminate the results of my study.

Theories are based on different world views, sets of assumptions, and concepts which guide how we interpret the world (Walshaw, 2012). These world views are embedded in ontological and epistemological assumptions. The relationship between theory and a paradigm is grounded in and provides the position from which we view and understand the world and make assumptions about phenomena. A paradigm is based on general philosophical assumptions about the nature of the world (ontology) and our understanding of it (epistemology). Therefore, both theory and the paradigm provide the means through which we view the world, how reality is viewed and how we understand phenomena (Schneider *et al.*, 2013). Paradigm and theory guide the research, therefore, the researcher's paradigm position and selection of theories

depends on the world view of the researcher and their beliefs (Walshaw, 2012). Since no single theory, framework or paradigm can be used to address all aspects of the research, theoretical pluralism might be adopted in a study to understand the phenomena. Hence, I integrated SDT and the PYD framework in this study. The rationale for this integration is discussed in section 3.5.

The theoretical point of departure is important in all studies as it enables the reader to understand the envisioned contribution of the study to the body of knowledge as well as the world view of the researcher. In this study, there are two main assumptions based on SDT and the PYD framework. The first is that the social environment could enhance or undermine people's sense of initiative to engage in activities and experience quality of life (Standage & Ryan, 2012), and the second is that a sports development programme could contribute to already enhanced youth experiences in rural communities.

Another key element of theory is concepts, which are the building blocks of theory. Theoretical concepts in natural science and mathematics are often expressed in symbolic forms and are expressed in words or ideas in social science (Neuman, 2014). Based on Neuman's explanation, social science concepts start as ideas, observations and personal experiences from everyday life. Then later, someone elaborates on the idea to define it and make it clearer (Gulson & Parkes, 2010). Therefore, concepts relate to the phenomena and they are used for discussions, analysis and examining our views about the world. The concepts range from concrete and tangible to abstract objects which cannot be directly observed or easily expressed. Concepts in research are used for conceptualisation, gathering data and elaborating on phenomena. In this study, a combination of concepts of human motivation and experiences are conceptualised in Chapter 2 and are aligned with SDT and the PYD framework. Furthermore, the theory and research paradigm are used in this study as an interpretive device to understand reality and human interaction.

This study is underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm. A paradigm provides an opportunity to build on a coherent and well-developed research approach (Maxwell, 2013). The theories and paradigm chosen for this study were essential to extend, deepen understanding and build knowledge within the context of this study. The interpretivist paradigm provided an opportunity for me to take a stance on the issues that relate to youth experiences. For these reasons, my purpose was to use the paradigm along with theory to provide a voice for the youth

about their experiences and provide the highest level of consistency and congruity throughout my research. This philosophical position in my study was coherent with the theories used.

I understand that a theory is not fixed and is open to revision, therefore, a theory can emerge from our lived experiences. According to Neuman (2014), theories can be approached from deductive and inductive directions. The inductive principle is based on the premise of gathering data and making a general conclusion that can be included in the theories (Creswell & Creswell (2018). According to (Neuman, 2014), deductive direction implies where a researcher logical progress from a general idea to a specific conclusion. However, the direction or approach that the researcher chooses is determined by the philosophical position of the researcher, the research objectives, the problem which is been investigated and the research instruments used. The insight into the relationships between these concepts and the descriptive framework is important to attempt to explore and understand the youth experiences of a sports development programme in the rural context.

3.3 The role of the theoretical framework in research

According to Grant and Osanloo (2014), a theoretical framework is a foundation on which knowledge can be created and it provides structure and a rationale for conducting the research. A theoretical framework consists of selected theories that provide insight into the phenomena and concepts that relate to the study (Grant & Osanloo, 2016). Collins and Stockton (2018:5) identified four important roles of a theoretical framework: (1) providing focus and structure to the research; (2) connecting the researcher to the existing knowledge, literature and interrelated concepts; (3) giving a description and obstruct meaning; and (4) identifying strengths and weaknesses in the study. Basing research on a theoretical framework is important to articulate the theoretical assumptions and to understand the relationship between the different concepts in the study and how those concepts might differ.

The theoretical framework chosen for this study provides insight into my research approach and, to some extent, these theories are complementary and overlap. Furthermore, the theoretical framework not only assists the reader to understand my research design and philosophical position but also to understand that this study is not based solely on my assumptions but it also informed by relevant theories. The research question and purpose of this study are aligned with the theoretical framework. However, the research on youth development experiences of a sports development programme in a rural context could benefit from an additional theoretical

perspective. I therefore integrated two complementary theories focusing on youth development.

The structure, related concepts and assumptions of my study were embedded in the theoretical framework which guided how I explored the experiences of youth about the sports development programme.

3.4 The theoretical framework for this study: positive youth development framework and self-determination theory

This study aims to explore youth experiences of a sports development programme in South African rural communities. The research in the field of sport and youth development consists of multiple theoretical approaches and competing theories. This is based on the nature of the phenomenon being studied, which was required to be viewed from multiple perspectives (Anfara & Mertz, 2015). To answer the research questions and achieve the aims of the study, I explored youth development using the PYD framework and SDT, which provided comprehensive constructs on youth development and community and sports development programmes.

In this study, the PYD framework included constructs at multiple levels, such as interaction at school and in the community between youth and environment, and factors that contributed to PYD, such as sports development programmes, family, parents and peers (Qi *et al.*, 2020). Meanwhile, SDT offered a broader perspective on both the individual and social context in terms of the impact of parents, teachers and adults in the community on the development of youth. Furthermore, SDT provided a holistic perspective on youth experiences and the influence of social–contextual factors on the development of youth. The rationale for the integration of the PYD framework and SDT will be discussed in section 3.4.3 of this chapter and other aspects of the PYD framework and SDT of this study will be discussed in sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2.

3.4.1 Positive youth development framework

The PYD framework emerged as a broad theoretical lens focusing on the strengths and development of youth and the plasticity of human development, such as the individual ability to thrive and adapt to the social environment through positive interaction (Benson, Scales & Syvertsen 2011; Schwartz, Theron & Scales, 2017). The PYD framework is based on the

premise that community-based sports approaches promote positive behaviour and competencies that could lead to positive experiences for young people (Camiré *et al.*, 2014; Lerner *et al.*, 2011). Lerner *et al.* (2011) suggest that the concept of PYD is grounded in three interrelated perspectives: (1) the developmental perspective, (2) an approach to youth programming, and (3) youth programmes and organisations focusing on the positive development of youth. The PYD framework is relational and focuses on approaches that enhance youth competencies, provide positive development opportunities, and support youth to gain social and personal skills in order to thrive (Catalano, Skinner, Alvarado, Kapungu, Reavley, Patton, Jessee, Plaut, Moss, Bennett & Sawyer, 2019).

There are several PYD frameworks and theoretical views relating to PYD in the literature. For instance, Benson’s 40-DAF (Benson, *et al.*, 2011), developed by the Search Institute, refer to 40 developmental assets which relate to positive experiences and social and personal development qualities that youth require for positive development. Benson’s 40-DAF consists of 20 internal and 20 external assets. The underlying understanding of the internal assets is guided by individual personal development skills, such as commitment to learning and motivation, positive identity (for example, a sense of purpose and self-esteem), positive values and social competencies (Benson *et al.*, 2011). The external assets refer to the positive factors of development based on the interaction in ecological contexts, such as family, community and school (Shek *et al.*, 2019). The domains for the external assets include support from family, a caring school climate, positive relationships and empowerment of youth (Benson *et al.*, 2011; Bonell *et al.*, 2015). According to the 40-DAF, social structure, positive experiences and environmental resources support youth to be effective in their lives and achieve adequate development (Bonell *et al.*, 2015). The 40-DAF identified by Search Institute are outlined in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Benson’s 40-DAF

(Source: Benson, 1997)

External assets	Internal assets
Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Family support ● Other adult relationship ● Positive family communication ● Caring school climate 	Positive values <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Responsibility ● Integrity ● Honesty ● Responsibility

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parent involvement in schooling ● Caring neighbourhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Restraint ● Caring
<p>Empowerment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Community values youth ● Youth as resources ● Service to others and the community ● Safety 	<p>Social competencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Resistance skills ● Cultural competence ● Peaceful conflict resolution ● Interpersonal competence ● Planning and decision-making
<p>Boundaries and expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School boundaries ● Family boundaries ● Neighbourhood boundaries ● Adult role models ● Positive peer influence ● High expectations 	<p>Commitment to learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School engagement ● Homework ● Bonding to school ● Reading for pleasure ● Achievement motivation
<p>Constructive use of time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Youth programmes ● Creative activities ● Religious community ● Time at home 	<p>Positive identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Personal power ● Sense of purpose ● The positive view of personal future ● Self-esteem

Another PYD framework that has been influential in describing PYD is the 5Cs of the PYD framework developed by Lerner (Lerner *et al.*, 2011). The 5Cs refer to connection, confidence, character, competence, caring and compassion. Bowers, Li, Kiely, Brittan, Lerner and Lerner. (2010) argue that positive development occurs if the strengths of youth (for example, support, competence and empowerment) are aligned with positive experiences through social interaction with community, family, friends and school. Lerner *et al.* (2011) note that positive development is based on mutually beneficial relations between youth and the social environment. It is essential to understand the constructs of the 5Cs and how they relate to youth

experiences and PYD in a context of a sports development programme. Figure 3.1 illustrates the categories of the 5Cs of the PYD framework (Bowers *et al.*, 2010).

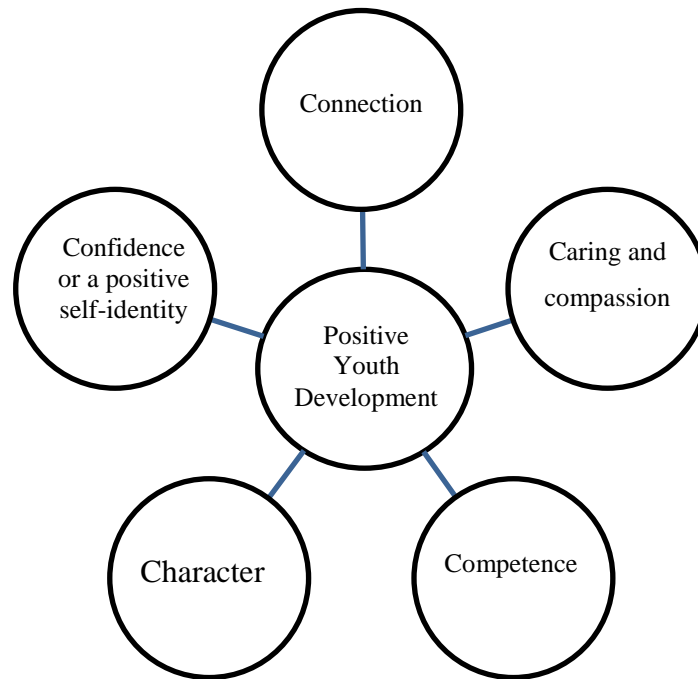


Figure 3.1: Five Cs of positive youth development
(Source: Adapted from Bowers *et al.*, 2010)

In the 5Cs model, connection refers to the positive relationships between the community, family, friends and teachers. These relationships reflect how youth are affirmed in life, and how they are exposed to a caring school climate and parent involvement in schooling (Travis & Leech, 2014). Caring and compassion reflect empathy and a positive relationship with others (Lerner, Lerner & Benson, 2011). Character reflects a positive attitude, values and morality in the context of societal and cultural discourse. Bowers *et al.* (2010) note that confidence or positive self-identity includes self-efficacy and self-worth. Competence relates to individual ability in the academic domain and it also applies to social, physical and emotional competencies (Lerner *et al.*, 2011).

Benson *et al.* (2011), Arnold and Silliman (2017), and Shek *et al.* (2019) identified the following similarities between the different PYD frameworks: (a) human plasticity; (b) internal

developmental assets, such as competence, and external assets or ecological context (for example, the influence of the community, schools, sports development programmes, and relationships with friends, families); and (c) experiences which support and contribute to positive developmental outcomes (for example, resilience, self-determination and social competence). On the other hand, Holt, Neely, Slater, Camiré, Côté, J. Fraser-Thomas, MacDonald, Strachan & Tamminen (2017) highlighted the 40-DAF and the 5Cs of PYD framework that were not developed in the context of sport. According to Holt *et al.* (2017), 5Cs is arguably the most established framework of PYD. It was developed to evaluate the 4-H youth development programme in the United States (US) which focuses on agriculture-oriented activities. According to Bonell *et al.* (2015) and Shek *et al.* (2019), Benson's 40-DAF was initially designed to inform public policies for youth and guide community-based initiatives to strengthen relationships and social experiences of youth with the aim of health promotion (for example, to prevent drug abuse, violence, and school dropout). According to Benson *et al.* (2011), the 40-DAF has been used as a PYD strategy in organising youth programmes in Canada and the US (for example, the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and the Salvation Army).

Recognising the need for a PYD framework that considers contextual factors of youth development through sport, Holt *et al.* (2017) developed a model of PYD through sport (PYDTS). Emanating from the review and evaluation of qualitative studies focusing on PYD in sport and conceptual linkages drawn from the PYD literature, the model aims to provide testable relationships that may guide future research. The components of this model include: (a) distal ecological systems; (b) characteristics of the participants (for example, age, ethnicity and gender) and individual differences which should be considered because of how they might influence the way in which individuals acquire personal and social outcomes through their involvement in sport; (c) a PYD climate which is a social environment based on positive interaction between youth, coaches, parents and peers; (d) sports development programmes focusing on life skills activities which contribute to PYD outcomes and enable youth to thrive; and (e) social, personal and physical outcomes linked to youth sports development programmes (for example, physical skills associated with fundamental movements and sports-specific skills, social skills, such as meeting new people, and personal skills which include improved confidence and self-esteem) (Holt *et al.*, 2017). Figure 3.2 outlines the PYDTS model.

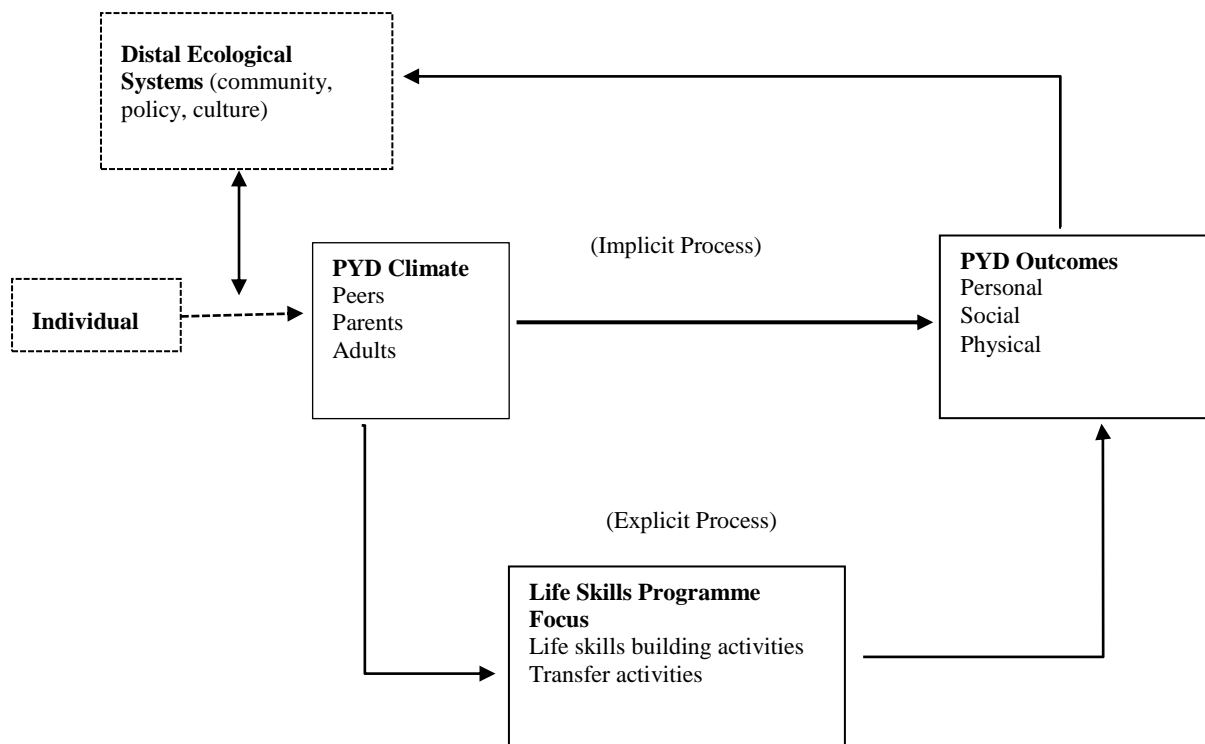


Figure 3.2: Model showing positive youth development through sport
 (Source: Holt *et al.*, 2017:36)

The strength of the PYDTS model is that it highlights the importance of the social environment and sport development programmes in enabling the youth to gain positive experiences that will ultimately contribute to PYD outcomes. Furthermore, the model provides an overarching perception on the implementation process of PYD frameworks to achieve PYD outcomes in a sports context.

Overlaps and similarities in the PYD frameworks, such as positive experiences, social environment and the relationship between youth, peers and adults, are discussed in this section, (Benson *et al.*, 2011; Holt *et al.*, 2017; Shek *et al.*, 2019). However, Shek *et al.* (2019) note differences in the PYD frameworks and the lack of integration between the processes and PYD programmes, for example, an ecological perspective, which emphasises the role of community in youth development versus the life-span developmental perspective. Table 3.2 shows a comparison between different PYD frameworks.

Table 3.2: A comparison of PYD frameworks

Dimensions	Different PYD frameworks and PYD models		
	5Cs	40-DAF	PYDTS
Theoretical orientation	Ecological perspective (role of community is emphasised)	Ecological perspective (both roles of community and individuals are emphasised)	Ecological perspective (both roles of community and individuals are emphasised)
Domains and constructs	Social and personal development (competence, confidence, caring, connection and character)	Social and personal development (support, empowerment, positive values, social competencies, positive identity)	Physical, social and personal development
Focus and outcomes	PYD outcomes	PYD outcomes	PYD outcomes
Origin	Global North	Global North	Global North

The comparison shown in Table 3.2 reveals the different domains in PYD and highlights the positive outcomes associated with youth intervention programmes and sports development programmes. However, the PYD framework provides little guidance regarding negative experiences and possible negative outcomes associated with sports development programmes. Theoretically, the 40-DAF, 5Cs framework and PYDTS model constructs are rooted in ecological principles, such as parental involvement, community, schools and peer relationships. Shek *et al.* (2019) argue that the current PYD framework focuses on the effects of the social environment and it is embedded in the ecological theory developed by Bronfenbrenner, which highlights the importance of social relationships and interaction with the environment.

The PYDTS model, which is different from the other frameworks, highlights the importance of the combined effects of the social environment and sports development programmes by

focusing on life skills activities in achieving PYD outcomes. In addition, the model recognises how individual differences and characteristics (for example, gender, age, ethnicity, and socio-economic status) could influence how individuals acquire PYD outcomes such as social and personal skills (Holt *et al.*, 2017).

Finally, these frameworks were developed in the context of the Global North. However, there is empirical evidence indicating that these frameworks have been used in several studies in the global context, which include developed and underdeveloped countries (Qi *et al.*, 2020; Shek *et al.*, 2019). According to Santos, Camiré and Campos (2018), despite the growth in research focusing on PYDTS, the research in PYD is currently dominated by researchers from English-speaking countries, namely the US and Canada). Qi *et al.* (2020) highlight the need to expand the research by focusing on the PYDTS framework from different countries' perspectives in order to understand how PYD is framed and conceptualised in other countries.

In summary, the PYD frameworks discussed in this study provide a foundation for understanding key constructs related to youth development and highlight enablers and possible barriers to attaining PYD outcomes. However, beyond the noted conceptual strengths of these frameworks, there are several concerns relating to gaps in the application of the PYD frameworks in the context of sport, especially in the South African context.

First, the PYD frameworks emphasise factors that promote positive development and environmental contexts that enhance youth development for young people to attain positive outcomes (Camiré *et al.*, 2014; Holt & Kacey, 2011; Lerner *et al.*, 2011; Qi *et al.*, 2020). These factors could be viewed as strengths of the PYD frameworks, however, the current PYD frameworks provide little guidance on the specific personal skills and social skills acquired by the youth through their personal experiences. Furthermore, these frameworks fail to highlight cultural, individual and contextual factors that could lead to negative experiences.

Second, the negative outcomes associated with the social environment and how the negative interaction between youth and the social environment could lead to negative experiences are not addressed in the framework of PYDTS reviewed in this study. Negative experiences include negative peer influence, social exclusion, inappropriate adult behaviour, lack of parental involvement, and unsupportive teachers. The 5Cs framework elaborates on the constructs that relate to caring, confidence and competence, but offers little guidance on the skills required by youth to achieve the positive outcomes described in the framework.

The PYD frameworks identified by the researcher for this study address the implementation of a sports development programme and different conceptual levels of youth development, for example, the influence of social context and relationships. However, these frameworks limit the ability of the researcher to explore the youth's contribution to their own development and social environment, or the consequences of the social environment and the inappropriate design and implementation of a sports development programme. To address the limitations of the theoretical framework and strengthen the youth development framework efficacy for youth in South African rural communities, SDT was incorporated into the study.

3.4.2 Self-determination theory

SDT is a broad theory of human behaviour and personality development that is concerned with how social conditions support or hinder the individual's satisfaction of their basic psychological needs (Ryan & Deci, 2017). SDT outlines intrinsic and some extrinsic factors of motivation and describes the role of these motivations in cognitive and social development. SDT is based on the premise that people naturally strive to expand, develop and understand themselves by integrating new experiences and interacting with the outside world (Legault, 2017).

SDT provides a theoretical framework which suggests that sports development programmes and the development of youth cannot be understood in isolation. The social contexts are different and could lead to different developmental outcomes. SDT embraces the viewpoint that the social environment could enhance or undermine people's sense of initiative to engage in activities and experience quality of life (Standage & Ryan, 2012). Therefore, SDT recognises the individual's need to continuously strive for satisfaction and an environment that enhances their psychological needs. Human beings can be engaged in society or remain passive and be excluded due to social conditions. SDT reflects on how social factors could facilitate or undermine people's sense of belonging and quality of life. DeHaan, Hirai and Ryan (2016) state that for people to develop and realise their abilities, the social environment should support processes that fulfil their basic psychological needs. The environment that supports and continuously satisfies these needs will ensure that people experience positive development and function effectively. However, should these needs be thwarted, this may result in fragmentation, unhappiness and negative experiences. Three critical dimensions of psychological needs identified by Ryan and Deci (2000) are:

- Autonomy: a feeling of self-governance, self-direction and people making their own choices in life. Autonomy stems from a need to feel that they are in control of their behaviour.
- Competence: a need to experience effectiveness and develop capabilities and effective interaction with the environment.
- Relatedness: being able to associate and connect with others in society. This is experienced through mutual care and connection with others. Furthermore, relatedness is based on people's need for a sense of belonging.

A social environment supporting people's psychological needs could enhance or disrupt the quality of motivation and engagement in social activities, such as friends, teachers and coaches. Therefore, the degree to which the above-mentioned psychological needs are unsupported could have a detrimental impact on youth sports experiences (DeHaan *et al.*, 2016). The notion of psychological needs is used to explain social influences on the social development of youth (Curran, Hill & Niemiec, 2013). According to the findings of Ryan, Frederick, Lepas, Rubio and Sheldon (1997, cited in Standage & Ryan, 2012:240), people have multiple motives to participate in sport. Furthermore, a study conducted by Weinstein and Ryan (2010) indicates that autonomy, competence and relatedness contribute to personal development. When a need for competence, relatedness and autonomy is satisfied, people are likely to feel effective, more connected with others, and in control of their lives (Martela & Ryan, 2016). Based on this empirical evidence, satisfying youths' needs for competence and relatedness could promote and enhance positive experiences. Youth in rural communities could be afforded opportunities to develop and enhance their social skills and refine their interpersonal skills through sports development programmes. However, the lack of structured sports development programmes and unsupportive social environments could undermine youth experiences of autonomy, competence and relatedness.

SDT consist of six sub-theories: (1) cognitive evaluation theory; (2) organismic integration theory; (3) causality orientations theory; (4) BPNT; (5) GCT; and (6) relationships motivation theory. These sub-theories highlight the importance of basic psychological needs, which relates to the need for autonomy, competence and relatedness (Legault, 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2017). To understand the factors that contribute to individual motivation and youth experiences, I used

BPNT and GCT of SDT. BPNT and GCT provide complementary perspectives, describing factors that contribute to individual goals, youth behaviour and motivation (Legault, 2017).

I will discuss the sub-theories BPNT and GCT of SDT to provide an understanding of the link between these sub-theories and the youth experiences of a sports development programme. The sub-theories BPNT and GCT of SDT are relevant to this study because of their focus on how individual goals and social conditions could either enhance or undermine human motivation and development.

3.4.2.1 Basic psychological needs theory

The concept of psychological needs is used in many theories, and some scholars have viewed psychological needs based on individual differences that are learned through social interaction. The basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness are central to SDT and all its sub-theories (Legault, 2017). BPNT theory argues that three basic psychological needs are important for optimal development and that failure to satisfy these basic needs could undermine the necessary conditions for youth to thrive and hinder positive development (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Legault (2017) argues that the need to experience self-direction and to feel effective interaction with the environment and other people is a basic need required by youth for survival. The development of youth depends on the environment, which facilitates motivation and social integration to enable the youth to function positively. Therefore, the environment could contribute to the extent to which their basic psychological needs are satisfied or hindered. A supportive environment and positive relationships between adults and youth have a positive effect on youth experiences and motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). A nurturing and supportive environment could facilitate youths' sense of competence, relatedness and autonomy, thereby promoting PYD.

As demonstrated by BPNT, autonomy, competence and relatedness can easily be disrupted by an unsupportive environment. In this study, the parents, teachers and coaches were responsive to the needs of the youth, created a supportive environment that could facilitate PYD and contributed to the satisfaction of the different needs required for optimal development. BPNT theory allowed me to understand the extent to which the environment facilitated frustration and the need for satisfaction. Autonomy, relatedness and competence are essential needs for positive development and necessary for youth to thrive and flourish. It should, nevertheless, be

stressed that failure to satisfy these basic psychological needs could easily contribute to negative experiences.

3.4.2.2 Goal content theory

The impact of extrinsic and intrinsic goals on development and motivation is explained by GCT (Legault, 2017). GCT further outlines the factors that contribute to youth behaviour in pursuing their goals. The goals are categorised as either intrinsic or extrinsic (Ryan & Deci, 2017). For example, youth who participate in sport in the pursuit of fame and wealth are considered to have extrinsic aspirations, while those who pursue sport for personal growth or have an inherent interest in and enjoy sport are deemed to have intrinsic aspirations. In this study, the importance of relatedness, competence and autonomy is instrumental in understanding the factors that contribute to the experiences of the youth in a sport development programme.

A study conducted by Ryan, Soenens and Vansteenkiste (2019) showed that psychosocial development was delayed in individuals who pursued extrinsic goals. Those who valued intrinsic goals experienced better development (Ryan & Deci, 2017:275). According to Ryan and Deci (2000), the individual goals that contribute to accomplishing basic psychological needs are associated with the development of youth. Therefore, intrinsic goals could be viewed as a contributing factor to the positive development of youth. Positive outcomes in youth development such as academic achievement (Hansen & Larson, 2007), social integration, improved peer relationships and teamwork (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009) have been associated with intrinsic goals.

The importance of individual goals and motivation is clearly outlined in SDT. Furthermore, the two sub-theories of SDT highlight how social and organisational elements (poverty, resources and a sports development programme) could influence youth experiences. The two sub-theories of SDT were used in this study to capture youth experiences and explore factors contributing to youth experiences of a sports development programme. The PYD frameworks provided a conceptual clarity related to the social context, sports context, youth developmental outcomes and positive outcomes associated with sport. The integration of SDT and the PYD frameworks will be explained in detail in section 3.5.

3.5 Theoretical integration and a new framework of youth developmental experiences through sport

This study was grounded in the PYD framework and SDT. The theoretical perspectives discussed in this chapter were guided by the 40-DAF, 5Cs framework and the PYDTS model developed by Holt *et al.* (2017). The PYD frameworks and SDT support the notion that youth experiences in sport are influenced by multiple constructs consisting of structural conditions in society, families, organisations and communities. To align these multiple constructs (for example, school, teachers, coaches, individual characteristics and socio-economic challenges) with the aims of this study, the PYD framework and SDT were integrated for conceptual clarity and to interpret the research findings.

It should be noted that it was not the aim of this study to develop and test the proposed framework, YDETS. However, I proposed a modification to the current PYDTS framework. The new YDETS framework reflects youth as agents of their own development, highlights the role of the social environment in either enhancing or thwarting youth experiences, and demonstrates the role of an appropriately designed and implemented sports development programme to enhance youth experiences in rural communities in the South African context. Although the proposed framework was not empirically tested, it has been proposed to address the contextual gaps in the current PYD framework, provide a youth development through sports framework specific to the South African context, and guide the future research and research design of sports development programmes.

The YDETS framework emanated from integration of SDT into the PYD framework. The YDETS framework bears some similarities to the model for the PYDTS framework developed by Holt *et al.* (2017). For example, the notion of social contexts reflects the PYD climate and external assets components identified in the developmental assets framework (Benson *et al.*, 2011) and the model for PYDTS (Holt *et al.*, 2017). Similarly, the proposed model of YDETS recognises that the key elements of a sports development programme that supports youth development are influenced by the social environment that can enhance or hinder positive experiences (Lerner, Lerner, Bowers & Geldhof, 2015). However, the proposed theoretical framework also emphasises how three basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence and relatedness) are important for optimal development, and failure to satisfy these basic needs could undermine the necessary conditions for youth to thrive and possibly result in negative experiences (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The 40-DAF refers to the alignment between positive traits

of individuals (for example, existing personal and social skills) and external requirements, such as context and social relationships. Therefore, the proposed theoretical framework of YDETS suggests that youth are the agents of their development and an important component in creating positive relationships. Figure 3.3 depicts the new theoretical framework of YDETS.

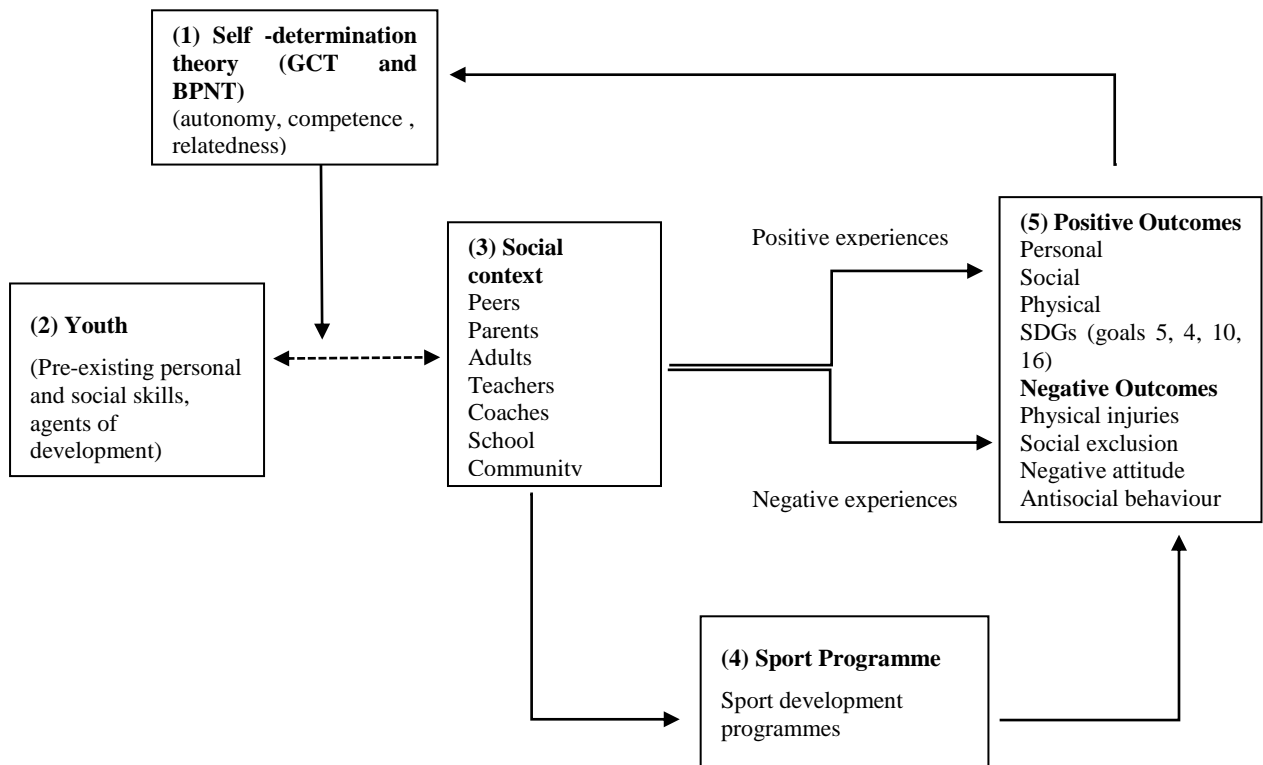


Figure 3.3: Theoretical framework of YDETS

The YDETS framework includes five key elements: (1) SDT (GCT and BPNT); (2) youth viewed as agents of their own development; (3) social context based on relationships between youth, peers, adults, parents, coaches and teachers; (4) sports development programme design and implementation; and (5) positive and negative outcomes associated with the sports development programme, and positive and negative experiences based on the interaction with the social environment. Therefore, the theoretical framework suggests that youth development through sport should be viewed from different paths of development, that is, a positive or negative developmental path.

The first element of the YDETS theoretical framework relates to SDT which refers to the three basic psychological needs, competence, relatedness and autonomy, and contextual factors that

influence youth development (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The theoretical literature highlights that youth development is a process that is influenced by multiple factors, such as social context, individual developmental experiences and sports development programmes (Coakley, 2011; Singh *et al.*, 2012; Yi & Li, 2017). The motivational aspect of SDT is a central component of sport and social contexts that highlight factors contributing to youth development experiences. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are linked to the two sub-theories of SDT chosen for this study, namely GCT and BPNT. The sub-theories of SDT have been discussed in detail in section 3.4.1 of this chapter. Furthermore, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (satisfaction, self-actualisation, social recognition and interpersonal control) are associated with different social and personal development outcomes in a sport (Curran *et al.*, 2013; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Hence, the proposed framework is framed within the context of SDT. This is crucial to the approach of youth development through sport because the YDETS framework recognises the dynamic relationships between youth, parents, teachers and coaches. The theoretical framework also highlights possible barriers to attaining basic psychological needs in a sports context.

Youth are the primary focus of the second element of the YDETS theoretical framework. According to Seligman and Rider (2012), youth are seen as individuals with preferences and as active agents who can contribute to their own development and pursue fulfilment through their choices and decisions. This view highlights the notion that youth possess the capabilities and potential to be actively involved in their own development and become effective and autonomous in their lives. Therefore, the YDETS theoretical framework suggests that youth developmental experiences are based on their personal strengths, potential and bi-directional interaction between themselves and their social context, such as family, peers and teachers (Brink & Wissing, 2012).

The interaction of youth and the social environment not only relates to the influence of the social environment, it also relates to the actions and choices of youth to change their developmental contexts (Lerner *et al.*, 2015). Holt *et al.* (2017) argue that individual differences will determine their experiences and influence the way the youth acquire personal and social developmental skills (for example, confidence, social competencies, connectedness and good personal relationships) through their involvement in sports development programmes. Youth are diverse and develop within the social context in various stages of development during adolescence, that is, from 12 to 18 years, and acquire social, personal and

physical skills through their interaction with the social environment (Seligman, 2011). Therefore, the proposed theoretical framework recognises the potential, personal characteristics, capabilities and social competencies acquired by the youth before they participate in a structured sports development programme. Furthermore, youth are viewed as agents of their own development. This view echoes that of Holt, Kingsley, Tink & Scherer (2011) who state that when youth are motivated to improve the contexts of their social environment, the impact is enhanced because of their resilience and self-determination.

The third element of the YDETS theoretical framework focuses on the social context, which constitutes a relational interface with youth. The YDETS proposes that if the social context (for example, parents, peers, teachers and coaches) is supportive and the community and schools create an appropriate environment that fosters positive development, positive youth developmental experiences could be enhanced and lead to positive development outcomes (Blom, Visek & Harris, 2013; Qi *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, the framework suggests that if the social environment is not supportive (for example, if there is lack of parental support, a dysfunctional family structure or a feeling of discomfort around their peers), and it is inappropriate for positive development, this could lead to negative developmental experiences of the sports development programme (Blom *et al.*, 2013). This will impede youth development and hinder the three basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness.

The fourth element of the YDETS theoretical framework focuses on the sports programme and youth developmental experiences while they are engaged in sport. The sports development programme focus refers to the positive and negative youth development outcomes gained from participating in the sports development programme. Structured activities such as sport development programmes provide youth with opportunities for development in areas such as physical skills, self-worth, social competence, positive bonds with others, sense of compassion and sympathy (Blomfield & Barber 2011; Holt & Kacey, 2011; Lerner *et al.*, 2015; Vosloo, 2014). A sports development programme that is appropriately designed and implemented to meet the developmental needs of the youth could foster positive developmental experiences in areas such as physical, personal and social developmental skills. According to Bonell *et al.* (2015), sports development programmes have the potential to enhance the development of internal assets, such as positive values, positive identity and social competencies. However, contextual challenges, such as poor sports development programme design and implementation, poor facilities, and unsupportive teachers and coaches, could lead to negative

developmental outcomes, including injuries, negative attitudes and social exclusion. The theoretical framework suggests that the impact of sports development programmes on youth development is mutually dependent and influenced by contextual features (for example, teachers, coaches, parents, community and schools).

Therefore, the objective of the sports development programmes on community and youth development is more likely to be achieved through partnerships with education, government, community organisations and other social services (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011). This view is supported by Jones, Edwards, Bocarro, Bunds and Smith (2017) who state that partnering with community organisations, especially those focusing on youth development, could enhance the efficacy of the sports development programme to achieve positive outcomes. Furthermore, Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) suggest that sports development programmes should strategically combine sports-specific outcomes (for example, basic sports skills and fundamental movement skills) and non-sport-specific outcomes (for example, personal and social developmental skills) in order to achieve positive developmental outcomes. Finally, the theoretical framework suggests that sports development programmes can be strategically designed and implemented to contribute to achieving some of the UN SDGs and empowerment, namely Goal 5 – gender equality, Goal 4 – education, Goal 10 – inequality, and Goal 16 – inclusive society (Burnett, 2010; United Nations General Assembly, 2015).

The fifth element aims to provide a range of youth developmental outcomes associated with the youth experiences of sports development programmes and interaction with their social context. The YDETS theoretical framework recognises that youth developmental outcomes are related to both positive and negative developmental experiences, which sports development programmes may foster. Positive developmental outcomes are linked to the 5Cs (competence, confidence, character, caring and connection) as well as physical, personal and social development outcomes and SDGs attained through sports development programmes. Negative developmental outcomes are based on negative experiences of youth in the sports development programme, such as physical injuries, antisocial behaviour, stress and social exclusion (Gould, Flett & Lauer, 2012).

The theoretical framework suggests that positive experiences through youth interaction with the social context and sports development programmes, which are designed to achieve both sports-specific and non-sport-specific outcomes, could produce positive developmental outcomes and contribute to achieving some of the SDGs. However, these contextual features

(for example, social context, sports development programme design and implementation) could lead to negative developmental experiences. Finally, there is a feedback loop in the framework which indicates that youth developmental outcomes could enhance or undermine basic psychological needs. For example, positive outcomes could enhance autonomy, competencies and relatedness, while negative outcomes could diminish motivation and undermine basic psychological needs (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Standage & Ryan, 2012).

The YDETS theoretical framework highlights many aspects and constructs of youth developmental experiences. The first critical aspect of the theoretical framework is the role of the youth in their development process. Secondly, the theoretical framework is framed within the context of SDT, highlighting the importance of motivation and the three basic psychological needs to promote youth development. This theoretical framework considers motivation to be an important component of sport and youth development. Cognitive evaluation theory (a sub-theory of SDT) is used to highlight how motivation can enhance or undermine positive developmental experiences (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The third aspect clarifies negative experiences and outcomes associated with sports development programmes or participation in sport. Holt *et al.* (2017) and Lerner *et al.* (2011) state that the lack of negative outcomes associated with sports participation and the PYD framework focusing on promoting positive developmental outcomes are some of the weaknesses of the PYD framework, that is, the 5Cs of PYD, 40-DAF and PYDTS model.

This study explores youth experiences of a rural South African sports development programme. The proposed theoretical framework provides conceptual clarity on youth developmental experiences and individual outcomes that are associated with the sports development programme. Furthermore, the theoretical framework provides insight into how motivation and the social environment could hinder or facilitate the satisfaction of autonomy, competence and relatedness needs in the context of the relationship between youth, adults and friends.

3.6 Conclusion

The main purpose of this chapter was to discuss the theoretical framework of the study. Considering that the purpose of my study was to explore youth experiences of a sports development programme and understand how youth in rural communities experience development in a sports development programme, the theoretical framework of YDETS has been formulated through the integration of the PYD framework and SDT.

The proposed YDETS theoretical framework is aligned with this study because of the emphasis on the holistic view of youth experiences (that is, both negative and positive experiences) associated with the social environment and sports development programme. Furthermore, the theoretical framework highlights multiple factors that influence youth experiences and some of these experiences include individual motivation to participate in sport, a supportive environment and autonomy. Therefore, the proposed theoretical framework provides multiple theoretical perspectives and addresses both individual and social conceptual levels of youth experiences of a sports development programme. The next chapter will focus on the research methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER 4: HIGHLIGHTING THE FORMATION OF THE PLAYING FIELD: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology used to gather the data and examine the process that underpins the research approach in this study. Furthermore, the explanation for using the research paradigm, philosophical perspectives, research design and sampling strategies in this study is discussed. The philosophical perspectives highlight the researchers' assumptions and beliefs about the research. According to Grix (2019), ontology and epistemology are the foundations of the research process and help to determine the research methodology and methods of the study.

The research methodology section in this chapter provides details about the choices I made with regard to how the data was constructed. It also provides insights into the research setting and how the participants were selected. The research design guided me through the research process and enabled me to interpret the results of this study (Clark, Flewitt, Hammersley & Robb, 2014). The final sections of this chapter deal with the different methods used to gather the research data, that is, photovoice, drawings and semi-structured interviews. The thematic analysis and visual analysis process related to the drawings and photovoice data are also discussed. The chapter concludes with a discussion on ethical considerations and trustworthiness.

4.2 Research paradigm

My study is aligned with the interpretivist paradigm, which is an umbrella term that addresses a wide range of perspectives in the social sciences. According to Scotland (2012) and Sefotho (2015), a paradigm is regarded as a philosophical lens which is informed by how the researcher views the world. Rehman and Alharthi (2016) agree with Scotland (2012) and Sefotho (2015) by concluding that a researcher is expected to understand and articulate beliefs about the nature of reality. In this regard, a research paradigm refers to philosophical perspectives or a set of beliefs, assumptions and values that guide the research. Two world views in research are interpretivism and positivism. These different epistemological positions are influenced by the aims and objectives of the study. Positivism relates to objectivity and views the world as existing independently of social actors, while, contrary to positivism, interpretivism views the world from a subjective perspective (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019; Sefotho, 2015). In

this sense, interpretivism asserts that reality is subjective and constructed through interaction between people and the social context.

My qualitative research approach was guided by the interpretive paradigm which seeks to understand the world from the subjective experiences of individuals (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A meaningful reality is constructed through interaction between people and their environment; therefore, a phenomenon is understood from an individual's perspective. Thus, the researcher collaborated with the participants to construct the data. Creswell (2013) explains that in an interpretivist paradigm, the researcher focuses on the specific contexts and experiences of the people in their social context. The interpretive paradigm focuses on subjective meanings and uses methodologies such as observation and interviews to construct data. The decision to use interpretivism as my paradigm was underpinned by my desire to better understand the participants' experiences and perspectives in the context of a sports programme.

According to Scotland (2012), a research paradigm consists of four major dimensions: ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods. According to Creswell (2009), ontology deals with the nature of reality and how the researcher perceives the world. In this sense, epistemology relates to the relationship between the researcher and how the knowledge can be created and communicated (Grix, 2019). The epistemological position influences how the researcher constructs knowledge which ultimately guides the researcher's methodological approach (Manson, 2017). My study is underpinned by specific philosophical perspectives which are related to my ontological and epistemological position. The next sections will elaborate on the philosophical positioning I have chosen for this study.

4.2.1 Ontological position

Manson (2017:4) posits that the first question the researcher should ask to interrogate and challenge the assumptions when designing a qualitative study is 'What do you see and believe constitutes the nature and essence of things in social reality?' This implies how the researcher views the social world. Researchers with different cultural contexts can have divergent views and assumptions about the same phenomena due to their beliefs about what constitutes social reality (ontology). In essence, researchers form their preferred conceptualisation of reality and take their own position about how things really are (Sefotho, 2015). According to Grix (2019), the ontological position is located in a different dichotomy, implying that positivists and interpretivists have different views on social phenomena. The positivism ontological position

stems from the view that social phenomena exist independently from social actors. On the other hand, the interpretivist ontological position asserts that reality relies on social actors (for example, social structure and human beings). I adopted the interpretivist ontological position for this study. This view stems from my recognition that multiple realities exist and that reality can be constructed through interaction with the participants and their diverse experiences.

The interpretivist ontological position provided me with the opportunity to understand the multiple views and experiences of my participants. Saunders *et al.* (2019) confirm this by stating that reality is socially constructed owing to the complexities of a social subject. Hence, there is more than one truth and there are different interpretations of the phenomena. Reality continuously changes, therefore, to understand the views and experiences of the participants in a way that was meaningful, it was important to seek to understand the participants' subjective reality and interpretation of their own experiences. In other words, reality was constructed from the perspectives of the participants' world view. It was assumed that youth experiences are a social reality and that the participants in this study had different views and experiences. Considering this assumption, my ontological perspective is consistent with the focus of my study, which was to explore the participants' experiences of the sport programme. I adopted a subjectivist view as I believe that experiences are created and re-created through social interaction between people and their environment (Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

4.2.2 Epistemology position

My ontological position has been clarified in the previous section, and, according to Grix (2019), the next step linked to ontology relates to what we regard as knowledge in the social world. This constitutes an epistemological view, which asserts how reality is known and how knowledge should be constructed (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). Manson (2017) affirms that the world, perceptions and experiences are inseparable. In this sense, the epistemology of interpretivism is concerned with the interpretation, voice and views expressed by the participants. Sefotho (2015) points out that interpretivism's epistemological stance asserts that human beings determine social processes through interaction and how they interpret reality in their social world. In this sense, Saunders *et al.* (2019) affirm that knowledge and reality are socially constructed. This implies that it is the role of the researcher to work closely with the participants in order to understand their subjective reality and make sense of their views. In this regard, Scotland (2012:9) highlights that 'researchers need to take a position regarding their perceptions of how things really are and how things really work'.

My subjectivist view and epistemological position provided the philosophical grounding for this study. Subjectivism asserts that phenomena are created from individual perceptions and through interactions with the world (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). This view is associated with social constructionism, which asserts that reality is socially constructed. Social constructionism is aligned with the purpose of this study, which is to understand the participants' perspectives and experiences of reality and construct meaning from their interpretations based on their social interaction in the rural and cultural context. I acknowledge that the participants' experiences differed and were constructed in relation to their perceptions and personal experiences. It is possible that some of the factors contributing to the participants' experiences of the programme might have been influenced by their social environment and other external factors, for instance, political, economic and environmental aspects. In essence, subjective epistemology was considered appropriate for this study as the youth participants were able to share their experiences of the sport development programme. Furthermore, I chose the interpretivist paradigm because it related to the research questions posed for this study. Similarly, I embraced interpretivism's epistemological and ontological position which was aligned with the focus of this study. My ontological and epistemological perspectives in this research stemmed from the interactive process of engaging with the participants in their natural environment in order to understand their social realities and experiences.

4.2.3 Methodology

My ontological and epistemological views underpinned the research methodological approach and influenced the research methods adopted in this study. The terms research methodology and research methods are often confused and, in other instances, are used interchangeably. According to Scotland (2012), the methodology involves processes and the choice of gathering and analysing data. In other words, a methodology is used by the researcher to discover the reality and construct knowledge (Sefotho, 2015:31). Grix (2019), however, explains methodology as exploring the limitations and potentialities of the techniques and research strategy taken by the researcher. In this study, the term methodology was employed to denote the approach used for data construction and analysis, while research methods were the techniques and procedures for selecting, gathering and analysing the data (Kumar, 2011; Sarantakos, 2013; Scotland, 2012).

This study aimed to explore youth experiences of a rural sports development programme. Therefore, the theoretical perspective and aim underpinning this study culminated in the

decision to use an arts-informed methodology. This decision was informed by general principles of qualitative methods, and having a desire to understand the participants' experiences and the factors contributing to these experiences from the participants' perspectives. Arts-informed methodology is situated within the qualitative research framework and is based on the premise of using art to understand human conditions and experiences through unconventional processes of inquiry (Knowles & Cole, 2008:59). Given (2008) explains that the focus of an arts-informed approach is not necessarily about the arts but is inspired by a body of artistic work and uses art forms to tell a research story.

The art in research promotes a deeper understanding of human experiences and provides an opportunity for deep conversations and insightful dialogue between the researcher and the participants (Knowles & Cole, 2008). The strength of an art-informed methodology is embedded in a holistic process, knowledge advancement through research, a high level of authenticity that speaks to the process of inquiry, and sincerity of the phenomenon in the study (Cole & Knowles, 2011). The creative inquiry process of arts-informed methodology is entrenched in the quality of engagement with the audience and responsiveness to the natural flow of experiences (Given, 2008). In this context, art was used in this study to engage, evoke and provoke the participants' thoughts to enhance my understanding of their experiences. As Cole and Knowles (2011) point out, the arts-informed approach is an explicit approach that acknowledges collaboration with the individuals in the society and is engaged in knowledge advancement.

According to Cole and Knowles (2011:121), an arts-informed approach recognises the holistic dimensions that constitute the human condition, for example, social, physical, emotional and cultural aspects and ways of engaging people (visual, oral and embodied). They continue by saying that arts-informed methodology is a way of creating new understandings of processes, subjectivities and ethical dimensions of inquiry. Arts-informed researchers, such as Connelly and Clandinin (1990), Cole and Knowles (2011), Eisner (2008), and Knowles and Cole (2008), assert that arts-informed methodology is generative rather than propositional and provides multimodal forms of expressions that reflect the multidimensional, dynamic and contextual nature of lived experiences. In the context of this study, an arts-informed approach was used to contextualise the dynamic views of the participants and provide the depth and complexity of their experiences. This resonates with my aim as a researcher to connect with the souls and hearts of the participants in a transformative way.

Ewing and Hughes (2008) argue that the nature of the arts-informed approach provides a depth of understanding of individual perspectives and communication that would be difficult to achieve through one semiotic system. Thus, they argue that artistic modes of knowing, such as arts-informed inquiry, can provide multiple perspectives and a high level of authenticity to the inquiry process. My interest in this study was in understanding the multiple perspectives related to the participant's experiences of the sports development programme and the factors that contributed to their experiences. I found that situating my study in the arts-informed approach was suitable and consistent with the purpose of this study.

In this study, the participants were required to share insight into their experiences relating to the programme. I realised that some participants might not be comfortable talking about negative experiences. This required an innovative research approach to enable the participants to open up and share their experiences, so art was used as a creative way of representing the participants' experiences and as a medium to achieve the research goals (Desyllas & Sinclair, 2014). For this reason, art (in this case, drawings and photographs) was used to provide the opportunity for the participants – the best people to provide their perspectives and interpretations of their experiences – to visually share their experiences and express their views openly. Therefore, the participants were engaged and acknowledged as collaborators in the process of knowledge advancement (Knowles & Cole, 2008).

The arts-informed perspective in this study was influenced by my ontological and epistemological position. In essence, these research dimensions (ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods) are logically compatible with each other. The research methods are discussed in sections 4.6 (data gathering) and 4.7 (research methods for data analysis) of this chapter. Figure 4.1 shows the summary of the interrelationship between ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods of this study.

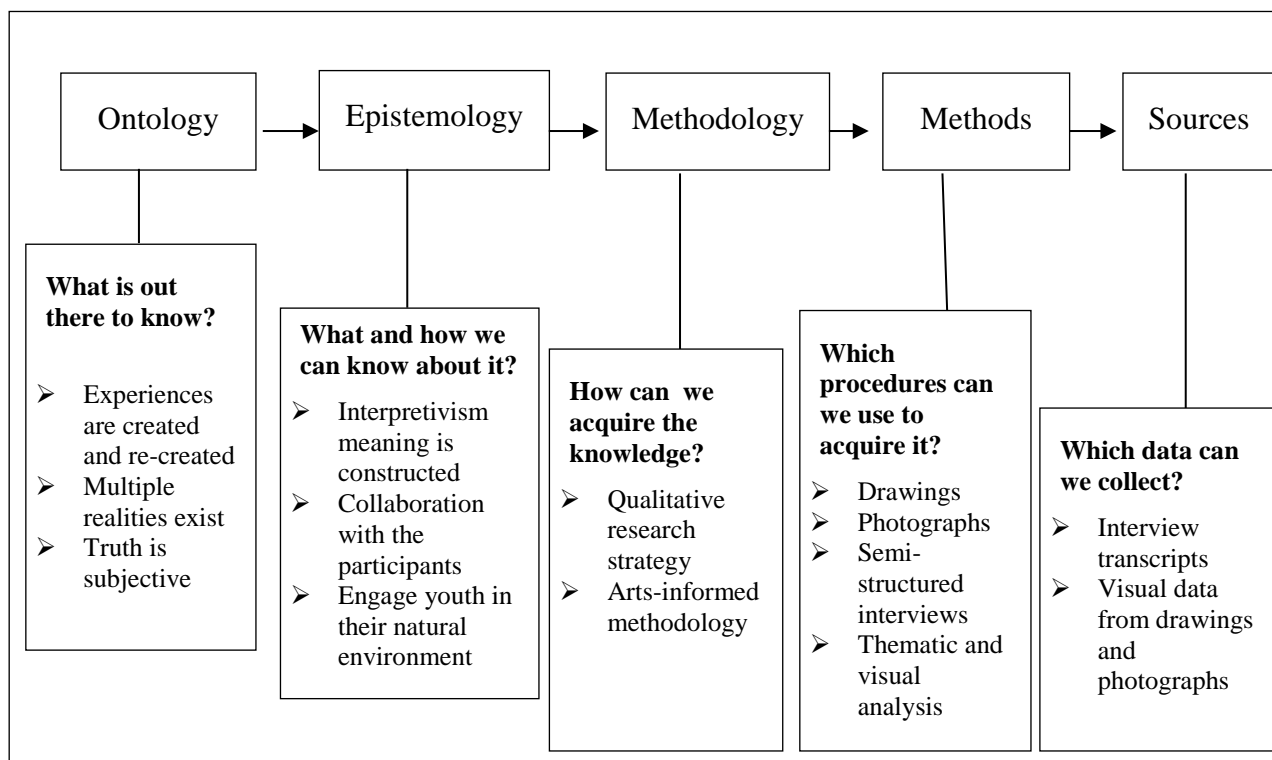


Figure 4.1: The interrelationship between the building blocks of research

(Source: Adapted from Grix, 2019:86)

In summary, this study was positioned within the parameters of an interpretivist discourse because the main aim was to understand the participants' social reality and experiences. Furthermore, the interpretivist paradigm, the choice of this paradigm, and the arts-informed methodology and methods concurred with the research questions and focus of this study.

4.3 Research design

The research design provides a framework for procedures in a study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, the research design is an important tool as it guides the methods and decisions that the researcher must make. Creswell (2013) states that the research design is a process for gathering, interpreting and logically analysing data for reporting data in research studies. Also, the researcher should ensure that relevant data is gathered and analysed appropriately and research aims are achieved (Clark, Flewitt, Hammersley & Robb, 2014).

This study followed a qualitative, descriptive research design. According to Kumar (2019), descriptive research aims to systematically describe a phenomenon and what is relevant about the issue under study. Therefore, the research design of this study was influenced by the intent to explore the views and experiences of the participants. According to Creswell (2018), qualitative research allows the researcher to explore people's subjective experiences and gain

insight into the phenomenon. Qualitative research is rooted in the philosophy of empiricism, follows a flexible approach, and emphasises the perceptions and experiences of the participants (Kumar, 2019).

This study used a flexible design which allowed the methods of inquiry to evolve contextually in response to the data gathered (Sarantakos, 2013). This flexible approach does not imply a lack of planning on the part of the researcher; rather, it reflects the adaptation and changes in the design elements (for example, analysis of data and reporting, idea generation and data gathering) and it also seeks to find ways to refine and improve the design elements in the study. These research design elements could have evolved, hence a flexible approach was required (Kampenes, Anda & Dybå, 2008). Figure 4.2 illustrates the procedure for flexible research design.

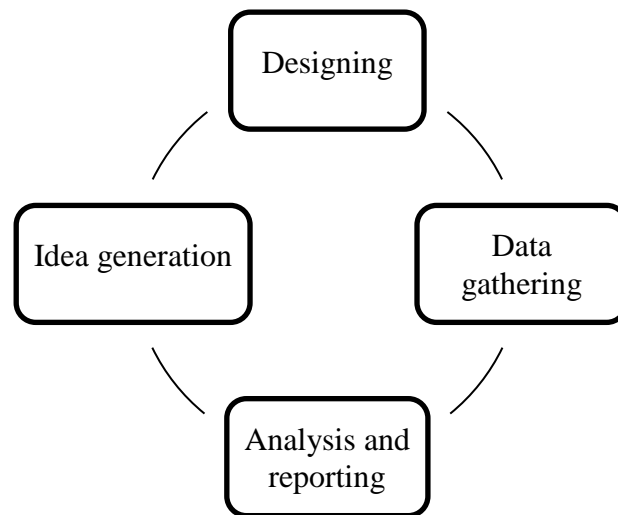


Figure 4.2: Procedure for flexible research design
(Source: Adapted from Kampenes *et al.*, 2008:3)

I considered a flexible research design to be consistent with the interpretivist paradigm of this study. The flexibility of this research design allowed me to adapt to changes throughout the study. During the data gathering process, I was required to revise the research interview questions to gain clarity from the participants, and the sample size was reduced to provide quality, comprehensive information related to the participants' views and experiences. This will be elaborated on in the following section.

4.4 Research sample

A research sample is a subgroup of a specific population chosen to gain specific experience or information about the target population (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Using Kumar's definition (2011), a target population is defined as a group of individuals identified by the researcher based on the relevant characteristics of the research. In other words, the researcher selects a sample from the population because it is not always feasible to recruit the entire population when conducting a study due to limited time and resources (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The target population of this study was South African youth who lived in rural areas and had previously participated in DreamLeagues, a Dreamfields Project sports development programme.

In general, qualitative research often does not require statistical inferences to be made from the sample. Instead, the logical relationship between the sample selection technique and the focus of the study is essential (Bell, Harley & Bryman, 2022; Saunders, 2012). In this context, the sample size is informed by the research questions and objectives of the study. O'Reilly and Parker (2013) argue that the number of participants in qualitative research depends on the available resources, depth and richness of information required. In this sense, the focus is not so much on the sample size, but rather on the suitability and adequacy of the sample. According to O'Reilly and Parker (2013), sampling adequacy relates to data saturation, which refers to the depth and breadth of information that is achieved when gathering data. Hence, the participants in this study were chosen based on suitability, accessibility and their ability to provide sufficient data to answer the research questions (Bryman, Bell & Harley, 2019).

The study applied purposive sampling strategies, which involved selecting individuals or groups that would best provide information to answer the research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Kumar, 2011). The choice of the Dreamfields Project programme for this study was deliberate. My choice was based on the programme's focus on developing and empowering youth through sport. Various stages were used to recruit and select the participants from three high schools in Ingwavuma, KZN, in South Africa. I used purposive sampling to select the three schools that were based in a rural area but were accessible. The criterion for choosing the three high schools was that the schools had been implementing the sports programme for more than four years and had participants between the ages of 14 and 20 years who were willing to participate in the study. For the purpose of this study, three sampling

strategies were carefully chosen to recruit participants, namely snowball, purposive and self-selection or volunteer sampling.

In the first stage of recruitment and selection of the participants, a snowball sampling strategy was used to identify the teachers at the selected high schools. Snowball sampling is based on the researcher contacting a group of people who can locate and identify participants relevant to the research topic (Bell *et al.*, 2022). I requested the telephone numbers of the three schools from the Dreamfields Project coordinator and contacted the teachers who coordinated sport at the schools. The teachers of the three schools agreed to assist me in identifying and recruiting the learners participating in the sports programme who would be willing to participate in my study and share their experiences. The criteria for participation included: (1) youth involved in the Dreamfields sports development programme at school; (2) boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 20 years; (3) a minimum of two years of participation in the Dreamfields Project sports development programme; and (4) youth residing in the rural community. The inclusion criteria for this study were motivated by the aims of the study and the expected data to be gathered from the participants. This study excluded youth participants residing in urban areas, and males and females participants below the age of 14. To protect the anonymity of the three schools in this study, I identified them as High Schools X, Y and Z.

I sought and obtained permission to conduct the research from the KZN DBE. The three schools were used as the research sites for data gathering. The information letter outlining the details of the study was sent to the teachers (see Appendix C). Participation in the study was voluntary. The teachers were requested to use the Dreamfields Project sports programme database to identify and recruit the participants. With the help of the teachers, purposive sampling strategies were used in two steps to recruit the participants. When using purposive sampling to choose a research sample, the researcher selects participants based on the premise that they will provide in-depth and rich information to answer the research questions (Patton, 2014; Saunders, 2012).

In the first step, the teachers identified and invited the sports programme participants to take part in the study. In the second step, the teachers employed a self-selection sampling strategy to help recruit the participants, which meant that the teachers identified the participants who voluntarily indicated that they were interested in the study. According to Saunders (2012), self-selection sampling is based on the choice of the recruited participants to volunteer and their willingness to participate in the study. This stage of identifying and recruiting the participants

through the help of the teachers was based on the convenience and accessibility of the teachers to individuals who were relevant to the research topic. In this regard, the teachers became the gatekeepers and assisted me in establishing contact with potential participants and gaining access to the schools.

In the second stage of recruitment, the teachers arranged a meeting for me with the potential participants identified in the first stage of the recruitment process. The discussion with the participants was done in the absence of the teachers. I was mindful that some participants might feel obliged to participate in the study because of the teachers' influence. In the meeting, I introduced myself to the participants to create a rapport with them. I explained the purpose and research process to the participants. I also informed them that participation in the study was voluntary and asked whether they were willing to participate in both phases of the research. The purposive sampling was combined with the self-selection sampling strategy in the second stage of selecting the participants to ensure that all the participants were given the choice to volunteer to participate in the study. This was also done to minimise the potential for bias in the selection and control the possibility of influence by the teachers in the selection of the participants. Furthermore, the choice to purposely select the participants was informed by their availability, willingness and experience in the programme.

Some of the potential participants recruited in the first stage by the teachers withdrew from the study when they were made aware of their right to refuse to participate. Therefore, 10 participants from the first high school (High School X) were willing to participate in this study. At the second high school (High School Y), 10 participants indicated that they wanted to share their experiences, and, at the third school (High School Z), 11 participants agreed to participate. Although the initial aim was to recruit 15 participants, I was able to obtain a sample size of 31 participants, which was made up of 16 boys and 15 girls. It is worth noting that some of the participants withdrew in the second phase of the data gathering process (see section 4.5). I discovered that the majority of the participants were under the age of 18 years, and, in such cases, the parents were requested to sign informed consent forms (Appendix C) and the participants, including the participants over the age of 18 years, were asked to sign the assent form (Appendix D). In addition, the teachers contacted the parents telephonically to elaborate on the research process and to respond to research-related questions from the parents and guardians. The parents and guardians were also advised to contact me if they required further details related to the study. I then scheduled the dates and times for data gathering with the

participants, which was done in consultation with the teachers. We agreed that the sessions would be scheduled in the morning and during school breaks to ensure that the learning programmes were not interrupted.

The data gathering process took place in two phases. Some of the participants were not available for the second phase (see sections 4.5.1 and 4.5.2) as the DBE had implemented a rotational attendance system with days off for specific grades to reduce the spread of COVID-19. This meant that learners had to attend alternate classes and school on different days. These changes had an impact on the availability of eight participants because they were not present at school during the second phase of the data gathering. As the participants were unreachable during the second phase of data gathering, they were excluded from the study. The total sample size in the second phase of data gathering was 23 participants (N=23), that is, 14 males and nine females. The sample of 23 participants came from High School X (N=6), High School Y (N= 9) and High School Z (N=8).

Following the first phase of data gathering, informational redundancy was evident. In other words, a significant repetition of views had occurred and no more new information would be generated from the participants (Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe & Young, 2018). According to O'Reilly and Parker (2013), in qualitative research, the researcher should be flexible when considering sampling and focus more on sample adequacy and data saturation than on sample size. This resonates with Vasileiou *et al.* (2018) who highlight that in a qualitative study the more insights and information a sample provides, the smaller the sample is required. Having considered all of this and the fact that the sample size had decreased from 31 to 23 participants, I considered further reducing the sample size to 12 participants, which is deemed sufficient based on the scale of this study. This decision stemmed from Manson (2017) and Bell *et al.* (2022) who state that the emphasis of qualitative inquiry should be based on generating quality, detail and sufficient, comprehensive information rather than acquiring a fixed number of participants. In the context of this study, the participants provided depth and rich information, and their unique perspectives expanded the understanding of the participants' experiences. However, most of the responses from the participants were the same and repetitive. Data analysis (see section 4.7) revealed similar patterns and could not generate more codes and themes related to the study. It is worth noting that all the data sets were analysed to develop a better understanding of the commonalities and differences of the participants' views. Therefore, the criteria used to determine the final sample size was based on: (1) the richness

and depth of the data provided; (2) data saturation; and (3) information from the data being duplicated and redundant.

Even though 31 participants were recruited in the first stage of the recruitment process, the depth and richness of data were important. Ultimately, the data from 12 participants was used to draw the findings, enable in-depth exploration, re-analysis of data and reflect on each transcript, drawing and photograph. Considering the focus and nature of the study, an in-depth understanding and thick description of the context of the participant’s experiences were required. Therefore, the salience of the data obtained and the sample size were adequate to ensure that the participants’ narratives provided rich, contextual descriptions of their experiences. As mentioned in this section, different purposive sampling strategies were used to recruit and select the participants. The following diagram (Figure 4.3) illustrates the sampling strategies used in this study.

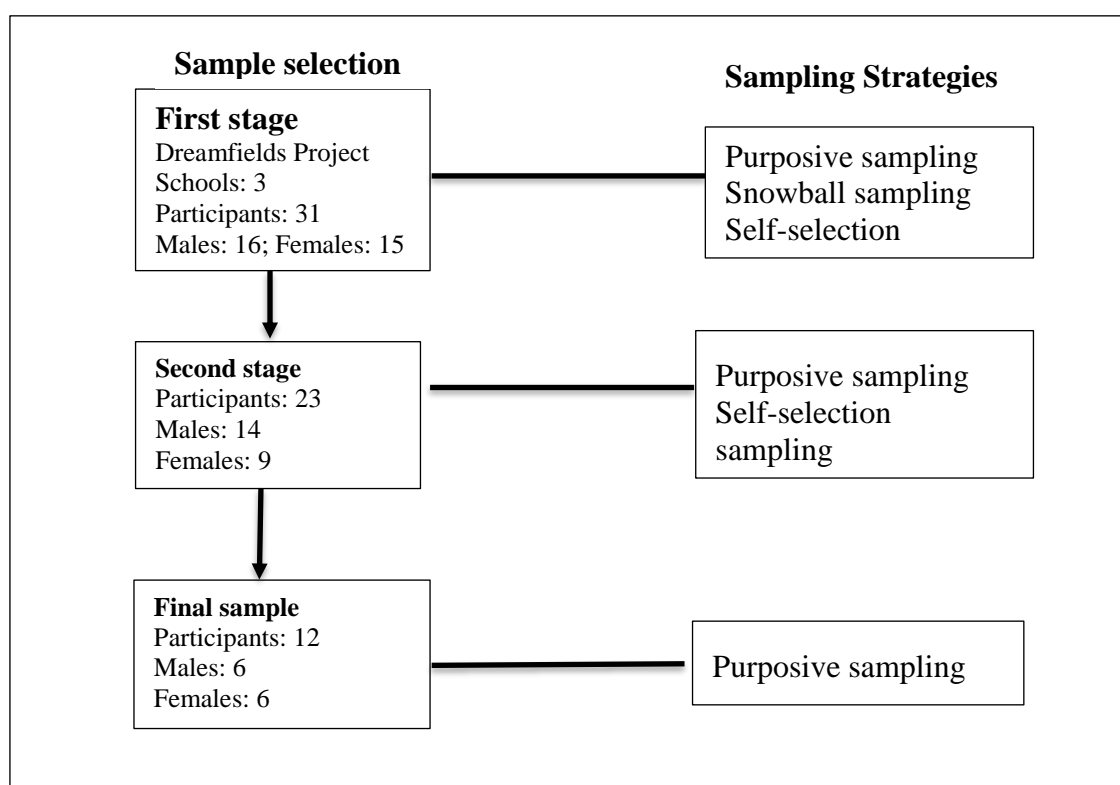


Figure 4.3: Sampling strategies

I purposefully chose the participants who provided in-depth experiences and rich data related to their perspectives. Furthermore, these participants reflected diversity in age, sex and participation in sport. Table 4.1 presents the sample breakdown of the study. The breakdown

of the phase 1 and phase 2 data gathering sample appear in Appendix K. Pseudonyms for participants were used for confidentiality purposes.

Table 4.1: Breakdown of the sample

Participants	Gender	Age	School
Kwazi	Male	15	High School X
Thelo	Female	14	High School X
Bonga	Male	16	High School Y
Sandile	Male	15	High School Y
Zee	Male	17	High School Y
Amu	Male	16	High School Y
Busi	Female	16	High School Y
Sam	Male	14	High School Z
Nikile	Female	14	High School Z
Dumi	Female	16	High School Z
Lungi	Female	15	High School X
Sino	Female	18	High School Y

4.5 Data gathering methods

Methods are strategies of inquiry or techniques used to gather and analyse data (Grix, 2019). The consideration for the suitable methods depends on how they are aligned with the research methodology and the research title. In essence, methods are linked to research questions and our understanding of the social world. According to Patton (2014), multiple methods of gathering data in qualitative research include observation, interviews, document analysis and digital audio-visual material. Other innovative and alternative qualitative inquiry methods include arts-informed methods, such as drawings and photographs (Cole & Knowles, 2011).

To obtain an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences, this study used the arts-informed methods of drawings and photovoice (photographs) combined with in-depth semi-structured interviews to construct the data. The arts-informed methods used in this study were aligned with the qualitative research approach and interpretivist paradigm. The essence of arts embedded in the arts-informed methods is that it offers a fresh perspective and diverse ways to advance knowledge and interpretation of the social world (Capous-Desyllas & Bromfield,

2018). In the context of this study, my aim was to use art as a means to engage and provide the participants with the opportunity to express their views and experiences from their own perspectives and in the socio-cultural context. Therefore, the participants in this study were acknowledged as co-producers of knowledge.

The data gathering was carried out in two phases. The first phase was from 8 March 2021 to 11 March 2021, and the second phase was from 29 March 2021 to 31 March 2021. Sections 4.6.1 and 4.6.2 explain the phases of the data gathering in detail. Figure 4.4 depicts the data gathering phases of the research.

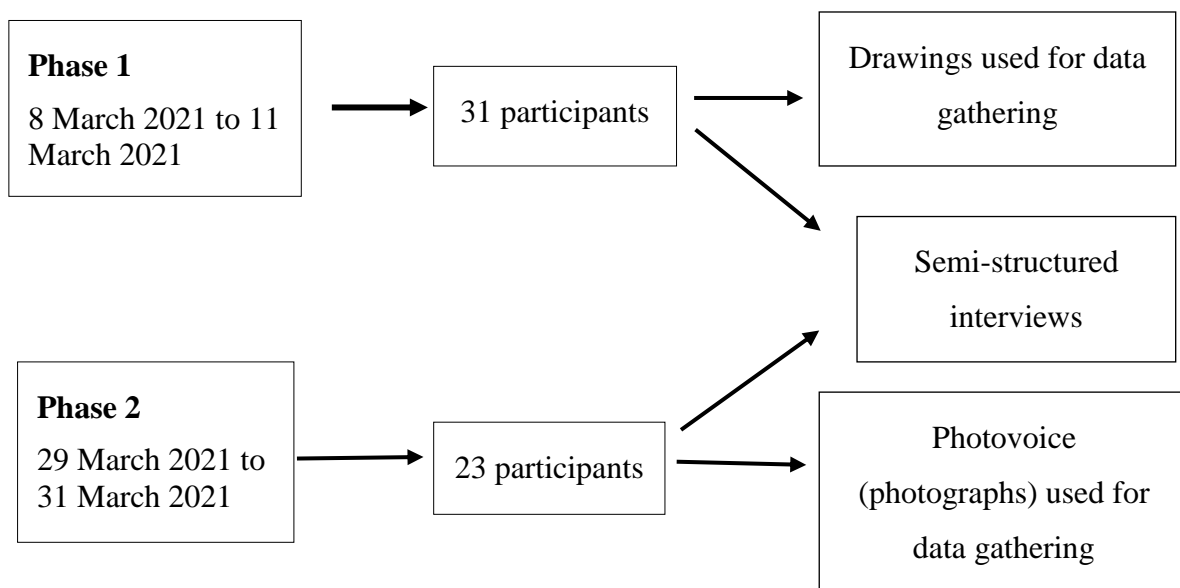


Figure 4.4: Data gathering phases of the research

4.5.1 Conversation through semi-structured interviews

In addition to the drawings and photovoice, I conducted individual semi-structured interviews with the participants to offer them an opportunity to share their explanations of their drawings and photographs about their experiences. A research interview is a purposeful conversation between the researcher and the participants in which the researcher asks concise questions, and the participants respond willingly to the questions (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). Saunders *et al.* (2019) also assert that the use of interviews stimulates conversation that can help the researcher to gather rich data that is aligned with the focus and purpose of the study. In this context, I conducted semi-structured interviews partly to encourage the participants to express

themselves freely and because the data gathering method aligned with the interpretivist position and methodological issues of intersubjectivity.

For this study, the interviews seemed appropriate since they incorporated a conversational structure that encouraged interaction between the researcher and the participants. The in-depth interviews were based on semi-structured questions in order to keep the conversation focused. However, I varied some questions based on the context of the conversation and used different prompts to allow the participants to elaborate and talk freely about their diverse experiences. King, Horrocks and Brooks (2018) assert that flexibility is an important aspect of interviewing. Hence the interviewer is required to respond to the context of the interview and address issues that emerge during the interview in order to explore the multiple perspectives of the participants.

The purpose of interviewing the youth participants was to give them a voice to express their views and experiences based on their own perspectives and understanding of reality. In addition, the semi-structured interviews afforded me the opportunity to probe and verify the participants' responses to obtain rich data related to their experiences. Before I commenced with the interviews, I had to build a rapport with the participants to make them feel comfortable about sharing their views and experiences (King *et al.*, 2018). I was mindful that my professional and personal identity could have been a problem and might have resulted in some form of bias. For instance, the participants might have provided responses that reflected positive accounts of their experiences rather than sharing their actual views. I mediated the issue by telling them a bit about myself and made it clear that my role was not to judge them or evaluate the programme, but rather to understand their views and experiences of the sports programme in their schools. I also engaged in friendly conversation with the participants to make them feel comfortable.

Furthermore, I combined the interviews with the drawings and photographs to keep the interaction fun and informal. The interview sessions in the two phases of data gathering were conducted in the classrooms at the respective schools in the morning and during lunch breaks. The integration of interviews with the drawings and photographs as part of the research process is discussed in the next sections.

4.5.2 Phase 1: Drawings

The drawings and in-depth semi-structured interviews were used in the first phase as a data construction method. Drawings can elicit youth's views, opinions and insights about their experiences (Bland, 2018). Mayaba and Wood (2015) argue that drawing as a method of constructing data provides the researcher with the opportunity to explore the lived experiences of youth and a means to understand their interpretation. Furthermore, Literat (2013) warns against data gathering methods that constrain children and youth expression of their feelings as such methods might make children feel intimidated and fail to capture their voice and insight.

The drawings in this study were used to elicit the participants' views and experiences about the sports programme. The significance of using drawings as a method to construct data lies in the potential to generate metaphorical representations of concepts that stimulate creative thought, and the potential to encourage active conceptualisation of ideas and experiences (Literat, 2013). Drawing as a data generation method provided me with the opportunity for constructive engagement with the participants and to gain insight into the lived experiences of young people (Capous-Desyllas & Bromfield, 2018). The process of using drawings is inclusive and interactive, therefore, the co-constructed data approach could discourage a sense of hierarchy between the participants and the researcher and thereby afford them the opportunity to feel comfortable and express themselves freely. I was mindful of how children and youth position themselves in relation to adults (for example, teachers and coaches), as they might be tempted to provide responses that they think are acceptable in the context of their participation in the programme and not share authentic information that affects them (for example, negative experiences and feelings). Therefore, I was careful and sensitive in my approach and engagement with the participants.

On the day of the data gathering, I explained the purpose of the study, the research questions and the process involved in data gathering. I also discussed how I was going to maintain confidentiality and anonymity during this process. The participants submitted the informed consent form (Appendix C) signed by their parents. In addition, the participants voluntarily signed the assent form (Appendix D). Thereafter, the participants answered the eligibility questions to make sure that they met the research criteria. The eligibility questions were about their age, gender and how long they had been in the programme.

I used a draw-and-write technique to facilitate the conversation with the participants. This technique integrates drawings, writing exercises and interviews (Patton, 2014). During the session, I offered each participant a blank, A4-sized piece of paper, a pen, pencil, ruler, eraser, and coloured pencil crayons and asked them to create a drawing that related to their experiences of the sports programme. Furthermore, I asked them to write a description of what the drawing represented and why they chose the drawing. I explained to the participants that the drawing had to symbolise their experiences of the sports programme and that the quality of the drawings was not important, but the focus was on explaining what the drawings conveyed. I also notified them that at the end of the drawing process that I would ask them questions related to their drawing.

The next step of this process was to facilitate a discussion with the participants using their drawings and written descriptions. The individual semi-structured interviews were then conducted, and the participants were asked to explain what the drawings represented to them and to give the context (for example, ‘Please tell me more about your drawing, how does this drawing relate to your experiences?’). The interpretation was recorded and additional notes were taken. The interview questions are included as Appendix A and Appendix B.

The first phase of the data gathering process was completed within a week, and immediately thereafter the participants were provided with disposable cameras (one camera per participant). Each camera had a label with the participant’s code and the basic steps for using the camera. The participants were asked to take five photographs of objects or people in their community that related to their experiences of the programme. The photovoice procedure, ethical considerations and the role of the participants when taking the photographs were discussed. Furthermore, the participants were trained on how to operate the camera and take photographs. They were given an opportunity to practice using the camera. The private property photograph release form (Appendix E), the drawings and photograph general release form (Appendix F), and the photography subject consent form (Appendix G) were discussed in detail and copies were issued to the research participants. Owing to the limited time I had to spend in the community and the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, the participants were limited to two days to take pictures in their community. Thereafter, they returned the completed photograph release, private property release, and photograph subject release forms and the cameras for processing.

4.5.3 Phase 2: Photovoice

Photovoice is a method whereby individuals take photographs to capture images that document the reality of their lives and experiences (Nykiforuk, Vallianatos & Nieuwendyk, 2011; Plunkett *et al.*, 2012). Plunkett *et al.* (2012) note that visual images provide space for voices and enable people to think critically about the challenges and experiences in their communities. In the context of this study, photovoice was used as a method of constructing data. Wang (2006) identified five key characteristics of using photovoice in constructing data for youth research: (1) youth involvement in the research data construction; (2) co-learning and collaboration in which the youth, policymakers and researchers learn from one another's expertise; (3) a reflective process that involves education and in-depth understanding of the world from different views and perspectives; (4) an enabling process in which the youth can express their views freely; and (5) a balance between the goals of the research and evaluation.

The above-mentioned characteristics resonated with my choice of using photovoice to provide the opportunity for creative engagement with the participants and enable them to freely express their views and share their experiences. The photovoice method combined with the semi-structured interviews was also used in this study as a method of data construction to highlight the visual voices and experiences of the participants in a creative and engaging way.

The second phase was conducted within two weeks following the first phase of the initial data construction. First, the researcher discussed the first phase of the interview transcriptions with the participants for member reflection. Thereafter, the printed photographs were given to the participants. The second phase of data gathering included the same participants interviewed in the first phase, and this process was used to complement and enhance the data gathered in the first phase.

The photovoice method was used for data gathering in the second phase of the study. The process included semi-structured interviews related to the photographs taken by participants. During this second round of semi-structured interviews, the participants were asked to select the two most meaningful or most descriptive from the five photographs and share their views and experiences. The participants were asked a series of questions (Appendix B) about the pictures during this semi-structured interview (for example, 'Describe your picture, how does this picture relate to your experiences of the sports programme?'; 'Can you tell me about this photograph?'; 'What does this photograph mean to you?'). The photographs were used during

the interviews to encourage verbal discussion and elicit more information from the participants. Glaw, Inder, Kable and Hazelton (2017) describe the process of using visual images such as photographs in an interview as photo-elicitation. Glaw *et al.* (2017) affirm that visual images give the participants the freedom to choose and could make them feel comfortable because they know the content of what they want to talk about.

All the participants were asked the same questions during the interviews, however, probing questions were different and mainly relied on individual responses. The probes were done to verify the responses and encourage the participants to share more details about their experiences. In addition to recording the interviews, notes were taken to ensure that the data gathered was credible and transparent. I am proficient in isiZulu, therefore, where needed, the Zulu language was used during the interviews to clarify the interview questions set in English. The decision to conduct semi-structured interviews was aimed at creating a comfortable environment for engagement and for the participants to share their experiences freely. Each of the two semi-structured interview lasted approximately 30 to 40 minutes, and all the interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

4.6 Research methods for data analysis

Flick (2014) describes data analysis as the classification and interpretation of a written text or visual material to draw a conclusion about the implicit and explicit meaning of the material. Therefore, the general purpose of data analysis is to apply a systematic process to make sense of and develop structure and meaning in the data gathered (Creswell, 2009). According to Flick (2014), data analysis is done for several reasons, such as describing a phenomenon in detail, comparing several cases of individuals or groups, and developing a theory of the phenomenon under study. In this study, multimodal data analysis strategies were adopted and integrated to analyse the data which had been gathered. The decision to employ multimodal data analysis was based on the intent to gain a deeper understanding of the multiple and diverse data presented in this study (Norris, 2014). Therefore, semiotic visual data analysis, photovoice data analysis and thematic data analysis were integrated to gain insight into the participants' experiences. The phenomenon under study was youth experiences of a rural South African sports development programme.

The data in this study were gathered in collaboration with the participants through drawings and photographs combined with semi-structured interviews. The process of data analysis was

done methodically and systematically with rigour. Innovation is required when analysing data due to the complexity of the data analysis process, for example, a detailed description and explanation of the data. The data analysis methods I employed in this study were informed by the multimodal methods used to gather data. The constructed raw data consisted of drawings, photographs and interview transcripts, which required logical reasoning to organise and find meaning in the data. A detailed description of the data analysis process and methods used in this study are provided in sections 4.6.1, 4.6.2 and 4.6.3. The data analysis procedures used in this study were aligned with the qualitative data analysis interactive framework developed by Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2018). The model is depicted in Figure 4.5, and the discussion of the model follows.

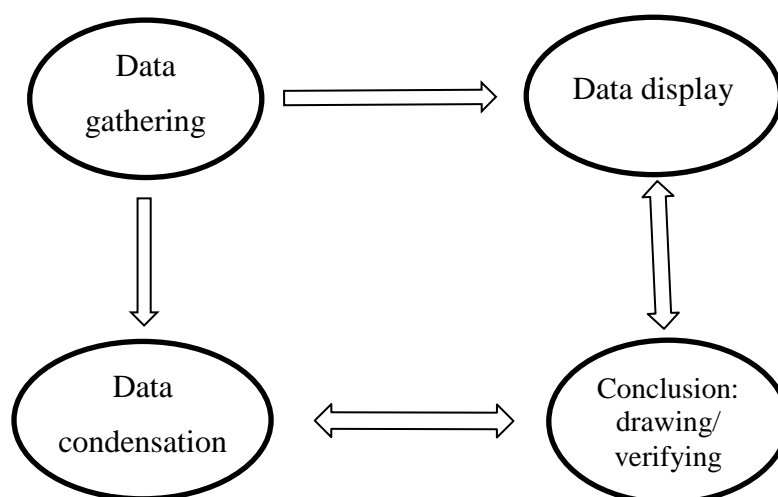


Figure 4.5: Components of qualitative data analysis model

(Source: Adapted from Miles *et al.*, 2018:10)

The qualitative data analysis model is grounded on three interrelated components of data analysis, namely data condensation, data display and conclusion drawing or verification. Data condensation relates to the selection and abstracting of the data interview transcripts, field notes and other empirical materials (for example, drawings and photographs). Miles *et al.* (2018) argue that data condensation is an anticipatory approach because it starts before the data is gathered and occurs as soon as the researcher formulates a research question and decides on the conceptual framework and data gathering methods to be used in the study. The process continues after the data gathering is over until the final research report is completed. This transformation process of the data involves coding, generating categories, developing themes and writing summaries (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Flick, 2014). It is aimed at refining, sorting, sharpening and organising the data to verify and draw conclusions from it.

The second component of the analysis activity is data display. Miles *et al.* (2018) argue that trustworthy and credible analysis is driven by a structured and systematic display of focused data that can answer the research question. The data display refers to the presentation of information in a systematic and visual format so that the researcher can draw a credible conclusion. The data is arranged graphically in a set of networks (lines and arrows) and matrices (rows and columns) that are created to display the data. The construction of networks, matrices and graphics depends on the research question, data gathered and the developing concepts in the data.

The third component linked to the analysis activity involves drawing and verifying conclusions. This component of the qualitative data analysis model reflects the interpretation and makes sense of the data by noting patterns, propositions and explanations (Miles *et al.*, 2018). The importance of drawing and verifying conclusions relates to whether the meanings in the data are trustworthy and correct. The interpretation and meanings in the data analysis should reflect credibility and trustworthiness and minimise researcher bias by ensuring quality conclusions and the verification of data. I used a combination of data analysis techniques to minimise my biases as a researcher and to ensure that my study was credible. The methods I used to ensure credibility was to engage and reflect on the data with my supervisors and obtain feedback from other participants, a process known as member reflection. These techniques of addressing multiple sources of analytical bias and ensuring data quality are discussed in sections 4.8.1 and 4.8.2.

I employed the following research methods to analyse the data. The process was aided by the qualitative data analysis computer software ATLAS.ti (v.8.4.15):

Table 4.2: Research methods followed in the data analysis process

	Data construction methods	Research methods for data analysis
Phase 1:	Semi-structured interviews Drawings	Thematic analysis Semiotic visual analysis
Phase 2:	Semi-structured interviews Photovoice (photographs)	Thematic analysis Photovoice analysis method

In this study, the data were analysed through an inductive logical process, implying that the analysis relied on the data presented. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the inductive approach is important in establishing comprehensive themes. The research methods for data analysis used in this study are discussed in the following sections.

4.6.1 Semiotic visual analysis of drawings

I employed a semiotic analysis technique to analyse the drawings. Semiotic visual analysis is entrenched in the identification and interpretation of symbolic meanings in visual images such as drawings (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). The method is concerned with signs in the image and how it is conveyed in the texts. A sign is a form of expression used to convey information such as drawings and pictures. Johnson and Christensen (2017) affirm that semiotic analysis in qualitative research is concerned with conceptual meaning derived from the images and how the meaning is produced. According to Rose (2016), a sign consists of two parts: the signified, which is an object or concept, and the signifier, which refers to a sound or image that is linked to a concept (the signified). In other words, signs are attached to ideas, artefacts, text and written words.

Rose (2016) distinguishes between the signifier and signified by emphasising that signs are complex and cannot be interpreted and understood in isolation. In this regard, I considered two dimensions of signs, namely denotation and connotation. First, denotation refers to the direct meaning of the expression and connects the expression with the content of the sign (Sonesson, 1998). Pratiwi, Indrayani and Soemantri (2020) emphasise denotative meaning as a literal meaning that agrees with what is stipulated in the dictionary. This explanation means that denotation is the precise or actual meaning of the object or expression. For example, it is easy to denote a house because when you look at a photograph of the house. You are able to see that it is a house, not a school. Secondly, connotation is considered an abstraction of the concepts associated with an expression (Rose, 2019). For instance, a sports field is associated with physical activity and sport. These connotations are subjective and the purely personal meanings are influenced by socio-cultural background and ideological perspectives (Johnson & Christensen, 2017).

Images, such as drawings, have multiple and layered meanings. In the first layer, referred to as denotation (objective reality), the researcher is interested to know what the image is depicting.

In essence, this layer assumes that we can recognise what we already know and that the historical and cultural perspectives might influence this (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). The second layer, connotation (subjective perception), builds on what the researcher and the participants collectively know, and they work together to construct how meaning and ideas are represented in the drawings or photographs. Hence, this study sought to analyse each participant's drawing to explore the multiplicity of meanings expressed by each participant. Furthermore, the analysis was concerned with understanding the participants' social reality from their point of view.

From this perspective, my analysis of the drawings involved the following steps: (1) analysis of each participant's drawing and transcript to develop codes (see section 4.6.1); (2) comparing the transcripts of all the participants; and (3) performing interpretive analysis based on the participants' descriptions and the themes that emerged from the drawings. Hence, the analysis included reviewing the drawing produced by each participant, identifying themes based on the interview and drawing of each participant, and comparing and integrating all the themes that emerged from the participants' data. Furthermore, at the denotative level of analysis, I considered the literal meanings in the drawings, whereas through connotation, I was interested in the associative meanings and what was expressed through the drawings. In this regard, the viewpoint and perspectives of the participants were essential to interpreting the drawings. Alongside my interpretation and perspective as a researcher, the participants' views and perspectives provided insight and a deeper understanding of their experiences. I created multiple tables to organise the data and represent the themes that emerged from the drawings and interview transcripts. Table 4.3 provides an example of the analysis summary of the participant (Kwazi's analysis).

Table 4.3: Example of a participant’s analysis summary

What is the drawing depicting (denotation)	What does the participant say about the drawing (connotation)	What are my interpretations (based on the drawings, transcripts and field notes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● House ● Soccer field ● Man ● Chicken ● Sun 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The house shows that it was close to home. When we needed water, we could quickly go to the tap and get water ● A small soccer field next to my home. It is because it reminds me of the days when I was learning to play soccer ● The adult in the photograph represents the uncle ● The participant did not explain the meaning of the chicken ● The sun shows that we are about to go play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● House is seen as a safe space that resonates with personal identity and personal experiences ● Soccer field is associated with participation in soccer ● Another aspect not evident in the drawing is interaction with his peers and teachers. However, he mentioned that he used to play with his friends ● Two chickens can be seen in the backyard, and most rural families keep a small flock of chickens in their backyard ● The sun symbolises a natural scenery and outdoor environment

Finally, this study recognises the plurality and multiple perspectives of knowing. In essence, there can be different ways of interpreting and representing the same aspect of reality (Rose, 2016). This is influenced by social, cultural and historical backgrounds and individual interests. Hence, it was essential to consider the participant’s descriptions and interpretations of their drawings through a collaborative meaning-making process, that is, through dialogue and interviews. This is supported by Mitchell, Theron, Stuart, Smith and Campbell (2011:20) who state that individuals produce drawings in a particular space and time, therefore, collaboration to make meaning of the drawings is essential. The collective analytic process of the drawings in this study included drawing content (denotation), participants’ interpretation of their

drawings (connotation), and my own interpretation based on the participants' perspectives. Table 4.4 shows a summary of the themes and codes generated through the drawings.

Table 4.4: Themes and codes generated from the drawings

Themes	Codes	Descriptions
Animal	Chicken	Only one drawing showed an animal (chicken).
Building	Houses (doors, roof, windows), homes, schools	Six of the drawings showed a variety of buildings. Schools were featured in two of the six drawings, and four of the drawings portrayed houses (home).
Colours	Yellow, green, orange, blue, purple	Most of the drawings were multicoloured, and the participants mainly used bright colours such as yellow and orange. Female participants mainly used bright colours.
Family	Parents, uncle	Three drawings were categorised as family. The family members in the drawings included parents and uncles.
Friends	Peers, teammates	Three of the drawings signified group friends or peers on the sports field.
Nature	Trees, sun, fruits, clouds	Six drawings depicted natural scenery like trees, sun and clouds.
People	Boys, girls, men, women	Ten of the drawings included people. Three of these drawings featured the boys and two signified girls holding the ball. The other two drawings depicted a man and woman.
Sports environment	Sports field, playing and exercising space, equipment for sport (goalpost, balls)	Five drawings generated a playground theme. Six of these drawings illustrated a sports field (three netball fields and three soccer fields). One drawing showed boys running in the street. Five of the drawings depicted sports equipment (for example, balls and goalposts).

The semiotic analysis method used in this study fits coherently within the interpretivist paradigm.

4.6.2 Data analysis strategy for photovoice

This study used the adapted photovoice analysis technique suggested by Ciolan and Manasia (2017) which is based on three levels of analysis, namely: (1) participatory analysis, in which the participants' interpretation drives photography analysis; (2) researcher interpretation, in which the photograph analysis is driven by the interpretation of the researcher; and (3) cross-comparison of photographs and theorisation. The first level of analysis was to examine and view the photographs from the participants' perspectives (Oliffe, Bottorff, Kelly & Halpin, 2008). This process integrated a review of the photograph interview transcripts, participants' narratives, and the interpretations related to their photographs. The following interview questions were asked to avoid misinterpretation of the photographs: 'Can you tell me about your picture?', 'Please describe your photograph', 'How does this picture relate to your experiences?', 'Please share with me why you took this picture.' These questions allowed the participants to share their interpretations and explain how they positioned themselves relative to the meanings of their photographs. In addition, we explored the congruity between the data that emerged from the photographs and the interview transcripts.

This was followed by the second level of analysis which involved viewing each participant's photographs and the interview transcript from the researcher's perspective. This stage of analysis was informed by the analysis completed in the first stage (participatory analysis). I reviewed each participant's photographs and focused on the details of the illustrations and the incongruous relationships and contradictions between the participant's photographs and narratives. Rose (2016) suggests that textual data and visual data should be analysed separately and then the relationship between the two data sets should be explored. In this context, I first explored the interview transcripts (see section 4.8.4) and later the relationship between the photographs and the participants' narratives. In addition, I explored how the participants' experiences and causes were represented. The analysis process in this stage enabled me to identify inconsistencies between what was said and what was not said in their photographs. For example, a photograph taken by one of the participants, Kwazi, depicted grass. During the interview, Kwazi explained that grass and space were linked to his experiences of participating in sport. He explained: 'If the playing field surface is not level and not in good condition, you can get injured.' Linking the photograph and the narrative provided context to his account and enabled me to interpret his experiences.

The analysis of some of the participants' photographs and descriptions presented contradictory explanations and representations. The ambivalence of the participants' narratives highlighted the multiplicity of authentic views and experiences. Oliffe *et al.* (2008) assert that multiplicity and subjectivity are embedded in the photovoice analysis process. Thus, the researcher and the participants may interpret the same photographs in divergent ways, depending on the position they adopt and their life experiences. Therefore, in this study, the inquiry was not focused on revealing a single truth or consistency in the participants' perspectives. However, the context and understanding of the multiple realities and accounts of the participants' photographs were central to the analysis process. My role as the researcher was not intended to contest the participants' views and experiences but rather to expand and extend on what had been said about the photographs.

The third level of analysis refers to the cross-comparison of photographs and theorisation. This analysis process included comparing all the participants' photographs, significant statements and explanations related to their experiences and contributing factors. The photographs were compared and arranged into categories based on the participants' interpretations and my interpretation. For example, photographs depicting a house were grouped together, and those representing people were grouped into one category. The photographs were moved around several times between different categories (for example, photographs of people, schools, animals, plants and houses). Some of the photographs overlapped into other categories.

The statements and meanings that emerged from the participants' narratives were incorporated into this process and placed in distinct categories (for example, personal experiences, physical development experiences, and relationships with peers, family and teachers). The themes that emerged from the photovoice analysis were linked to the themes from the interview transcripts in order to theorise the findings. To make sense of the participants' perspectives and themes that were generated from the data, I asked critical theoretical questions such as, 'What was consistently depicted in relation to the participants' experiences?' and 'How do these photographs relate to and explain the causes of the participants' experiences?' The data analysis process yielded seven themes that represented the signification of the photographs. Table 4.5 shows the themes that emerged from the data analysis of photographs and the number of photographs in each theme.

Table 4.5: Themes generated through data analysis of photographs

Themes	Codes	Number of photographs ⁵	Descriptions
Animals	Cows	1	The only animal featured in one of the photographs was a cow.
Building	Houses, homes, schools, shops	5	Five photographs showed a variety of buildings, including houses, schools and tuckshops.
Family	Brothers, siblings	1	One photograph was categorised as family. This photograph captured the image of the siblings in the bedroom.
Friends	Peers, teammates	3	Three photographs were categorised as friends. Three of these photographs captured peers on the soccer field, and one captured a boy standing next to the water buckets.
Nature	Grass, trees, mountain	6	Six photographs taken by participants captured natural scenery, such as trees, grass, and mountains.
People	Boys, teachers	7	Seven photographs were categorised as people. Three of these photographs featured the boys on the soccer field, and one photograph captured the image of a teacher.
Playground	Sports field, street, backyard	4	The participants submitted four photographs that generated a playground theme. Two of these photographs captured a soccer field.

The themes outlined in Table 4.5 were integrated into the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews to generate the broad themes that explained the participants' experiences. The next section provides a discussion of the semi-structured interview analysis process.

4.6.3 Semi-structured interviews data analysis methods

The two data analysis methods discussed in sections 4.6.1 (semiotics analysis) and 4.6.2 (photovoice analysis) were based on the analysis of the participants' drawings and photographs data sets. Considering the multiple data gathering methods used in this study, I chose to use a

⁵ The total number of participants' photographs analysed in this study was 12, however, the total number of photographs in Table 4.5 was more than 12 as some photographs were coded in multiple themes.

blended approach that relied on visual data and verbal data analysis methods. In this context, the thematic analysis was considered a suitable data analysis strategy to analyse the participants' interview transcripts. It is worth noting that the interviews were used in this study to seek clarification and understanding of the participants' unique perspectives related to their visual data (drawings and photographs). Therefore, thematic analysis of the verbal data was applied to support and complement the visual analysis (drawings and photographs).

Thematic analysis is described as a method for identifying, organising and interpreting patterns of meaning in the data (Clarke & Braun, 2014:1947). It is a widely used method of qualitative data analysis. The method is aimed at providing the researcher with a wider perspective of the collective meanings and experiences drawn from the data regardless of the researcher's theoretical perspective. It is considered theoretically flexible and not confined to a particular theoretical position. Therefore, thematic analysis can be applied across a range of research paradigms and theoretical frameworks (Clarke & Braun, 2014:147; Terry, Hayfield, Clarke & Braun, 2017:25)

The flexibility and accessibility of thematic analysis is embedded in the researcher's approach to analysing the data (for example, inductive or deductive analysis). As such, thematic analysis can be applied to numerous forms of qualitative data. However, Terry *et al.* (2017) argue that the choice to use thematic analysis depends on the research approach and the epistemology and ontology of the researcher. The data in this study relied on the data construction processes. Therefore, the inductive approach was used to understand the participants' experiences. In this study, codes and themes were generated from the participants' perspectives and social realities of their experiences. The data gathering process and research questions suited the inductive thematic analysis approach because the codes and themes emerged mainly from the data constructed from the drawings, interviews and photographs.

To identify the codes, themes, sub-themes and relationship between the themes and sub-themes, I combined a qualitative data analysis model developed by Miles *et al.* (2018) and a four-step data analysis approach recommended by Clarke and Braun (2014). The two data analysis approaches were combined to ensure an extensive and explicit data analysis of the text, and verbal and visual data (for example, networks, graphs, and matrices). The four-step process used in data analysis is outlined below.

Step 1: Familiarising myself with the data

Qualitative data analysis involves a comprehensive analysis of visual, verbal and written data (Clarke & Braun, 2014). This process involves reading and rereading textual data, such as transcripts of the interviews and field notes. In the case of this study, I started by listening to the audio recordings of the 24 participant interviews recorded in the first and second phases of the data gathering. I then read the interview transcripts and field notes. I rechecked the interview transcriptions by cross-referencing them with the audio recordings to ensure the accuracy of the information, that the verbal accounts of the interviews had been retained, and that the transcripts reflected the original accounts and information provided by the participants during the interviews. This process enabled me to familiarise myself with the data. The transcripts of the phase 1 interviews were returned to the participants for member reflection, which was done three weeks after the data gathering of phase 1. This was done to promote credibility and allow the participants to reflect on the accuracy of their responses and ask questions. All the participants were comfortable with the transcripts and information they provided during phase 1 of the interviews. However, the phase 2 transcripts could not be provided to the participants due to the limited time and resources. Unfortunately, I could not travel back to the research area of KZN.

Step 2: Organising data

This step involved generating a format for organising the data. First, I started with data preparation by generating codes. Miles *et al.* (2018) describe codes as generated constructs or words with symbolic meaning used to generate patterns, categorise themes and interpret meaning from the information compiled during data construction. Therefore codes are used to cluster similar data sets relating to a particular theme or construct. Flick (2014) notes that coding helps the researcher to gain distance from their own views and perspective and to force the data into their preconceptions. Furthermore, Saldaña (2013:8) describes coding as a 'heuristic tool' thus implying that coding is a problem-solving tool that is used to explore the data further. I used the codes in this study as a heuristic tool for the participants' experiences. The codes assisted me in organising, linking and providing an interpretation of the data.

I started the first cycle of coding with open coding. This is described as a process of dividing data and creating categories (Flick, 2014). This involved reading word by word, engaging line-by-line with the transcripts and highlighting and writing notes. This process was followed to

identify patterns and connections between the categories that emerged from the data. I integrated vivo and descriptive coding methods into the first coding cycle to assist with re-coding the data and identifying similar patterns from the data. Descriptive coding refers to assigning labels to data to summarise the words or phrases (Flick, 2014). On the other hand, vivo coding relates to using the direct words or phrases from the participant's statements in the data (Miles *et al.*, 2018). Vivo and descriptive coding were deemed appropriate due to the nature of the study.

This study is grounded in the interpretivist paradigm. Thus, the coding decision was based on the research paradigm. It was also to understand the participants' experiences and ground the analysis from the participants' perspectives. The second coding cycle involved revising codes, and some codes had to be changed, modified and relabelled to ensure that the constructed codes were focused and the most significant codes were used.

This process consisted of reading, rereading and organising the data inductively into units of information (Saldaña, 2013). I treated the experiences of the participants separately without imposing the experiences of the first participants on other participants' experiences. The data were coded inductively and focused on the codes relevant to the main research questions. Throughout the process, I respected the new codes and statements that emerged from the other participants. Hence, I created different files on ATLAS.ti 8 for each participant in order to conduct a comprehensive analysis of data. This process provided me with insight into the experiences of the participants.

Step 3: Generating themes and data display

This step involved creating and categorising themes. A theme is classified by Saldaña (2013) as the second level of coding, categorisation and analytic reflection. Themes are considered to be an advanced level of coding. Furthermore, Flick (2014) states that a theme is an extended phrase that describes a unit of data and gives meaning to the data pattern. A list of the codes generated was established to categorise the themes using matrices and a network display to organise the data. Thereafter, the common codes were grouped to form categories. A set of themes were generated from the generated categories and a refinement of the themes was also conducted to ensure coherence among the themes. Names and numbers were assigned to the various themes. This step involved a detailed analysis thus the quotes and information from the transcripts were recorded and clarified.

The analytic display methods used in this study included creating networks. I constructed networks of displayed qualitative data based on the codes and themes to illustrate the links and interrelationships between the different constructs. This was driven by the categories and constructs that emerged after reading and reflecting on the data constructed in the study. The multiple matrices and network formats for displaying the data were generated to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the study. The matrix format in which data is arranged in columns and rows is focused, and provides easy viewing of the data and detailed analysis. On the other hand, I used multiple networks to visually illustrate the link between the codes, categories and themes (Miles *et al.*, 2018).

Step 4: Conclusion drawing/verification

The final step of the data analysis related to verification, generating meaning from data, confirming the findings and, lastly, assessing the quality of the conclusions (Miles *et al.*, 2018). This final stage implies interpretation and making sense of the data by noting patterns, propositions and explanations. The themes that emerged from the interviews were integrated into the themes generated by the data analysis of the drawings and photographs. The integration and relationships between the data analysis strategies are discussed in the next section.

4.7 Data analysis process and integration

The multimodal data analysis methods (semiotic visual data analysis, photovoice data analysis and thematic data analysis) are complementary and coherent with my interpretivist position, which was built on the principle of the existence of multiple truths. The core of the interpretivist philosophical assumption is that no one objective method leads to the production of knowledge and reality is socially constructed (Sefotho, 2015). Hence, the multiple data analysis approaches, which included a collaborative analysis process with the participants, were employed to answer the research questions of this study. Figure 4.6 illustrates the relational process and integration of four levels of analysis. These levels are: Level 1: semiotic visual analysis for drawings combined with semi-structured interviews, Level 2: data analysis strategies for photovoice combined with semi-structured interviews, Level 3: condensation of visual data and text data (combining the themes), and Level 4: a theoretical analysis.

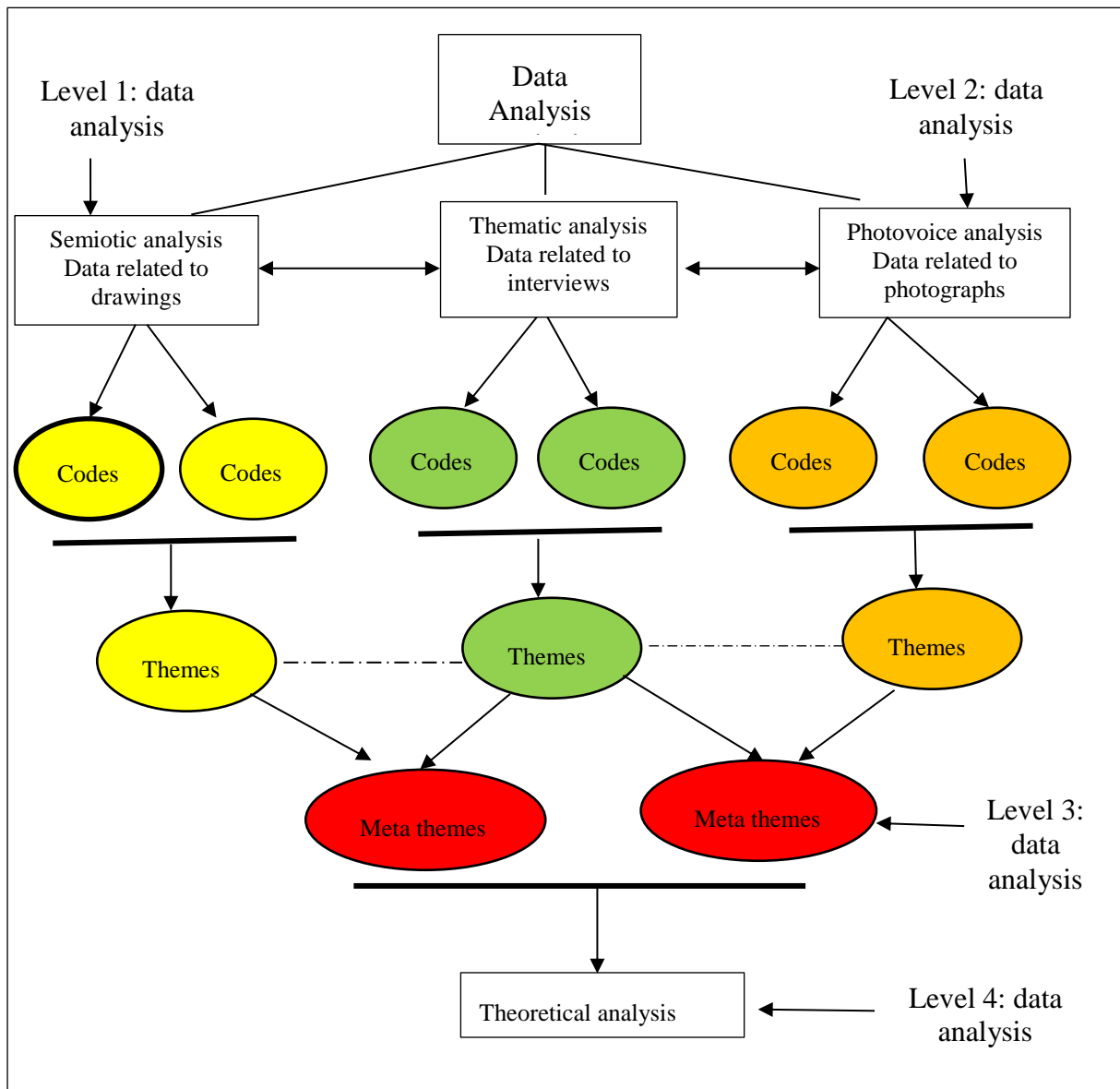


Figure 4.6: Data analysis integration process

It is worth noting that the data analysis methods were complementary and provided a holistic perspective and deeper understanding of the participants' experiences. In addition, these methods were aligned with my theoretical framework and literature review, which were based on youth experiences. The data analysis process and methods are discussed in sections 4.6.1, 4.6.2 and 4.6.3 of this chapter. Therefore, this section explores the integration and relational connection between the themes that emerged at all the levels of data analysis in this study. Level 1 and level 2 of the data analysis process focused on generating codes and creating categories. In this regard, I followed the qualitative data analysis interactive framework (see section 4.6) developed by Miles *et al.* (2018).

In the first phase of the analysis, I started analysing the drawing combined with the interview transcription of the first participant, followed by the analysis of the same participant's photograph and interview transcription. The aim of the analysis at this stage was to generate codes, categories, themes and a format for organising the data (Saldaña, 2013). I started identifying preliminary codes by coding the drawing, photograph data sets and interview transcriptions. I followed a systematic data analysis process which was a continuous process of comparing data to data, codes to data, and establishing patterns between the categories (Saldaña, 2013). The intent was to establish the relationships between the codes and identify concepts that shared similar characteristics. Afterwards, I clustered the codes that shared common characteristics into categories and themes.

In the second phase of the analysis process, I followed the same preliminary coding process used in the first phase to establish codes for the other 11 participants. Saldaña (2013:22) suggests that when the study involves multiple participants, it is advisable to code one participant's data first and progress to the other participants. The first participant's codes guided my coding process for the other data sets. However, I embraced and recognised the similarities and contrasts that emerged from the new codes and categories of the second data set. I reviewed the codes and patterns from the first data analysis process in the first phase. Furthermore, the emerging new categories were constantly compared with the previous data set categories to establish the relationships between the categories. Subsequent to the identified categories of the codes, I generated themes which were refined to ensure coherence between them.

The third phase of the analysis process (level 3 data analysis) consisted of integrating and unifying the themes that emerged from the second phase of the data analysis process. The focus was on establishing a relational combination between the themes. In this regard, I categorised the themes of the level 1 data analysis (semiotic visual analysis) and level 2 data analysis (photovoice analysis strategies) to create the main themes (meta-themes). In the process of integrating and establishing the link between the themes, I looked for similarities and differences between them. Furthermore, I considered semiotic relations, which implied visual similarities and differences between the themes (Robinson, 2011). I moved forwards and backwards between the themes to identify new themes and establish meta-themes in order to progress to the theoretical analysis. In this regard, I condensed the themes identified into meta-themes to link these themes to the research questions of this study. The five meta-themes that

emerged from the data analysis were: (1) personal life experiences, (2) relationships with others, (3) contextual environment, (4) context of the Dreamfields Project sports development programme, and (5) nutritional needs. Table 4.6 lists the meta-themes and themes constructed from all the data sets (drawings, photographs, interviews).

Table 4.6: Emerging themes and meta-themes

Meta-themes	Themes
Contextual environment	Contribution of the community Effects of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions
Nutritional needs	Food and water
Personal life experiences	Individual context Sports environment Social environment
Relationships with others	Relationships with parents and family Relationships with peers and friends Relationships with teachers and coaches
Context of the Dreamfields Project sports development programme	Personal development experiences Social development experiences Physical development Physical injuries Sports facilities and equipment

Finally, the fourth phase, the theoretical analysis, was related to the two research questions of this study. The aim was to make sense of how the findings were linked to the literature and theoretical framework of this study. In essence, I aimed to develop an understanding of how the participants made meaning of their experiences and the causes of their experiences. The YDETS theoretical framework underpinning this study was used to provide the lens through which I interpreted my data. I then interpreted the findings with regard to how the meta-themes addressed the two research questions in the study. I also explored the contradictions and ambiguities in the participants' experiences. For example, some of the participants expressed apprehension about participating in the sports programme and getting physical injuries, but

they did not consider this a barrier to sports participation. I also tried to look for silences in the meta-themes to understand why certain information was not revealed.

It is important to acknowledge that the integration of different methods of data analysis provided insight into the participants' experiences. In essence, the use of data from different methods fitted with the pluralistic approach and combinatory aspect of the qualitative method, which sought to provide meaningful integration of findings (Robinson, 2011). In this context, the integration of the three methods of analysis brought diversity and clarity to the interpretation of the views and experiences of the participants in this study. For example, the drawings helped the participants to talk freely about their personal life experiences outside the sports programme and provided rich data related to the interaction between the youth and the social environment (teachers, parents, peers and friends). On the other hand, the photographs provided details about the participant's personal development and sports experiences at school. The participants revealed positive and negative experiences related to the sports development programme. Therefore, these complementary data analysis methods were successful in revealing the participants' experiences.

Flick (2014) argues that the quality of the data and the meanings emerging from it have to be tested for credibility and trustworthiness. Therefore, rigour and diligence were ensured by crystallising data from the drawings, photographs and semi-structured interviews. With this consideration, I discuss the trustworthiness of this study in the next section.

4.8 Quality criteria of the study

Researchers have a responsibility to ensure that necessary processes are followed to check for the accuracy, authenticity and credibility of their findings (Gratton & Jones 2010). In a qualitative research approach, validity and reliability are conceptualised as trustworthiness. Therefore, in qualitative research, validity is based on the accuracy of the findings from the participants' and researchers' perspectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Thus, the main aim of trustworthiness is to reflect on the quality and credibility of the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In this context, I remained reflexive throughout the research process by using collaborative methods of data gathering. Therefore, data were generated and interpreted through multiple methods and in collaboration with the participants.

Notes were taken during the research process for reflection on my personal experiences during the data gathering process. The art-informed method used in this study followed a natural

process of engagement. According to Knowles and Cole (2008), the art-informed method has a strong reflexive aspect where the focus is not on the researcher but on the participants. This method of data gathering, combined with interviews, enhances the authenticity, credibility and trustworthiness of the research process.

Interviewing the participants in both phases of the data gathering process provided rich information and an opportunity to elaborate on the data. The second phase interviews were also used to clarify responses given in the first phase of the interviews. To determine the accuracy of the data and findings, the descriptions and information gathered during the data gathering were also taken back to the participants for verification. Therefore, multiple data gathering and analysis methods used in this study enhanced the trustworthiness of the information provided by the participants. Furthermore, as this study was limited to rural youth in South Africa, I do not intend to generalise the findings across South African or another context, such as urban areas. The following subsection discusses how the trustworthiness and quality of my study were addressed and confirmed. The criteria selected for this study to authenticate and enhance the findings were based on the criteria recommended by Miles *et al.* (2018). These criteria are: (1) credibility, (2) confirmability, (3) transferability and (4) dependability.

4.8.1 The credibility of the study

The credibility of the study refers to confidence in the truth (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In other words, it implies the extent to which the findings reflect plausible information when compared to the data gathered from the participants. The strategies I used to ensure credibility included crystallisation and prolonged engagement with the participants using three methods of data gathering, that is, drawings, photovoice and semi-structured interviews, which complemented each another and provided rich data. In addition, the participants selected for this study were from different schools.

The participants' views were presented in a narrative form, and quotes were used to support the voices of the participants. Furthermore, the integration of SDT and PYD theoretical frameworks to understand the views of youth experiences and to confirm the findings also enhanced the credibility of the study. Member reflection was used in the first phase of data gathering to foster dialogue with the participants, elaborate on the data and allow the participants to ask questions. The feedback from the participants provided clarity on some of the responses and validated the findings.

Furthermore, I meticulously described the research methods, data analysis process and integration of the data gathering methods. In this regard, I provided a detailed description of the context of the study and participants. In addition, I presented a detailed description of how the data was constructed and of the rigour of the data analysis process to provide a vivid picture of the research processes followed in this study.

4.8.2 *Confirmability of the study*

Confirmability is concerned with consistency in the process of the study, and quality and integrity of the findings (Miles *et al.*, 2018). The researcher's positionality, personal views and assumptions can affect how the data is analysed. The role of the researcher as a primary data gathering instrument in a qualitative study requires clarification of the researcher's personal experiences, assumptions and biases at the beginning of the research (Creswell, 2018). In terms of my positionality and my role as the researcher, I was involved with the Dreamfields Project sports development programme although I was not directly involved in the area (Ingwavuma) where the sample was selected for this study. The participants were informed about my involvement with the project at the end of second phase of data gathering. It was important to identify myself and my role at the end of the second phase of the interviews to minimise the potential influence on the participants' responses during the interviews. It is worth noting that the aim of the study was not to advocate for the sports programme but rather to explore the participants' experiences in relation to the programme.

Furthermore, to minimise my biases and enhance the quality of the findings, I remained reflexive throughout the study by critically reflecting on my preconceptions as an insider and outsider. During the interviews, I used different probing techniques to encourage the participants to elaborate and clarify their responses. For example, I asked the participants to elaborate and tell me more about certain responses in order to gain clarity and encourage them to make further statements.

The inductive approach was used for data analysis. Therefore, the codes, themes and meta-themes generated emerged from the participants' perspectives. Furthermore, crystallisation was used to compare and interpret the data constructed in the two phases of data gathering. During the data analysis, I constantly read and reread the field notes and interview transcripts. This process helped me to analyse the data and review and refine the themes. In addition, I used reflection with my supervisor, a critical friend (a senior academic staff member in the

Faculty) and peer debriefing with my colleagues to conduct an audit trail by reviewing the analysis (for example, codes, categories, field notes and findings). The purpose of using my colleagues for peer debriefing and a critical friend was to discuss and reflect on my research study, data analysis process and interpretation. Furthermore, this critical friend was chosen to review and critique the analysis based on his experience and knowledge of arts-informed research methodology and as someone neutral who was not involved in the data gathering process. The critiques and feedback provided by the critical friend provided me with the opportunity to revisit my data analysis process. For instance, I decided to analyse the drawings and photographs separately using different data analysis strategies.

In addition, I presented the preliminary findings of my research at the University of Pretoria Faculty of Education Research Indaba. It was a great opportunity for feedback and critique from other scholars at the university. The feedback I received enabled me to review my interpretation of the findings to ensure that I provided rich descriptions of the participants' experiences.

4.8.3 *Transferability of the study*

The transferability of the study is also known as generalisability. It refers to the context in which the research findings can be generalised and applied in other situations (Polit & Beck, 2014). Tracy (2010) argues that transferability in qualitative research is not relevant because statistical generalisations in quantitative research require random samples. Furthermore, qualitative research focuses on in-depth studies that produce knowledge that cannot be generalised to predict the future (Tracy, 2010).

The findings generated from qualitative data can apply to other situations, provided the findings include enough description for the reader of the research to decide whether the findings apply to their situation (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Therefore, the reader of the research decides whether the findings are transferable to their own situation. This study provided a detailed description of the experiences of the participants, the context in which the research was done – including the sample size and selection criteria – and the data gathering process in the two phases of constructing the data. The study was conducted in the context of a rural community in South Africa and shared explicit narratives of the participants' experiences to provide the reader of this study with enough description to assess whether the findings are transferable to their situation and environment.

4.8.4 Dependability of the study

The dependability of this study relates to the consistency of the data analysis process and interpretation of findings over time and under different situations (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Reflection with my supervisors and peer debriefing with my colleagues were conducted to establish whether the research findings were consistent with the data gathered. I requested that my colleagues at the University of Pretoria, who were lecturers in the field of human movement studies and sports management, and a critical friend examined the data analysis process by reviewing the field notes and interview transcripts. This was done to ensure that the findings were linked to the data constructed in the study.

The dependability of the study and other strategies used to confirm trustworthiness demonstrate that the study was conducted diligently and ethically. Rallis & Rossman (2009) argue that standards for judging trustworthiness must take into consideration principles for ethical engagement with the participants. Therefore, the trustworthiness of qualitative research is also based on whether the research demonstrates sensitivity to ethical issues. The ethical consideration of the study will be discussed in the next section.

4.9 Ethical consideration

Qualitative research involves a number of ethical issues, which must be considered by the researcher due to intensive personal contact with the respondents (Kumar, 2011). According to Kumar (2011), participants need to know their rights to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality. The anonymity and privacy of the participants were achieved by using pseudonyms. Tracy (2010) describes ethics as procedural and relational. In this regard, procedural ethics are related to the ethical considerations of the study, such as informed consent, ensuring the privacy of the participants and maintaining confidentiality. This study secured procedural ethics by subscribing to the ethical principles of voluntary participation in which the participants could withdraw from the research at any time, by ensuring the safety of the participants, and by protecting the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. This study met all the ethical and procedural requirements and was approved by the University of Pretoria's Ethics Committee (see Appendix J).

Relational ethics refers to the researcher's engagement with the participants through a collaborative process and by respecting their views. The research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, so it was necessary to be extra vigilant and thoughtful of the participants'

needs, for example, by conducting screening, providing sanitisers and ensuring that social distance was maintained. I ensured that all the research materials provided to the participants were sanitised. I also discussed the transcripts of the interviews with the participants.

The exiting ethics relates to how the researcher shares the findings with the participants and selects the best possible means to present the research findings to avoid unintended consequences (Tracy, 2010). Ethical consideration continues beyond the data construction phase. Therefore, I shared the research findings with the schools and participants through a research report.

In summary, I requested permission from the KZN DBE and the schools to conduct the study (Appendix N). This study followed all the ethical and legal requirements stipulated by the University of Pretoria's Ethics Committee. Before they participated, the participants were informed about the study, including the research process, how the information would be used, and how they could withdraw their participation at any stage of the research if they wished to do so. Parents of the participants were requested to complete informed consent forms on behalf of the participants, and the participants completed assent forms. The semi-structured interview questions, drawings and photovoice instructions were only related to the research. The responses were and remain confidential and were used only for research purposes. The transcriptions and written interpretation of the data was made accessible to the participants. The written transcripts of the recorded interviews, drawings, photographs and field notes will be stored at the Department of Humanities Education at the University of Pretoria for 15 years.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter presented the research methodology and methods applied in this study. The study adopted a qualitative research approach to explore youth experiences. Furthermore, this chapter provided a comprehensive description of the research design and research paradigm.

I used arts-informed methods (drawings, photovoice) combined with semi-structured interviews to construct the data for this study. The data construction was conducted in collaboration with the participants in two phases. The final sample consisted of 12 participants who participated in the two phases of the study (see Appendix L). Thematic analysis, semiotics visual analysis and photovoice analysis methods were used to analyse the data. Furthermore, different coding methods were also used to generate the codes, themes and meta-themes. I also highlighted the integration and relationships between the three data analysis methods used in

this study. Finally, the strategies for confirming the findings and ensuring trustworthiness and ethical issues were discussed. The next chapter will present the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 5: YOUTH EXPERIENCES AND THE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THEIR EXPERIENCES OF A SPORTS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the research methodology employed in this study and provided the details of how the drawings, photovoice and the use of cameras were employed to explore the youth's experiences. This chapter presents the findings related to the youth experiences and the factors contributing to their experiences of the sports development programme. The participants were requested to portray their experiences of the sports development programme through drawings and photographs. Therefore, in this chapter, the drawings, photographs and interviews data are used to narrate the participants' experiences. The 12 narratives in this chapter include some excerpts in isiZulu, with an English translation provided. The third person is used in the narrations to reflect the participants' own life experiences and to reveal their voices and feelings. The first level of analysis (analysis of the drawings) and second level of analysis (analysis of the photographs) in this chapter are related to the first research question of this study, which is 'How do the youth experience a sports development programme in rural South Africa?' The third level of analysis is linked to the second research question of this study, which is 'Why do youth experience the sports development programme in rural South Africa the way they do?'

The experiences presented by the youth reflect their own life experiences and the role of the social context and close personal relationships in enhancing and hindering their development. The common thread in this chapter is the multiple realities and dynamic accounts of the participants' views and experiences.

5.2 Youth experiences of a sports development programme

In the next section, I explain the youth experiences and factors that contributed to the individual experiences of a sports development programme of the 12 participants of this study.

5.2.1 Kwazi: My small uncle

At the time of the interviews, Kwazi was 14 years old and had been participating in the Dreamfields Project sports programme for two years. To depict his experiences of the sports programme, Kwazi's drawing included multiple images in a single portrait (see Figure 5.1). He drew a multicoloured house in yellow and blue with two windows and a door. In addition,

Kwazi's drawing included the sun, clouds and a tree. He used yellow to represent the sun and green for the trees. He also drew two chickens near the house. In the same drawing, he depicted a small soccer field with goalposts and a man and a boy standing on either side of the soccer field. The boy is portrayed wearing pink tops and brown bottoms. The man seems to be juggling the multicoloured soccer ball and wearing soccer boots. The man has a big head and is slightly taller than the boy. His size denotes that he is an adult figure and probably older than the boy.



Figure 5.1: Kwazi's drawing of a house and a small soccer field

The caption that Kwazi provides at the bottom of his drawing is, 'This picture is the way that I started. I like to play with my small uncle in the small ground. Using his drawing, Kwazi explained that the sun represented sunlight and visibility. He viewed the sun as a feature that signified the outdoor context, and he explicitly mentioned that the sun implied playtime. Even

though clouds were included in the drawing, Kwazi did not state how they were associated with his drawing. However, it seems that Kwazi drew a culturally conventional representation of the clouds, which suggests an outdoor scene rather than an indoor environment. Similarly, the representation of the two chickens can be seen in the drawing, but Kwazi did not specify the significance of the chickens in the drawings. Therefore, the meaning conveyed through the representation of the chickens is embedded in the social and cultural contexts. In other words, Kwazi might have drawn the chickens to represent a context that indicated his experience of reality in his environment. For example, some rural families keep a small flock of chickens in their backyard to produce eggs – the chickens eat food crumbs and insects – which are sometimes sold to make money. The chickens are also eaten on special occasions. In essence, this reflects Kwazi's social reality and shows aspects of his community. To further contextualise the meaning and representation of his drawing, Kwazi clarified his drawing as follows:

Ngoba ungikhumbuza ngezinsuku la bengiqala khona ukufunda ukudlala ibhola, kunabanye abantu ababengifundisa. Bengifundiswa omalume bami abadala nabanye abancane, La bengifundisa khona, sadlala umashayelana. Ikhombisa ukuthi kwakuseduzane nasekhaya, uma sesidinga amanzi siye khona. Ilanga likhomba ukuthi sasesiqala ukuyodlala uma seliyoshona. (Because it reminds me of the days when I first learned how to play soccer, there were other people teaching me, my older uncles⁶ and other younger ones [uncles] taught me. It is where they taught me and we playing games. It shows that it was closer to home [and] when we need water we go there. The sun indicates that we were starting to play when it was about to set.)

During the interview, Kwazi explained that he started playing soccer with his friends in the neighbourhood. The two individuals in the drawing represent him and his uncles, and the house next to the soccer field represents Kwazi's home. Kwazi elaborated further on his drawing. He explained that his home was close to the soccer field.

Kwazi's drawing suggests that he related his experiences of sport to the outdoor environment close to his house. His drawing conveys this through natural scenery (sun, trees, clouds) and

⁶ Older uncle is an African concept relating to a male who is an older sibling to a parent.

the soccer field. He also used the ball to convey his experiences of playing soccer. Another aspect of Kwazi's drawing, other than the outdoor representation, was his uncle on the soccer field. This highlights the relationship and contribution of Kwazi's uncles to his physical and sporting development. Kwazi explained his views about his uncles as follows:

It is just that the uncles have this mentality of making you do something or telling you what you should not be doing. If you continue doing it, they will end up kicking you out of the field; if you continue doing it, you might end up being out of the field, and they will end up kicking you out of the soccer field, and you are forced to listen to their rules, if you want to continue playing.

This further highlights Kwazi's experiences related to his relationship with his male relatives. Even though Kwazi did not include his mother in the drawing, he mentioned that his mother was supportive and bought him soccer boots, although he was not comfortable playing soccer near his home because he did not want his mother to see him when he played soccer, explaining:

Engingakuthandi ukuthi kwakusondele kakhulu ekhaya ngoba ngenkathi ngingakakwazi ukudlala ibhola bengingafuni ukuthi umama azongibukela nokuthi angibone. (What I didn't like was that it was too close to home because I did not know how to play soccer and didn't want my mother to watch me and see me.)

There were contradictions between Kwazi's drawing and his explanation. On the one hand, he mentioned that his mother was supportive. This might be because his mother bought him shoes. On the other hand, he did not want his mother to see him when he played soccer because of his perceived poor ability to do so. However, his doubts about his skills disappeared and his confidence had improved when he was able to play soccer.

Kwenze [Dreamfields Project sports programme] ukuthi abantu esikhathini esiningi bagcine bengibuka uma sengidlala ibhola, bayangibukela manje uma ngidlala, Abantu abahlala ngaphandle, ama-supporter, Abazali bayaziqhenya ngami. (It [Dreamfields Project sports programme] made people to watch me most of the time when I play soccer; they watch me now when I play, it is people who sit outside and supporters. My parents [mother] are proud of me.)

Therefore, due to his enhanced soccer skills, he believed that his mother was now proud of him. Thus, Kwazi's relationship with his mother and uncles gives the impression that Kwazi was concerned about his proficiency in soccer and his life at home.

Another aspect not evident in the drawing was his interaction with his peers and teachers. However, he shared his experiences regarding the school environment and sports participation in our conversation. Kwazi mentioned that the school environment was conducive to sports participation because they had access to the sports field. Furthermore, the sports field was in good condition and appropriate for sport. He argued that it would not have been possible to participate in the programme if the school did not have a sports field. He explained that at school the teachers and coaches were supportive and sports equipment was provided, but when he played with his friends in the streets, there was a lack of sports equipment. This suggests that Kwazi experienced a positive football relationship with his peers, friends and teachers at school. Furthermore, Kwazi presented the teachers as the main actors in creating a conducive environment for positive development in his life.

He further acknowledged the limited opportunities to be part of the school soccer team. Kwazi talked about how the sports programme at school had created the opportunity for him to participate in soccer. His comments might possibly mean that the school environment and the sports programme provided Kwazi with an opportunity to participate in sport at school. Kwazi also mentioned that the sports programme at school was inclusive and organised. Kwazi explained his thinking as follows:

La esikoleni kugcono ngoba kudlalwa kahle, sesiyazi ukuthi kwenzekani, Ukuthi nami ngikwazi ukudlala ibhola, ngingahlali ngaphandle ngibukele abanye, ukuthi nami ngingabhoreki uma bedlala abanye abantu. Ngigcina sengenze izinto ezinhle ngokuthi uma kudlalwa ibhola uma kunomncintiswano nami ngiye khona. (It is better here at school because it [soccer] is played well; we already know what is going on. It is that I can also play soccer, I do not sit out and watch others, and I do not get bored when other people are playing. I end up doing good things because when soccer is played, and when there is competition, I go there too.)

Although Kwazi started participating in soccer outside school through the guidance and support of his uncle, Kwazi gave the impression that he enjoyed participating in sport both in and out of school. During our conversation, Kwazi expressed his concern about a lack of appropriate space and a soccer field in his community. To support his view, Kwazi photographed an open area showing the grass close-up in Figure 5.2.



Figure 5.2: Photograph of the grass on an open field (taken by Kwazi)

According to Kwazi, this photograph illustrates the importance of having enough space and a place to play soccer. The grass is damaged and seems to be dry and patchy. This might be due to lack of watering, or the grass being overused. To clarify his view, Kwazi elaborated, ‘If the soccer field surface is not level and not in good condition, you can get injured – unfortunately, in our area, we do not have a proper place to play sport, there are stones, and you may get hurt [injured]. We need safe places so that we do not get injured.’

Kwazi’s explanation reveals his belief that the lack of a conducive sports field could result in physical injuries. This signifies Kwazi’s fear of injury and experiences related to poor sports facilities.

Besides the condition of the soccer field in the community, Kwazi used his photograph to convey his personal development experiences. He explained that the Dreamfields Project sports programme had contributed positively to his personal development, and he had learned to work with others. He emphasised the importance of cooperation, respect and good behaviour by mentioning, ‘It [the programme] has made me see that you are not supposed to do, for example,

hate each other. You must cooperate because soccer brings people together, if you have conflicts, you must resolve them.’ Kwazi also reflected on his learning experiences through his participation in the programme. He explained that he had learned to respect others and believed that respect was an essential personal development skill which could promote teamwork and friendships. His explanation of personal development experiences strongly indicates Kwazi’s perceived benefits of sport.

Kwazi believed that he had gained competence and confidence through interaction with his peers and teachers in the programme. To explain his social experiences, Kwazi explained that the teachers encouraged them to work as a team and he had been told by his teachers and friends that his soccer skills had improved. According to Kwazi, the supportive environment and support from his teachers and friends had motivated him to improve his soccer skills.

Kwazi’s photograph did not reveal negative experiences associated with sport. However, it emerged from his experiences that the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions imposed in 2020 and 2021 had had a negative effect on him. Kwazi explained that he was upset because he could not participate in sport due to the restrictions and he had missed the interaction with his friends and teachers at the school.

Kwazi’s drawing depicts his small uncle, however, in our conversation he constantly mentioned other uncles too. Although his mother is absent from the drawing and photograph, she appeared in the conversation. Similarly, his teachers and friends are absent in his illustrations but he explicitly made comments about them during the conversation. This reflects some tension between Kwazi’s representations (drawing and photograph) and his narrative. Despite the tension and contradictions between the narratives generated through the drawings, photographs and conversation, the drawings revealed Kwazi’s personal experiences and relationship with his family. Therefore, the photograph provided insight into his experiences in his community and sport. At the same time, the interview conversation provided an expressive opportunity for Kwazi to share how his teachers, friends and the sports programme contributed to his experiences.

The relationship with others is a critical aspect of Kwazi’s experiences. His relationships with his teachers and friends who were the main actors in Kwazi’s experiences were critical. According to Kwazi, his uncles coached him in soccer at home, however, his experience was enhanced at school. Kwazi acknowledged the contribution of sport to his personal development

through his interaction with the teachers and his friends at school. In essence, Kwazi recognised the value and significance of his teachers' continuous support in his development. In terms of friendship, although he recalled experiencing disagreements and conflicts with his friends, Kwazi emphasised the importance of cooperation with each other and harmonious relationships.

The critical aspects of Kwazi's experiences of the sports programme are: (1) its contribution to his personal development; and (2) its contribution to his physical development. Kwazi believed that through his participation in sport he had learned about the importance of teamwork and respect for others. Additionally, Kwazi mentioned that sport had enhanced his soccer skills and helped him to improve how he played soccer. He also believed that the sports programme at the school was inclusive as it gave more learners the opportunity to participate in sport as opposed to just watching others participate in sport. Kwazi mentioned that his motivation to participate in the sports programme was also motivated by the rewards awarded in the programme. 'Yeah,' he stated, 'we got medals and a trophy. I felt very happy.'

I would like to acknowledge that the tension and contradictions in Kwazi's narratives were influenced by his social context and interpretation of his reality and experiences. Kwazi's experiences were embedded in his reality. I perceived Kwazi experiences and the contributing factors to his experiences of the sports programme to have been influenced by multiple factors, such as the interaction with his uncles, friends, teachers and his personal experiences in sport at school.

Kwazi's experiences point to a dynamic interplay between his ambiguous relationships with the Dreamfields Project sports programme. His perceptions of the contribution of the sports programme in his life coexisted with experiences of longing for a better physical environment for soccer. It is apparent from Kwazi's illustrations that the house and soccer were central to his fragmented family life. Thus, it seems that his home and soccer were the main links to school and the teachers for Kwazi. These findings suggest that the school created the opportunity for Kwazi to interact with his teachers and peers. In addition, the contradictions related to his experiences can be considered to be a representation of his multiple perspectives linked to his social and cultural context.

5.2.2 *Thelo: I love netball*

Thelo was 14 years old at the time of the interview, and she had been participating in the sports programme at school for three years. Thelo's drawing illustrates two girls and a school (see Figure 5.3).

In the drawing, the girl's arms are wide open and she is holding a ball with her left hand. The second one, also with her arms wide open but is not holding the ball. The girls are nearly the same height, with almost similar hairstyles. They are wearing identical dresses. However, the upper parts of the dresses are different, one dress has a pocket and buttons on the front, and the other does not have a pocket and buttons. Both dresses are orange and blue. However, the bottom outer part of the other dress is pink. The girls' shoes are different – one is drawn wearing flat shoes, and the other one is wearing what looks like pointy toe high heels shoes. The other part of Thelo's drawing illustrates a building with two wide outside doors, windows and a flat roof. The caption on the drawing reads as follows: 'Ukudlala ebhola lezandla kungeza ngi practice emzibeni, futhi nomzimba uyakhululeka' (Playing netball is an opportunity for me to practice and my body is also relaxed. It makes my muscles perfect and exercises my body, but sometimes it causes injuries.)



Figure 5.3: Thelo’s drawing of a school and two girls

With regard to the meaning of Thelo’s drawing, she used a description of her drawing to explain the significance of her drawing and how it related to her experiences. Thelo explained that the building depicted a house. She elaborated, ‘It [house] has training kit, and sports equipment which are kept in this house. When they [the girls] finish exercising, they can change their clothes and drink water at the house.’ The illustration suggests that Thelo possibly considered the house as a physical space and a place to access water, food and clothes. In this context, the house has a significant meaning in people’s lives. The house is mainly associated with a safe space and symbolises an individual life and a place of shelter. Flat roofs are primarily used in South African rural areas, and some houses are small with few windows and outside doors. In this context, the two doors and windows have a connotative meaning of the building structure. Therefore, the windows and doors reveal that the house is probably a two-roomed apartment. In addition, a house is associated with family in the South African context. This representation conveys structural factors (for instance, social, economic and environmental) that reflect Thelo’s personal life experiences and provide a backdrop for the contextual reality in her life.

Thelo also offered a critical representation of her sports experiences. She drew two girls depicting her experiences in netball. Thelo also revealed during our conversation that the dresses represented their netball kit, hence the dress colours and the design were similar. Thelo stated, ‘If we were to play here and wear the same sports kit, we would all look the same as one team.’ She continued, ‘These people [girls] are trying to exercise. I have learned that when you play [netball], you can enjoy, you always run, and the body does not get injured ... netball is important to us because we can get rid of loneliness.’

Sport was a critical aspect of Thelo’s experiences and her drawing further conveys the learning experiences of playing netball. She believed that playing netball at school had created an opportunity for her to learn to be committed and resilient. Through her sports programme experiences, Thelo understood the importance of teamwork and cooperation.

Her experiences are reflected in this description: ‘In a way, I managed to play with them [teammates], respect everyone on the field and abide by the rules. This will help me to continue playing netball because I can work and cooperate with others [learners and teammates]. It is important to be confident and never lose hope.’

According to Thelo, since she had started participating in the sports programme, her netball skills had improved, and she had the courage to compete with the older age groups. In addition, Thelo explained, ‘The programme helped me to stay healthy because I exercise. I am happy and responsible, and now I believe in myself.’ Furthermore, Thelo described her positive experiences participating in the programme. She commented, ‘I love netball, and most people are saying I am talented. I also learned that when you are on the field (sports field), you must be kind to one another and treat everyone like your sister. It is not necessary to have enemies.’

From the above description, it is clear that cooperation, fairness, respect, determination and commitment were important aspects of the social and personal development outcomes experienced by Thelo in the sports programme. She further perceived the sports programme to have contributed to her improved netball skills. Thelo also highlighted the nutritional needs and community support. The role of the community is best exemplified by the photograph Thelo took, which featured a tuckshop and incomplete building structure.



Figure 5.4: Photograph of a tuckshop (taken by Thelo)

With regard to the meaning of her photograph (see Figure 5.4) and how it relates to her experiences and views, Thelo described her photograph in the following way: ‘This photograph indicates where all of us buy some ice to drink and food when we are going to play; we need food and water for energy. We also buy ice to treat injuries. This one [incomplete building structure] on the side is used when there is someone injured, and it is where they assist him.’ She further elaborated on the meaning of her photograph, saying, ‘It means I should play well and not fear that I will get hurt because there is a place closer that can assist when we are injured.’

Seemingly, the role of the community was another critical aspect of Thelo’s experiences. She considered the tuckshop owner and staff to be supportive in providing the learners with food and water. In addition to her account of the community support, Thelo also mentioned that the teachers provided food for some of the learners. She explained, ‘They are the ones [teachers] who bring us things after we finish playing, and they give us food.’ Thelo believed that the teachers’ support motivated her. She regarded the role of the teachers in the programme as an important aspect of her development. She viewed the teachers as a source of inspiration and as role models. According to Thelo, this was apparent during the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions when sports activities were prohibited and she could not interact with her teachers. She explained her experiences as follows: ‘They [teachers] are the ones who brings us things

after we finish playing and they give us food. I miss playing [sport], those I play with in my team and the teachers. I think it can be much better if we can go back to play.’

Apart from the above-mentioned positive experiences and supportive relationships, Thelo also had experiences that negatively affected her participation in the sports programme. She explained that she did not appreciate seeing her teammates arguing during sports activities. She felt unhappy with the situation and mentioned that some teachers favoured some learners. She provided an important insight into her experiences when she noted that some of the learners may have felt excluded in the sports programme. She elaborated, ‘There are those [peers, teachers] that say you are not good at playing netball just because they want their relatives to be part of the team that plays [on] the sports field.’ Thelo felt upset and regarded this behaviour to be inappropriate.

With regard to Thelo’s experiences, it is worth noting that the negative interaction between the teachers and other learners in the sports programme resulted in both positive and negative experiences. Thelo highlighted that she felt excluded from the programme. This illustrates contradictions and ambiguities with regard to Thelo’s experiences with the teachers and peers in the programme. On one hand, she had a positive interaction with the teachers, but at the same time, she felt excluded from the programme due to the favouritism she perceived. This can be viewed as a problematic aspect of the programme and further illustrates possible tension that could have contributed to the participants’ negative experiences. This further highlights the contextual realities of her experiences and suggests that negative experiences can co-exist with positive experiences in a sports context.

Thelo’s views suggest that several contextual factors contributed to her negative and positive experiences. In terms of these experiences, Thelo explained that she wanted to continue participating in the programme because of the benefits she derived from sport. The initial factor that contributed to Thelo’s experiences was her personal experiences with the community. She explained that the people in her community loved her, and she enjoyed participating in sport. She further explained her experiences as follows: ‘It is that I like playing [netball], and a lot of people chose me, that is why I do not want to stop playing netball.’ Her peers at school were also at the backdrop of the causes that contributed to Thelo’s positive experiences. She explained that her peers at school watched the netball matches and acknowledged that their support encouraged her to participate in the programme. Thelo commented that she valued her

peers ‘because there are those [spectators] who are cheering for us, giving us support when we are on the field.’

Thelo’s family was a silent feature in her drawing and photograph. However, her mother appeared in our conversation during the interviews. She experienced a supportive relationship with her mother. She expressed her views about her mother’s support, saying, ‘I was happy to know someone was supporting me.’ This description of a supportive relationship that Thelo experienced with her mother suggests that Thelo could have been encouraged by the support she received from her mother. The support could have further motivated Thelo and contributed to her positive experiences.

Apart from the supportive relationship with her mother, another factor that contributed to her positive experiences was her perceived health and physical development benefits associated with sport. She participated in the programme because of enjoyment and believed sport had health benefits: ‘I just love playing netball, it [sports programme] has helped me a lot because I do not get sick easily because I always exercise.’ Thelo attributed her good health and physical fitness to the programme. She also ascribed her improved netball skills to participating in the programme.

Although Thelo was able to describe the factors that contributed to the positive experiences, she also believed that she had had negative experiences in the sports programme. She explained that it upset her to lose a netball match and not be rewarded and she described the feeling of not winning as a difficult, unbearable experience. She explained the context in which she experienced these feelings, saying, ‘I feel hurt because I am motivated, and I want to win so that we can all be happy.’ She acknowledged that she was previously awarded a medal for winning the netball league in the programme. This highlights the nature and reality of sports participation and suggests that Thelo valued extrinsic aspirations, such as winning and rewards.

In summary, it emerged from Thelo’s experiences that support from her peers, mother, and teachers contributed to the positive experiences. She explained that she enjoyed participating in the programme and felt encouraged by the support she received from her peers and teachers. She also mentioned that she was inspired by the positive relationships with the teachers and her peers. Thelo further recognised the support provided by the community. In this regard, the community can be seen as an integral part of her development. In addition, Thelo attributed her

good health and improved netball skills to the sports programme. This suggests that the programme was also a valuable aspect of her development.

Another aspect that emerged from Thelo's experiences was the tension related to her interaction with the teachers. Thelo explicitly mentioned how her perceived favouritism in the programme undermined her need to be treated fairly and resulted in negative experiences. She was concerned about the exclusion of other learners in the programme. In this context, the teachers' behaviour and role had a negative impact on Thelo's experiences.

5.2.3 Bonga: My father and our garden

Bonga is a 16-year-old male, and, at the time of the interview, he had been participating in the sports programme for four years. To depict his experiences, Bonga drew a house with two windows and a small door (see Figure 5.5). His drawing includes a tree and a figure that looks like a meadow next to the tree. There is also an illustration of a ball and a boy facing away from the ball. The boy's arms are outstretched away from each other. Another feature of the drawing depicts an elderly man sitting on a chair. The man looks like he is worried and not sitting comfortably. Bonga explained the meaning of his drawing using the following caption:

Kwi drawing yami ubaba uhlezi phansi ukhatazekile ngkhaya lakhe akakhoni ukusebenza ngoba akaphatekile kahle empilweni insimi yakhe yonile ngoba akekho kahle e moyeni. Idrawing yami ichaza ukuthi kumele usebenza kusavuma usekahle empilweni ukwazi ukunakelela umdeni wakho ngomsebenzi wezandla zakho ukhwazi nokutshala izitshalo, kodwa umfana yena udlala ibhola ubaba akhathazekile ngekhaya lakhe. (In my drawing, my father is sitting down; he is worried about his home, he can't work because he is not happy in life, his garden is in bad shape because he is not in a good mood. My drawing explains that you must work while you are still in good health to be able to take care of your family and grow crops, but the boy is playing soccer, and the father is worried about his home.)



Figure 5.5: Bonga’s drawing of a boy and elderly man next to a house

The house in Bonga’s drawing signifies his home and the trees and meadow represent a garden. According to Bonga, the man is worried about his family and the garden. He is unemployed, and must get a job to take care of his family. This could explain why the man in the drawing does not seem relaxed on the chair. He looks like an elderly person who is holding a walking stick in his right hand. The sitting position of the man reveals a figure of an isolated and worried man. A troubled, unhappy man in the drawing signifies the social and economic challenges that affect society. In the South African context, culturally, many older people in rural communities are not employed and have to rely on social grants for financial support. Bonga explicitly mentioned that the man was unemployed and worried about taking care of his family. However, it was not clear why the man was unemployed. This suggests the man might be struggling to support his family financially.

Bonga also described the poor condition of the garden and indicated that the garden had weeds; the man was worried because he could not take care of his garden. In essence, the backyard garden is considered a place to grow vegetables and fruit in order to harvest food. In this context, the tree and meadow in the drawing denote food. Considering the economic challenges in South Africa and the lack of financial income in most households, the garden in the drawings suggests a means to access and to providing food for the family. Hence, the man was possibly worried that he might not be able to provide food for his family. The man is a salient aspect of the drawing and can be considered a literal representation of a parent figure striving to take care of his family.

Another aspect of the drawing depicts a boy and a ball, which signifies sport. Bonga explained this aspect of his drawing as follows: ‘This boy has started playing and exercising, I learned to play soccer at school. The boy is happy as well, soccer and sports make me happy as I spend time exercising.’ In contrast to the man in the drawing, Bonga described the boy in the drawing as someone happy who enjoyed playing soccer. In this regard, Bonga’s participation in sport can be viewed as a safe place to escape the challenges at home and develop personal and social skills. To highlight some of the skills he experienced in sport, Bonga mentioned that his first learning experience of soccer was at school. He further believed that he had learned about respect, discipline and determination through interaction with his peers and friends in the programme.

With regard to the above personal development experiences, Bonga explained, ‘You should respect your parents. It should not only be in soccer, but you should be able to respect and do some chores [at home] so that parents will appreciate what you do and support you.’ Linked to the experiences of the programme, Bonga shared his experiences associated with the perceived positive outcomes of the programme by stating that the programme had helped him to avoid taking risks that could have resulted in dangerous behaviours, such as crime and drugs. He explained his views as follows:

It [sport] encourages me to focus and commit myself to everything I do. I also exercise so that I can improve and perform better than before so that I do not behave in a bad manner. I choose to behave in a good manner so that people can be happy and proud of me. I like to play soccer, and it has helped me not to be involved with bad friends because I might end up taking drugs, or it might mean that if you do not play soccer you might think about what is it that you need to do then you may end

up doing wrong things in people's houses, and you might end up in jail, or killed, you see something like that.

This extract illustrates Bonga's perceived social benefits of sports participation. It suggests that Bonga viewed sport as an appropriate activity, which possibly helped him not take risks that could have resulted in dangerous behaviours. Bonga's photograph and drawing do not reveal how sports participation would prevent bad behaviour. However, his comments indicated that his regular soccer participation would help him focus, and, as a result, he was less likely to engage in destructive behaviour.

Apart from Bonga's perceived social and personal benefits of sports participation, he also believed that sport had provided him with opportunities for social interaction and enhancing his sport skills. Bonga explained that the sports equipment provided by the Dreamfields Project made it possible for him to participate in the programme: 'Unfortunately, we did not have proper soccer goalposts and sports equipment in the past. We were forced to use stones to make goalposts.' Bonga also explained that it could have been difficult for him to participate in the sport without proper equipment and a sports field. To support his experiences related to the importance of the sports equipment and conditions of the sports field, Bonga took a photograph of soccer players on a soccer field (see Figure 5.6). Some players are seen in the photograph standing on the field, and others are sitting off the field. The opponents are absent in the photo, and the goalposts are not visible. My analysis indicates that the soccer match might not have started, and the team wearing black and gold soccer kit is getting ready for the game. Furthermore, the absence of goalposts in the photograph might signify a lack of proper sports equipment. Therefore, the representation of soccer players on the soccer field suggests a conventional connotation associated with soccer.



Figure 5.6: Photograph of soccer players (taken by Bonga)

With reference to the meaning of his photograph, Bonga explained, ‘It [the photograph] shows that the goalposts are small, the way this field is structured ... it is like there are concrete stones ... if you fall, you can end up hurting yourself.’ During our conversation, Bonga stated that the lack of equipment and poor sports facilities were some of the challenges that were faced by the community. For him, the condition of the sports field was essential to minimise the risks of physical injuries. Bonga’s photograph demonstrates the contextual realities of some of the sports fields in rural environments in South Africa.

The teachers were absent from Bonga’s illustrations; however, they appeared in our conversation during the interviews. He commented that certain things were mentioned that made him feel sad. He stated, ‘Some of the things they [teachers] say make me feel sad, so I practice and forget all that. Maybe teachers, my parents or people I know.’ Bonga was reluctant to elaborate on these experiences. Bonga’s hesitation to provide insight might have been amplified by his fear and personal perceptions. In this context, he might have considered his experiences a sensitive subject and felt uncomfortable discussing them. His response is not unusual when dealing with sensitive issues. This explains the absence of teachers from Bonga’s drawing and photograph and further suggests negative experiences in relation to his interaction with the teachers.

Another aspect absent from Bonga’s illustrations was the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, he commented that the discontinuation of sports activities due to strict

COVID-19 lockdown restrictions had affected him negatively. He explained his experiences, saying, ‘The COVID-19 disturbed us because we could not exercise; therefore, our performance was dropping. When we go back to the playing field, it will be as if we do not know how to play soccer, because we have not played for a long time because of this disease. We are disturbed, and it has impacted us negatively and changed our lives.’ He acknowledged that the imposed COVID-19 lockdown restrictions were necessary to prevent the spread of the virus. However, Bonga believed that the strict regulations had made him feel isolated from his friends. He felt that the sport should resume because he thought COVID-19 was no longer as contagious as it had been in the previous year [2019].

In summary, Bonga described a wide range of experiences. It emerged that the opportunity created at the school for Bonga to participate in the programme was one of the factors that contributed to his experiences in the sports development programme. Bonga explained that the programme afforded him the opportunity to participate in sport and improve his sports skills. Furthermore, he attributed his improved physical skills to participation in the programme.

The findings from Bonga’s experiences also highlighted the tension between challenges he faced at home and possible negative experiences with the teachers. The man, boy and soccer players in the drawing and photograph were salient figures associated with Bonga’s experiences. This further illustrates the insights into the contextual realities of his experiences and views. After all, Bonga seemed to have had great experiences in the sports programme, as reflected in his extracts of our conversations. By contrast, the circumstances at home were difficult due to financial constraints. Finally, it is worth noting that despite his circumstances at home, Bonga acknowledged the positive contribution of sport in enhancing his personal and social development skills. Bonga’s experiences were characterised by resilience and determination.

5.2.4 Sandile: *The herd boy*

At the time of the interview, Sandile was 15 years old and had been participating in the sports programme for three years. Sandile drew two boys running and three trees to represent his experiences (see Figure 5.7). The two boys appear to be wearing long pants with their arms slightly apart and head facing straight ahead. They are both wearing similar clothes. Sandile used bright colours on the clothes (yellow t-shirts and red pants). The wearing of similar colours and clothing in sport is considered a conventional representation of a team or players in the same team. The drawing also includes three parallel line which represent the lane.

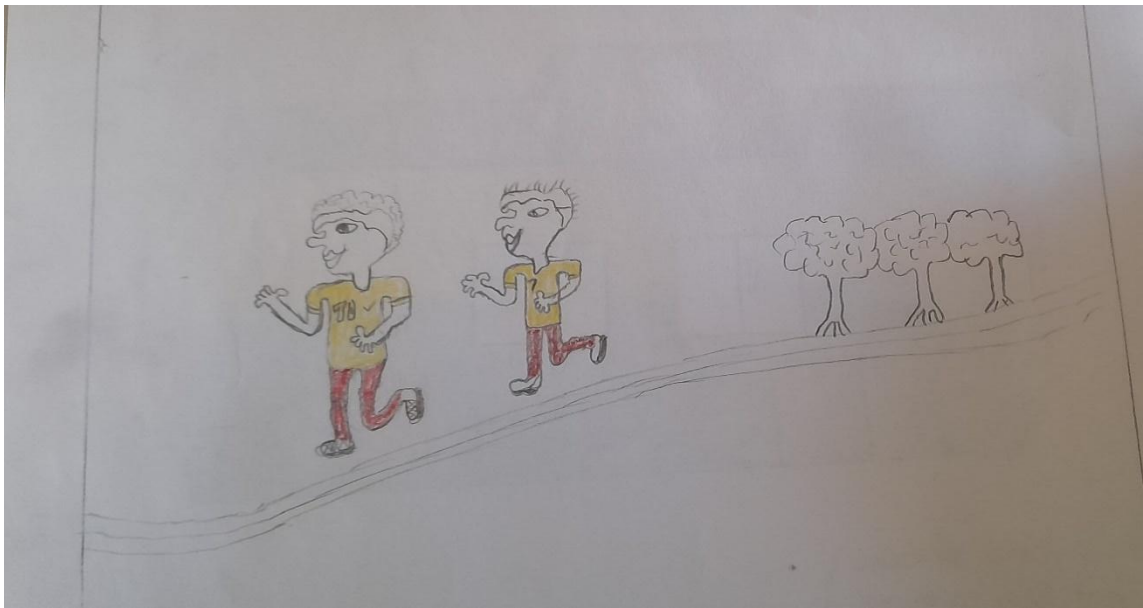


Figure 5.7: Sandile's drawing of boys running

In our conversation during the interview, Sandile explained the meaning of his drawing. According to him, his drawing depicted two boys running and he clarified his drawing as follows:

This drawing is about people who exercise every morning. They exercise to improve their fitness and to stay healthy. They are marathon runners and learned about running, and the lanes indicate that you must stay in your lane when you run. The lanes are there to guide the runners, not to be confused when they run. When you start running, you must not be confused and stay in your lane. You must be focused and have goals. I like [running] marathons and it has helped me because when they pass the ball, I need to know how to run.

The boys in the drawing are runners and a representation of physical exercise. Their body position, arms and head facing straight ahead, symbolise people running. The similar clothes signify training attire used by the runners belonging to the same team. Trees are mainly found outdoors. Therefore, the trees suggest an outdoor environment rather than an indoor representation. The parallel lines signify athletics track lanes, and the athletes are required to run inside the assigned lanes. Sandile associated the lanes with having direction, clear goals and determination. In general, athletes train individually or as a group. The presence of the two boys, one in front and the other at the back, indicates the contextual reality of Sandile's experiences. In the context of sport, the boys running apart from each other shows individuals running to reach the finish line and achieve their goals. These goals can be achieved through the support of other people or individually. Sandile's goals and aspiration might have been influenced by his determination and resilience. An interesting aspect of Sandile's drawing is the absence of social factors, such as parents and teachers. Their absence may not mean they are not a significant part of Sandile's experiences but rather that they were not significant in the context of his depictions and our conversation. In essence, they could have contributed to his experiences in other areas of his life. Another interesting aspect that Sandile conveys through his drawing is the importance of physical activity and being healthy. He explained:

What I like about this drawing is that it shows the importance of exercise so that they [the participants] can be healthy. You do not get sick easily whenever you exercise. If you could not walk a long distance when herding the cows, now, you can walk a long distance. If you are used to playing for a short period on the field, but when you exercise, you can play for a longer period.

This quotation by Sandile indicates his perceived physical development outcomes associated with sport. This insight illustrates the possible physical and health benefits that Sandile derived from his participation in sport. It is also clear from the quotation that there is consistency between Sandile's drawing and his views about the physical outcomes of sport participation. This further suggests that Sandile's experiences and views might have been influenced by his passion for running and sport.

Sandile took a photograph of cattle to elaborate further on his experiences (Figure 5.8). The photograph depicts a veld with green trees and grass. Another noticeable aspect of the photograph is a boy standing not far from the cattle. In South Africa, especially in rural areas, an open veld is considered a feeding resource for most domestic livestock. In essence, cattle cannot be separated from grazing land because they rely on grass and plants for their nutritional needs. From a cultural perspective, generally, the boys are assigned to look after the cattle in most families, especially in a rural South African context.



Figure 5.8: Photograph of cattle (taken by Sandile)

The boy and the cattle are significant elements in Sandile's photograph. According to Sandile, the drawing depicted a lonely boy herding the cows in the village. Sandile described his photograph as follows:

I met this boy on my way back from school, he is herding the cows when he comes back from school. I took this photograph because when the boy returns from school, he takes care of the cows. Whenever I ask him why he is herding the cows, he tells me that this is the way for him to exercise. He does this every day, and he walks a long distance. It seems as if he is getting exhausted and looks like it is hard labour. It [the photograph] shows that you can exercise in so many ways. One of the ways is to herd the cows because when you herd the cows, you are exercising and running as well.

In the excerpt, Sandile drew attention to contradictions and ambiguities related to young people's social realities and experiences in a rural context. Initially, he drew attention to the experience of herding cattle as a lonely experience and as an unconventional way to exercise. Sandile's views evoked an image of herding cattle as an uncomfortable experience but, on the other hand, a positive experience. Sandile implied that herding cattle can be seen as an unconventional way to exercise because it involved walking. Sandile acknowledged the differences between herding cattle as a form of exercise and exercising in a structured environment, such as school and community sports club. He further explained his views as follows:

There are many people at school, but when you herd the cows, you are alone and there is no one to talk to. You play with people you do not know when you play in the street [village] and different people. You learn from those people the things you did not know. You get to know how to talk to people, respect others, and avoid conflicts. There are many ways to exercise besides playing soccer.

Sandile's narrative suggests that structured sport could provide opportunities for social interaction. He narrated how he learned to work with his peers and make new friends. Sandile explained, 'It has helped me to be able to talk to other people so that, whenever I have problems, I can discuss my problems with them.' Sandile used our conversation during the interviews to describe his learning experiences and perceived benefits of sport. He emphasised how he had learned to respect others, such as his peers and teachers. Sandile recounted several learning experiences he encountered through participation in sport. He elaborated, 'Participating in sport taught me to be cooperative. I have learned that sport is very important and can help you to stay away from things like drugs and crime so that the community can support you.' This reveals that Sandile regarded participation in sport as a positive social experience. He further described how that interaction with his peers and friends had contributed to his improved behaviour: 'From my friends, I have learned that they can tell me when I am not behaving in a good manner and also discuss how to behave appropriately.' However, it is unclear if this was Sandile's personal experiences and characteristics, experiences in the programme or interaction with his friends that may have contributed to these positive experiences.

The absence of the teachers in Sandile's photograph and drawing was noticeable, although, they appeared in our conversation when I asked Sandile to share his experiences related to his interaction in the programme. He mentioned that he had a respectful and supportive

relationship with teachers. Sandile explained, ‘The teachers taught us that there are different ways of exercising. It was great because they supported us and guided us about our behaviour and how we should behave. They also advised us to take care of ourselves and to be disciplined. It felt great when they supported us and felt important.’ This suggests that Sandile believed that the teachers contributed to his positive experiences in the programme

Another critical aspect of my conversation with Sandile was the negative effect that COVID-19 lockdown restrictions had on Sandile’s experiences. According to Sandile, the programme activities had to be discontinued due to the lockdown restrictions which had a negative effect on his participation in sport: ‘We felt sad because we love soccer, and we could not play because of the situation [COVID-19]. We miss exercising and competing.’ This quotation demonstrates how Sandile perceived the negative effects of the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions on sports participation. Clearly, these restrictions resulted in social isolation and a lack of sports activities and might be considered a negative aspect for Sandile.

In summary, several contextual factors contributed to Sandile’s experiences. First, it is worth noting that the programme was not the central aspect of Sandile’s experiences. I consider his personal life experience of running in the community and interaction with the boy herding the cattle to be the critical aspects of his experiences. In this context, Sandile commented that he was inspired to be physically active by the boy herding the cattle. Secondly, the findings from Sandile’s experiences highlight contradictions and tension in his views about the boy in the photograph. On the one hand, Sandile felt sad for the boy and considered herding cattle to be exhausting. On the other hand, he perceived herding cattle to be an opportunity and positive experience to exercise and maintain good health. Sandile’s perspective further indicates the contextual realities in his life. Finally, the key contributors to his positive experiences were his own life personal experiences and interactions with his peers and friends at school.

5.2.5 Zee: Fetching water from the river

Zee was a 17-year-old male, and, at the time of the interview, he had been participating in a sports programme for three years. To illustrate his experiences, Zee depicted a man carrying a bucket on the top of his head. Carrying a bucket on the head is common in most areas in South Africa, especially in townships and rural areas. The bucket is often used to collect and carry water. In other instances, women use it to carry food to sell. The man holds the bucket with one hand.

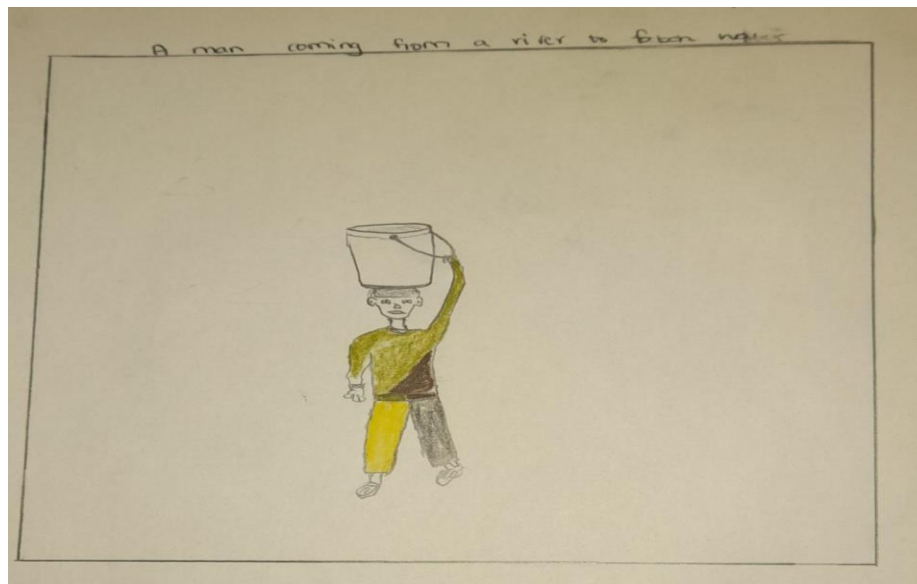


Figure 5.9: Zee's drawing of a man carrying a bucket

According to Zee, the drawing in Figure 5.9 portrays a man coming from the river to fetch water. When Zee explained his drawing, it was clear that sport was not the central focus of his experiences. The critical aspect to Zee was the importance of water in society and its contribution to good health. Zee explained his drawing as follows:

Umuntu ukha amanzi Ukuze, bathole ukuphuza Bagez'emzimbeni, amanz'okuphuza for abengcono emzimbeni ukuthi abe-healthy. (A person fetches water so that they can drink, wash their body, drink water for the body to be healthy). As he pours water into the bucket, he gets an opportunity to exercise and do other things. It [experience] has taught me to get water for other people. I like water as it is vital for our body to get energy. Soccer gives me energy. I am happy when I play soccer as I love it.

Zee's drawing depicts a person carrying a bucket of water. This depiction is a literal representation of a man carrying water, which may highlight the significance of water for his household. In this instance, it is common practice for people, especially women in the villages and rural communities, to carry a bucket of water on top of their heads. This drawing illustrates a form of transporting water from the river to the respective households. In the cultural context, the people living in the rural areas rely on the streams, dams and rivers for their water needs. In addition, fetching water from the river is a socially accepted practice in South African culture, mostly in rural areas.

Considering that the man is standing upright with one foot in front and the other at the back with both his feet pointing straight ahead suggests that the man might be walking. This reveals a form of movement. Zee perceives fetching and carrying a bucket of water as an unconventional way of physically working out. By contrast, Zee stated that he did not like to fetch water from the river. He explained, 'I do not like fetching water, especially when it is hot.' This extract highlights some tension between Zee's views. On the one hand, he mentions the importance of water in promoting health. On the other, he indicates that he does not like to fetch water. This might not necessarily mean Zee does not acknowledge the importance of water in his life but instead that he could be discontent with the intensity and routine of fetching water.

It is clear from Zee's drawing that the bucket on the top of the man's head is a salient aspect of his drawing. His illustration reflects reality and perspective based on his social context. Zee may consider the need for water to be an essential element in his life and something important for his community. This might further suggest that the need for water is more significant to Zee than sport. It is worth noting that during our conversation, Zee revealed that he enjoyed soccer, but this aspect is absent in his illustration. This shows the contradictions between his drawing and the conversation.

Zee also photographed a boy standing next to water drums to further elaborate on his experiences (Figure 5.10). The boy is wearing a red Puma-branded t-shirt and is standing in front of three drums and two buckets. Not far from the boy, there is a structural foundation of a building.



Figure 5.10: Photograph of a boy next to water drums (taken by Zee)

According to Zee, the photograph depicts a child fetching water. Zee described water as an essential element of life and his photograph portrays the significance of water. The photograph predominantly features drums and buckets that denote water. Zee described his photograph in the following way:

Lesi isthombe nje yabona si,si eh, ingane uma iyokha amanzi igcwalisa umkhumuli eh ,bakwenzu ukuthi bakhande indlu; Ngithandile into ayenzayo, uyawakha awathengise, ngoba ekugcineni kothola imadlana akwazi nokuziphilisa. Ihambelana ngoba kumele ngidlale, ngikwazi ukuzijimisa, ngikwazi ukukhamanzi, kube ngikwazi ukwenza ezinye izinto ngaphandle koku,kokudlala ibhola (This is just a photograph of a child going to fetch water. When a child goes to fetch water, he fills the containers. This enables them to build a house, I like what he [boy] does, he collect[s] the water and sells it, because in the end, he earns a little money to be able to support himself. This photograph relates to how I have to play soccer, also to fetch water, and do other things besides playing soccer.)

Zee's excerpt highlights some of his responsibilities at home. He said that apart from playing soccer, he had to fetch water for his family. Thus, the boy in the photograph reflects the

ordinary demands of everyday life of some children living in rural areas. In the rural South African context, fetching water, cooking and fetching firewood are some of the household chores performed by young people. The responsibility of fetching water usually falls on the girls. However, the boys will help the girls to collect the water from the river. The boys are mostly responsible for agricultural activities, such as farming, tending animals and planting. Their elders expect them to collect reeds and water to build the houses. The boy is a salient feature in the photograph and exemplifies the day-to-day experiences of the rural youth in their households. Zee's accounts revealed how young people engage in income-generating activities. For example, Zee mentioned that the boy sold water to make money. It is a common practice in most rural households for boys and girls to engage in activities that generate income for their families. In this context, young people collect water for moulding bricks and earn money for smearing dung and mud. It seems that Zee wanted to illustrate the conditions of his existence that were based on day-to-day life within his social context.

Zee's photograph represents his experiences shaped by his social realities and cultural context where young people's daily activities are characterised by household chores, school and sports activities. It is interesting to note the absence of sports features and the school environment in Zee's illustrations. He did not depict the teachers, coaches and sports activities. However, these aspects of Zee's experiences appeared in our conversation. The conversation revealed Zee's personal perspective related to his participation in the Dreamfields Project sports programme. In this regard, he said, 'Ngifundile ukukwazi ukudlala ibhola bengingakwazi ukudlala ibhola ingifundisile.' (I learned how to play soccer. I could not play soccer, and it has taught me.) Although the Dreamfields Project sports programme was not a central aspect of Zee's experiences, it seems the sports programme did contribute to his physical development and enhanced his positive experiences. Zee described his experiences of the Dreamfields sports programme in fostering positive experiences and positive behaviour. He further perceived sport as an avenue to enhance personal and social development skills. Zee explained his views as follows:

Ingincede ngokuthi ngi communicate nabanye abantu; Ngifunde ukuthi silalelane ukuze impilo izoqhubeka iye phambili. Ukuthi silalele 134ense lokhu abakushoyo, sigcine sesazi ukuthi ibhola lenziwa sigcine sesingasatshelwa; Ngifunde ukuthi ngilalele imithetho nokuthi angiphe ulwazi ucoach. Ingifundise ukuthi, ngikwazi ukubambisana nomunye umuntu. Ngizizwe nje ngi happy ngokuba kule-sports,

ngoba singifundise okuningi. (It has helped me to communicate with other people; I learned that we must listen to each other so that we can progress in life; We must listen and do what they [teachers, coaches] say so that we can end up understanding what is required in soccer and we end up doing it ourselves. I learned to obey the rules and to acquire knowledge from the coach. It taught me to cooperate with another people. I just feel happy to be in this sport [programme] because it taught me a lot.)

This extract provides further insight into Zee's experiences in the programme and suggests that Zee attributed his enhanced personal development and soccer skills to the sports programme. Across his account, Zee shared positive experiences related to his participation in the programme. For example, he mentioned that he 'enjoys soccer because it is fun'. The description of enjoyment suggests that the need to have fun was paramount, compared to the competitive environment that is inherent in sport.

Apart from the positive experiences, Zee also mentioned the challenges related to the sports programme. He explained, 'We do not have enough time [participation in a sports programme] ... sometimes we hurt each other.' Although he did not elaborate on the extent of the injuries, it was clear that he had experienced physical injuries in the sports programme. Continuing, Zee explained that enough time should have been allocated for sport at school and that the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions in 2020 and 2021 had had a negative impact on sports activities at the school. According to Zee, the cancellation of sport during this period resulted in isolation from his peers and friends. It seems that Zee might have been longing for social interaction. A likely explanation for Zee's views relating to the limited time allocated for sport and COVID-19 lockdown restrictions could be that he considered the sports programme as an effective way of promoting social interaction.

In conjunction with his household and sports experiences, Zee's perceptions and experiences seemed to have been shaped by his everyday life and broader social environment. His views and illustrations present multifaceted, contrasting perspectives. For example, Zee's photograph and drawings did not depict the teachers. However, he believed that the teachers at school created a positive environment for him to improve his sports skills and he considered the teachers to be supportive. The tensions and ambiguities in Zee's narration are a representation of multiple instances where the photograph and drawing conveyed his experiences related to

his household, while the interviews elicited a conversational shift in which Zee described his sports experiences.

In summary, Zee's experiences unfolded within his community, family and school. I interpreted Zee's views and factors that influenced his experiences as revolving around his home where the social conditions required him to contribute to his household. This further highlights the tension between the importance of sport and the need for Zee to fulfil his role in his household. In essence, Zee's family life was a central aspect of his experiences and coexisted with his interest in sport. Therefore, Zee's personal experiences suggests that his engagements and circumstances at home were paramount compared to his need to engage in sport.

5.2.6 Amu: Mother with a bucket of fruit

Amu was 16 years old at the time of the interview and had been participating in the Dreamfields Project sports programme for two years. Amu drew a woman carrying a bucket on her head and holding another bucket with her right hand (see Figure 5.11). Her left arm is raised towards the bucket on her head, which signifies balancing the bucket to ensure stability. The buckets seem to be carrying items. She seems to be smiling and looks content. The woman is wearing a dress that appears to be a two-piece dress with the top part darker and the bottom part a brighter colour.

With reference to the meaning of his drawing, Amu wrote the following caption in the drawing: 'lona umama ubheke kodayisa ubanana namangwinya' (this is my mother selling bananas and vetkoek)



Figure 5.11: Amu's drawing of a woman smiling with two buckets

Amu elaborated further on the significance of his drawing and stated:

Lomama ukuthi, okay umama lo udinga ukodayisa ucabangela ubhekelela umndeni wakhe. Ufuna ukubhekelela umndeni wakhe ngemali. (This mother needs to sell. She is considering the needs of her family and must take care of her family financially). This person is not carrying a bucket of water, but it is bucket containing vetkoek and a bucket of bananas she is selling.)

It is an ongoing, accepted social practice for women in rural Africa to carry loads and buckets on their heads. Head carrying is often associated with a bucket filled with water and sometimes with fruit and vegetables. The woman carrying buckets denotes a mother figure selling food on the streets. Amu affirmed that his mother had to sell food to take care of her family and buy him soccer boots. When asked how the drawing related to his experiences, Amu said, 'Umama ubengixhasa ngokuthi mangiza la eskolweni angiphe imali, ubengithengela amakhokho uma esenayo imali' (my mother supports me when I go to school and she gives me money, she buys me soccer boots when she has money.) This comment suggests that his mother was an important factor in his social setting and played an influential role in supporting Amu. He explicitly mentioned that he felt sad to see his mother selling food. Amu elaborated, 'It made me feel sad, but I knew she was doing it to help my family and me. It was the first time she bought me stationery.'

Amu's account of his interaction with his mother reveals multiple realities in Amu's personal life experience. Amu's views further highlight contradictions. While he acknowledged his mother's financial support, Amu was concerned about his mother selling bananas and vetkoek to make money. Despite his contradictory views, it is clear that Amu's mother created a nurturing and supportive environment for Amu to function positively. This is represented by a mother figure in his drawing and is further explained by his claim that

into ebikade yenzakala ukuthi kade ngingenazo lezizinto ngabona nomama uyaphanta mina kush ukuthi eskolweni mangifokhase, umama ubengixhasa ngokuthi mangiza la eskolweni angiphe imali, ubengithengela amakhokho uma esenayo imali. (What used to happened is that I did not have these things [sports equipment]. I saw my mother hustling, then it meant I should focus at school.)

His mother's efforts and support seem to have motivated Amu and enhanced his positive identity.



Figure 5.12: Photograph of a school building with the learners (taken by Amu)

Amu photographed a school building to share his experiences further and elaborate on his views on the school environment (see Figure 5.12). Amu's photograph illustrates a school and learners on the school premises. The photograph also depicts trees and grass, which signifies the outdoor environment. The learners symbolise the school environment. In addition to his mother's support and motivation, Amu mentioned that he had a positive relationship with the teachers.

The school is a salient feature in Amu's photograph, and he used it to convey his views and perceptions about the role of school in his life. Concerning the significance of his photograph, Amu described the photograph as follows:

Ngingasho ukuthi lesi sithombe lesi singikhumbuza ukuthi kufanele ngikwazi ukuzimela. Izingane lezi zithunywe abazali ukuthi zizofunda la esikoleni, zibhekelele imindeni yazo. Lokho kuxhumana ekuthenini abazali nabo sengingasho ukuthi sebekhathele ukuthi bayothenga e equipment, nabo sebengakhona ukuthi bafunde babe nemali yabo bakhone ukuzithengela. (I can say that this photograph reminds me that I should be able to stand up for myself. These children have been sent by their parents to attend school so that they can take care of their families; this relates in a manner that shows that parents are tired of buying equipment, they [the learners] can be educated and have their own money to buy [soccer boots] for themselves.)

Kulukhuni ukuthi bakuthengele equipment, babona engathi ibhola alikuyisi ndawo. Babona engathi izinto ziyadul, kodwa ibhola alikuyisi ndawo. Kanti bafuna u qinisa ekufundeni uzenzele zonke izinto. (It is difficult for them [parents] to buy equipment for you; they think that soccer will not take you anywhere. They believe that things are expensive, but soccer is not going to take you anywhere. They want you to study hard and do everything yourself.)

This excerpt reveals Amu's parents' perceived expectations and shows him fulfilling his mother's wishes. Amu seemed to be concerned about being autonomous and self-reliant. These concerns are conveyed through his narration where he explicitly mentioned that he would like to be independent in order to buy himself soccer boots. According to Amu, independence would enable him to work hard and be self-sufficient. He further believed that the school environment was conducive to developing skills and fulfilling his need to feel competent and effective. In this context, Amu explained, 'Ukufunda kubaluleke kakhulu, nje ngoba if ufunda uyakhona, usuthola imali ka NSFAS⁷ lapho ukuthi ugcine usuzithengela wena.' (Studying is very important, because if you study you will get money from NSFAS so that you can buy things for yourself.) This extract reveals Amu's needs for financial support and probably his

⁷ National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) is a bursary scheme in South Africa (Department of Higher Education and Training) that is offered to students who are in need of financial support to fund their studies.

domestic circumstances. Amu's comments were probably influenced by the expectations and perspective of his mother and his personal experiences at school.

With reference to the school environment, the role of the teachers was another critical aspect of Amu's experiences that emerged in our conversation. Amu affirmed that the teachers created a context that facilitated his personal development skills and influenced his motivation to participate in the Dreamfields Project sports programme. In this regard, Amu indicated that the teachers contributed to his improved physical skills and he acknowledged the support provided by the teachers. He explained:

Bayasigcuzelela ukuthi asiphumeni siyodlala ibhola ukuze umqondo singacini nje kwimfundo. Engikufundile kothisha ukuthi if kukhona abantu abahluphekile uyakhona ukuthi ubancede. Basithengela namabhola if eshoda la esikoleni. (they [the teachers] encourage us to go out and play soccer so that our attention is not limited to our studies. I learned from the teachers that if there are people in need, you must help them. They also buy balls for us if there is a shortage of balls at school.)

This excerpt appears to suggest that the teachers provided a supportive environment and motivated Amu to participate in sport.

In addition, Amu viewed his school as a suitable environment for learning and development. Amu attributed his positive development experiences to the coaches and teachers. In this regard, he said, 'I learned a lot from the coach; he changed the way I play [soccer] and [I] play much better. You can see the way I used to play was different and the coach helped me to play better.' It appears that Amu considered his participation in sport to have contributed to his improved soccer skills and he acknowledged the influence of the coaches in this context. This indicates the role and contribution of the coaches in enhancing sports skills.

Apart from the positive influence of the teachers and coaches, Amu mentioned challenges related to insufficient sports equipment at his school. He elaborated, 'It is difficult to buy the equipment; they [parents] think things are very expensive. Before, we used rocks to make goalposts, but Dreamfields Project did great things for us; we are now able to play using proper goalposts and can score goals.' Amu's comments reveal the realities and structural conditions in the context of sport. It is worth noting some of the schools in rural South Africa either lack sports equipment and facilities or do not have sufficient sports equipment, which is often

perceived as a barrier to sports participation. However, with regard to Amu, he improvised and used modified equipment for sports activities. For example, Amu indicated that they utilised rocks to make soccer goalposts. Despite the lack of adequate sports equipment, Amu seemed to have overcome this challenge and continued participating in sport.

In conclusion, it is clear that Amu's experiences unfolded under conditions that would generally be considered ambiguous and complex. His experiences appear to have been shaped by his interaction with his mother, teachers and coaches. The most prevalent aspect of his narration and representations reflects his fragmented family life and the tension between his mother's desires and expectations and his need to be self-sufficient. In some instances, his mother had to raise money by selling food in the community. On the other hand, Amu emphasised the need for financial support. Amu seemed to be torn between circumstances at home and participating in sport. Amu's conflicting perspective and ambiguous position reveals multiple realities in his social environment. Hence, the illustration of the school and his mother were more significant than his account of participation in sport. Therefore, education, the desire to make his mother proud and circumstances at home are considered critical aspects of Amu's life.

5.2.7 Busi: My netball hand

Busi was a 15-year-old female, and she had been participating in the Dreamfields Project sports programme for two years. Busi started participating in this programme at primary school. She depicted her experiences by drawing a hand with wide open fingers and a girl standing next to the netball goalpost (see Figure 5.13). The girl stretches her arms forward and appears to be catching the ball. She is wearing a matching top and a skirt. The girl is almost as tall as the goalpost, and she is barefoot. Another feature of the drawing is the sun. This can be seen as a representation of an outdoor environment rather than an indoor setting.

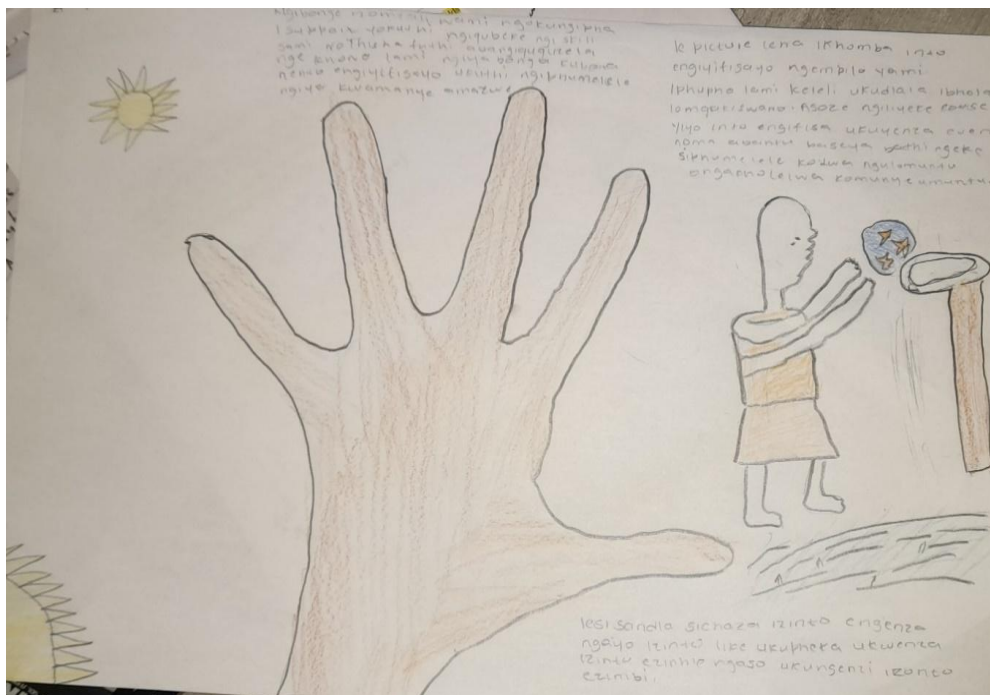


Figure 5.13: Busi’s drawing of a hand and a female netball player

A hand gesture has different conventional meanings in South African culture and varies based on the social and cultural context. A hand with open fingers often denotes a non-verbal sign to convey a message. However, the hand gesture does not have a universal meaning, and the cultural setting will determine the meaning. According to Busi, the representation of the hand in her drawing signifies her capabilities and potential. In this regard, she used a description in her drawing to explain the significance of the hand. She explained, ‘Lesi sandla sichaza izinto engeza ngayo izinto like ukupheka, ukwenza izinto ezinhle ngaso, ukungezi izinto emnzimbi.’ (This hand describes the things I can do, like cooking, doing good things with, not doing bad things.) Therefore, in this context, the hand symbolises her potential and a girl with aspirations and determination to succeed in life. Busi further elaborated on her drawing and stated:

Le picture lena ikhomba into engifisa ukuba yiyo empilweni. Iphupho lami leli ngidlala ibhola sinqakisane ngazi nabantu egroundini. Isandla sidwetshiwe ngoba yisandla esingikhuthazayo ngoba unkulunkulu unginike isandla ukuze ngisisebenzise. (This picture shows what I want to be in life. My dream is to play netball and meet people on the grounds [netball field]. The hand is drawn because it is the hand that inspires me. After all, God gave me a hand that I can use.)

This excerpt suggests that some of Busi's desires include participating in netball and the need for social interaction. Another aspect of her drawing, that is, a girl standing next to the netball goalpost, highlights this. In my analysis, the representation of the netball goalposts and a female figure illustrates Busi's desire to engage in netball activities. The netball activities could be providing her with opportunities for social interaction. Therefore, Busi can interact with her peers and meet new people through her participation in netball. Busi clarified the representation of the hand, the netball goalpost and the sun in her drawing as follows:

Umuntu uya shooter, uyisikhundla esifanayo engisidlalayo, Kungikhumbuza ukuthi ngingumdubuli [shooter]. Ngukuthi wonke umuntu osenkundleni uthembele kimi ukuthi angaphuthelwa yibhola, isandla esidwetshiwe lapha singisiza ukwenza konke, ukudlala e netball. (The person is shooting; she is in a similar position [shooter] that I am playing. It reminds me that I am a shooter. Everyone on the field believes in me and is confident that I will not miss a shot. The hand drawn here helps me do everything and play netball.)

Ilanga lona ilona elinginikeza uma kushuthi ukukhanya ehh ukukhanya ikona loku okunginikeza ukuqhubekeka phambili ngoba uma lina akudlaleki Kahle ibe sekunika ngiyashibilika. Ukuthi ingikhanyisele ukuthi khona labantu uma ungathola ukuthi li nethe abezi abantu kodwa uma kushisa bayakhona ukuthi beze. (The sun provides light and the light encourages me because when it rains it is difficult to play and then I slip. Some people when it is raining do not come [to netball matches], but when it is hot they come.)

Seemingly, netball was a significant part of Busi's life and this is conveyed through her drawing. Busi indicated that the person's height in the drawing might illustrate how she perceived her height. Busi explained, 'Jengoba nje ngingaka iheight yami, iheight yami ilingene for ukuthi ngidlale.' (It is just because I am tall, my height is suitable for me to play netball). Thus, she associated her height with her ability to play netball. She further associated the sun with netball activities.

For this reason, she described how the weather conditions could hinder or promote netball activities. Her representations were probably motivated by her participation in netball activities and the experiences she encountered in daily life. Across her account, Busi mentioned her passion for netball and the perceived benefits of netball. To explain her perceived development

outcomes associated with participation in netball, Busi described how the social connection to others promoted teamwork and enhanced trust between her teammates. In this regard, she said, ‘Ngikufundile kubadlali ukusebenzisana nabanye abantu, ukukhuluma kahle nabanye abantu. Uma kuthi siyadlala egroundini ungamthethisi omunye umntwana.’ (I learned from the players to work with other people, to speak well with other people. If we are playing on the ground [sports field], you must not shout at other children.) This depiction illustrates Busi’s perceived social development skills derived from her participation in the sports programme.

In addition, Busi expressed her views about the importance of sport in providing learning experiences related to respect, confidence and discrimination against others. She also stated that playing netball had inspired her to work hard and excel. She elaborated, ‘Engikufundile ngami ukuthi abantu abadala ngiyabahlonipha. Angibacwasi abanye abantu, angibabukeli phansi.’ (What I have learned about myself is that I should respect older people. I do not discriminate against other people, I do not undermine them.) Thus, sports participation was associated with personal development and social development experiences, such as respect and teamwork. This certainly seemed to be the case for Busi, who indicated that she had these experiences in netball.

It is clear from the drawing that netball was a central part of her life within the context of overall her sports experiences. Busi mentioned the need for social interaction. However, the representation of her peers and friends was absent in the drawing and only appeared in the conversation. The absence of other people may not have meant that these individual figures were not important in her life but rather it was a way to foreground the significant aspect of her netball experiences. The netball context suggests that personal development outcomes might have been an important part of Busi’s experiences. For example, the need for self-governance and enhanced self-esteem was paramount for her when compared to the need to connect with others.

Apart from the personal development experiences that she derived from participation in netball, Busi attributed her positive experiences to one of the teachers at her former school. To support this view, Busi photographed a female teacher standing next to the burglar-guard door (see Figure 5.14). Her left arm is stretched towards the wall. The teacher is smiling and this conveys a representation of a happy person. She explained the teachers’ smile saying, ‘Uyasmila Kutshengisa ukuthi phela uyangisupporta futhi unothando lwento engiyenzayo.’ (She is smiling; it shows that the teacher supports me and she loves what I am doing.)



Figure 5.14: Photograph of a teacher (taken by Busi)

According to Busi, her teacher persuaded her to participate in sport. She described her experience with the teacher to be pleasant. Furthermore, Busi indicated that she had a positive relationship with the teacher and she acknowledged that her teacher had encouraged her and provided her with support. She elaborated:

Lesi sithombe lesi, ilo thisha ongigqugquzelayo ukuthi ngidlale inetball. Ungipha umdlandla futhi unothando lezingane. Ngalokho uyakwenza ukuthi uqhubeke udlale ibhola. uye osigqugquzelayo uma sekuyikhathi sokuyodlala. Asibize emaclassini uma sekuyisikhathi sokuyodlala. Lokho kungitshengisa isupport anginika yona, nami ngizogqugquzeleka ukuthi ngidlale. (In this photograph, it is a teacher who encourages me to play netball. She inspires me, and she loves children. Therefore, she encourages me to continue playing netball. She is the one who encourages us, when it is time to play; she calls us from our classrooms. It shows her support, which inspires me to play [netball].)

Ungenzele, uma sidlala lapha inetball uhlezi engitshela ukuthi ngingadlali kabi nezinye izingane. Kumele sihloniphane egroundini, ngingadeleli ezinye izingane. (When we play netball, she always tells me not to play aggressively with the other children. We must respect each other on the ground [netball field], not disrespect other children.)

This quotation highlights the teacher's compassion and support. The illustration of the teacher smiling seems to convey the teacher's positive attitude towards Busi and other learners. Busi attributed her interest and motivation to participate in netball to her teacher and further expressed her appreciation for the guidance and encouragement provided by all the teachers. She explained,

Ukuthi othisha bayasinika isikhathi sokuyodlala phandla ,isikhathi sokupractisa. Bayakugququzela, nasemaclassini nakhona bayasitshela mayelana nokudlala ukuthi kubalulekile, nokuzivocavoca. (It is because the teachers give us the opportunity to play outside and a chance to practice. They encourage you; even in the classroom, they also share the importance of playing and exercising.)

The positive relationship and interaction with the teachers appear to have been the critical aspect that motivated Busi in netball. The element of a supportive relationship between Busi and her teachers highlights how a supportive environment can enhance motivation and connection with others. In this context, Busi said, 'E support ibalulekile ngoba uyagququzeleka nawe. Mhlampe awunayo nje isupport ngeke nawe ugququzeleke.' (Support is important because it encourages you. If you do not have the support, you will not be encouraged.)

Alongside the teacher's support and encouragement, Busi mentioned that her parents were also supportive. Interestingly, Busi did not include a parent figure in the drawing but discussed her relationship with her parents during the interviews. She explained,

Bahlezi bengigququzela bethi ngingaliyeki ibhola lingangifikisa ngisho naphesheya, abazali bami bangixhasa ngokuthi bangithengele amateki, bangezela umphako. Bangitshela ukuthi ngihambe kahle, ngidlale kahle. (They always encourage me, saying I should not stop playing netball [as] it can take me overseas.⁸ My parents support me by buying running shoes for me, make lunch for me, they tell me to be safe and tell me to play well.)

Her comments further suggest that she had a respectful and supportive relationship with her parents.

⁸ Overseas refers to foreign countries and in the South African context it relates to European countries and the United States of America. [for Busi, this overseas meant European countries and the US]

Figures of her friends and peers were also absent from Busi's illustrations; however, these aspects appeared in our conversation. In this regard, Busi described the contribution of her teammates and peers in enhancing her social development skills. She related her experiences as follows: 'Engikuthande kakhulu ehm ukuhlangana nabanye abantu ongabazi uma ngihamba nabasesikoleni siya ezikoleni ezinye. Ukuhlangana nabantu eningabazi nakhe ubudlelwane nabo.' (What I liked the most, is meeting new people that I did not know before, especially when we visited other schools. Meeting new people and building relationships with them.) It appears that Busi, through her participation in netball at school, experienced positive interaction with peers and friends

Alongside the positive interaction with her peers and teammates in the sports programme, Busi acknowledged the contribution of the spectators. She expressed her views as follows: 'Support is important because it encourages you. If you don't have the support, you will not be encouraged; it is like you are playing without intentions.' Busi mentioned that the spectators created an exciting and positive environment in the sports programme and she was encouraged by their support. My analysis shows that Busi valued the spectators' contribution and considered their role to be an essential aspect of her positive experience in the sports programme.

Linked to the above experiences, Busi also highlighted her experiences with COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, which prohibited sports activities. She explained,

Ngesikhathi se-COVID nga feeler sengathi kubuhlungu kakhulu asisalidlali ibhola kade silijwayele. Ngoba italent, uba nentalent elilidwa elincane odume ngalo udlala ibhola, ukuthi makudlula leCOVID babuye badlale futhi. (During the COVID-19 period, it was painful because we could no longer play netball and it was painful because the only talent that I am known for is netball. When the COVID is gone, we should play again.)

It seems that the COVID-19 restrictions had a negative effect on Busi's desire to continue participating in netball. She could no longer play netball as that was her passion

Through Busi's illustrations and context, netball can be viewed as a central aspect of her experiences. Busi attributed her participation and positive experiences in sport to her teacher at primary school. She appeared to have valued her teacher's influence in providing a supportive social environment. Thus, in terms of social environment, Busi developed positive

relationships through her fruitful interaction with one teacher at her school. Busi's peers and spectators also seemed to have contributed to her enhanced social development experiences. She perceived her teammates and supporters at school to be supportive and to encourage her in the sports programme. Similarly, Busi's motivation in netball can be attributed to the support of her parents. Lastly, Busi's motivation was disrupted because of the COVID-19 pandemic. She acknowledged that the lockdown restrictions had hindered her opportunities to participate in netball.

In conclusion, Busi seemed to believe that support was a significant aspect of enhancing motivation. For one, she expressed that the positive social environment created by her teachers influenced her perspective on netball. Secondly, she recognised that social interaction with her teammates and spectators was essential in creating a vibrant environment and promoting sports participation.

5.2.8 Sam: My siblings

At the time of the interview, Sam was 14 years old. He had been participating in the Dreamfields Project sports programme for three years. To illustrate his experiences of the Dreamfields Project sports programme, in Figure 5.15, Sam shared a drawing which depicts a person standing next to a tree. The drawing is captioned, 'A boy going to eat apples so he can be ready to play'. The tree has red features that seem to be fruit. The person is wearing a green t-shirt and trousers. He looks like he is standing on a mountain and seems to be isolated. The other features in Sam's drawing show the clouds and a representation of what looks like plants.

The illustration of a tree, clouds and plants could be considered a representation of an outdoor environment.

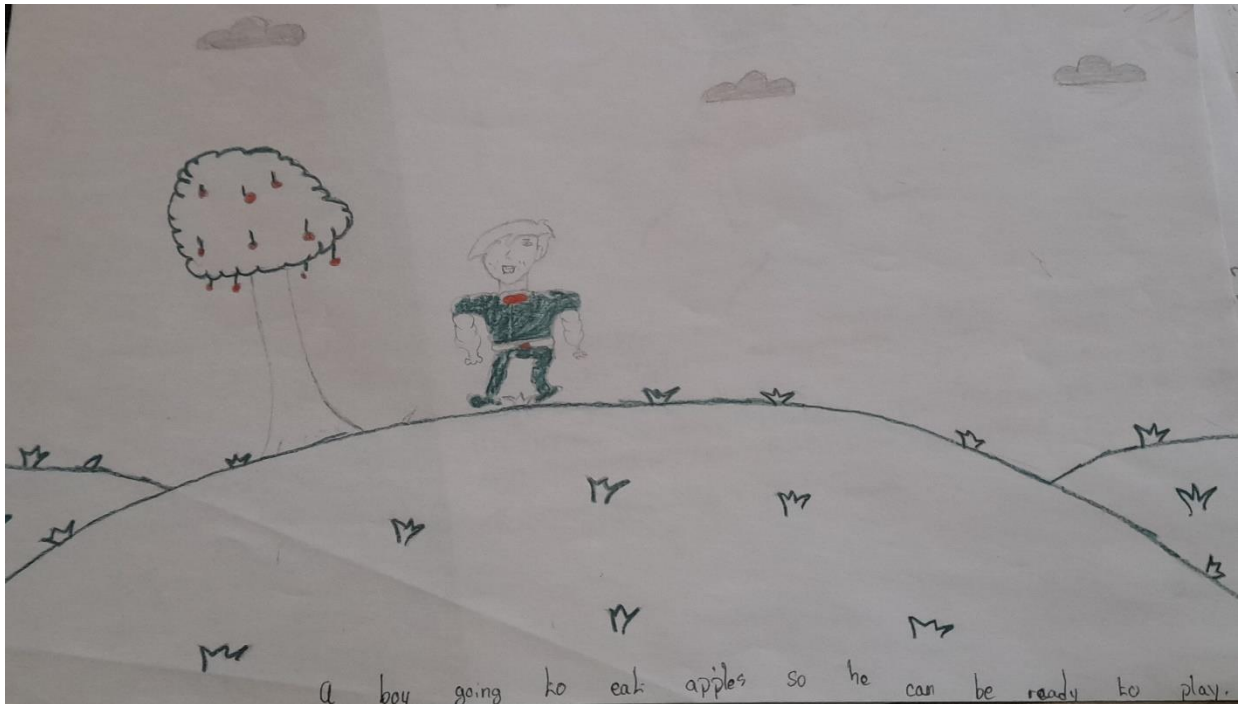


Figure 5. 15: Sam's drawing of a boy and a tree

Regarding the meaning of his drawing, Sam explained the significance of his drawing during our conversation. He said that the drawing signified healthy food and represented fruits. Sam expounded:

Ukuthi kumele udle ukudla oku healthy, Ukuze umzimba wakho ube fit, udlw ama Orintshi no carrot, lesihlahla lesi esama fruit, lo muntu uyowadla uzoba umzimba wakhe uzoba ready ukuthi ahambe ayodlalela e groundini agijime. Njalo ekuseni movuka kumele udle ama fruit before uzokwenza okunye. (You must eat healthy food so your body can be fit, eat oranges and carrots. This tree bears fruit, this person eats them, and he is ready to play on the ground (sports field) and run. Every morning you wake up, you must eat fruit before doing other things.)

Sam's comments and drawing suggest a connotation associated with physical activity experienced outdoors. Sam also used the fruit tree to convey a healthy lifestyle. He conveyed the importance of healthy food by using a cultural convention of drawing a vegetable garden.

The representations of a vegetable garden and the figure of a fruit tree suggest nutritional needs. A fruit tree is associated with good nutrition because it bears and provides fruit for people. Similarly, from a cultural perspective, growing a vegetable garden in the yard is often associated with food and a healthy diet. Hence, Sam perceived the tree and vegetable garden to be a source of healthy food.

Sam seemed to recognise the importance of eating healthy food. In this regard, he explained, ‘Ukuthi ngeke uze ukwazi uhamba udlala ibhola ube ungekho healthy umzimba wakho.’ (It is because you will not be able to play soccer if your body is not healthy.) Based on the experiences related by Sam, it is likely that nutritional needs were a critical aspect of his life experiences. This implies the possibility that Sam associated healthy food with sports participation. For instance, he highlighted that engaging in sport had encouraged him to eat healthy food. He explained that through the guidance of the teachers, he had learned to be cautious of the food he ate. Sam further expressed his views as follows:

Kade bengisiza ukuthi qa, bebengisiza ngokuthi uma uhleli ngingacabangi ukudla I junk food. Cabange ukuphuma ngiyohlala phandle wenze into encane u ekusesayize umzimba wakho. Uma uzohamba ufike uhlale ungenzi lutho akukho healthy kuwe umzimba wakho. Engikuthandayo ukuthi kuyaveza kwanye abantu ukuthi fanele uhhle kahle. (They [the teachers] have been helping me, they helped me not to consider eating junk food. I must think of going outside to play and do something that can benefit my body. If you sit and do nothing, your body will be unhealthy. What I like is that it also shows people that you should eat good food.)

In addition, Sam mentioned that being involved in sport had encouraged him to be physically active. Sam expounded, ‘It [sport] makes me not just sit when I am home, I don’t just sit, but I run ... it is not healthy to sit and do nothing.’ As part of the healthy lifestyle and sports experiences in his life, Sam took a photograph of his two brothers (see Figure 5.16). They seem to be relaxing in bed rather than sleeping because their eyes are slightly open. Sam’s brothers appear to be a salient feature of the photograph.



Figure 5.16: Photograph of the boys lying on the bed (taken by Sam)

Although the photograph depicts a bedroom, Sam did not share any specific narrative about the bedroom. However, during our conversation, he shared his experience related to his life at home. Sam described his home as a safe place to relax. He also shared experiences related to his interaction with his brothers. Sam described the significance of his photograph as follows:

Ukuthi nami mangibuya mele ngilithole uklala, ukuthi mele wenze lokhu abakutshela kona ukuthi bebsuku mele uthole uklala okukahle. Abobhuti bami abancane bengidlala nabo. (When I come back [home], I must be able to sleep. You should do as you are told so that at night you can sleep well. These are my younger brothers, and I used to play with them.)

The representation of Sam's brothers lying in bed suggests the positive social interaction and relationship that he experienced at home with his siblings. This further suggests a positive interaction and relationship between Sam and his siblings. In a cultural context, the positive relationship between the siblings is perceived to be promoting prosocial behaviour and supportive relationships. Sam's comments reflect his experiences of positive and supportive relationships with his brothers.

Besides the relationship with his brothers, Sam also mentioned that the sports programme facilitated his personal and social development skills. Interestingly, Sam did not include

features representing sport in his illustrations, but he expressed his views relating to participation in the Dreamfields Project sports programme. Sam shared his experiences and the perceived benefits he derived from the programme. To explain his experiences, Sam described the sports programme as an avenue to develop respect, determination, cooperation and commitment. Sam explained that regardless of the circumstances and challenges in his life, he remained committed and determined to succeed.

He regarded respect for others and the ability of individuals to work together as some of the important experiences in the programme. Furthermore, Sam expressed his view about the importance of teamwork and cooperation. He elaborated, ‘It is because other people won’t get along with you if you do not respect them, and they will end up demeaning you. If you are knowledgeable, you must not keep it [knowledge] to yourself ... you must teach others also.’ It is clear that Sam believed that the sports programme facilitated his personal development skills. Aligned with personal development outcomes, Sam indicated that social interaction enhanced his social development skills. For example, he mentioned respect and teamwork as some of the skills he experienced in the programme.

Sam also shared other experiences that highlighted barriers to attaining positive experiences. To explain his experiences concerning these barriers, Sam took a photograph of a car (see Figure 5.17). Sam was aware of how these experiences affected the accomplishment of positive experiences and development outcomes in the programme. Sam viewed limited transport and inadequate sports equipment as a hindrance to sports participation.



Figure 5.17: Photograph of a car (taken by Sam)

Concerning the meaning of his photograph, Sam commented,

Other players live far and they need transport to travel where they are supposed to play. They use it for transport and to access locations that are far and not easily accessible by walking. It [car] means I should go to the field on other days, I ask for transport because if I do not go to the [school] field, I cannot play.

Sam explained that some of the learners lived far from the school and they needed transport to be able to attend sports activities. He affirmed that sometimes he walked to school, and it was difficult for him to participate in sport at school because he was exhausted. Hence, he was supposed to rest when he came back from school. This suggests the challenges that he experienced with transport which can be seen as a barrier to participation in the sports programme.

Linked to lack of transportation, Sam explained his experiences concerning financial resources and sports equipment. According to Sam, money was required to buy sports equipment, and he acknowledged that the non-profit Dreamfields Project procured sports equipment for his school. He commented, ‘We need balls and a soccer kit, others get to the field and play barefooted, I don’t have soccer boots, I play with tekkies.’ This quotation further reveals the social realities and complexities that exist in the context of a rural sports programme.

It is clear from Sam’s responses about his experiences that the sports programme had facilitated positive development experiences. Furthermore, the sports development programme enhanced his capacity to live healthily. Sam frequently mentioned the importance of healthy food and exercising. It also emerged from Sam’s experiences of the sports development programme that lack of transport and sports equipment were some of the barriers to his participation in the sports development programme.

The experiences Sam shared highlighted multiple realities in his life. Sam revealed his views about the importance of healthy eating and nutritional needs in sport. It was evident that healthy food and his relationship with his brothers were critical aspects of Sam’s experiences. Sam narrated positive experiences with his brothers and the sports programme. It is worth noting that Sam’s parents and teachers were absent from his depictions. It is not clear why Sam did not include these figures in his illustrations. Their absence could indicate that they might not be central figures in his experiences of the sports programme. However, it does not necessarily mean that the teachers and parents did not exist in Sam’s life.

5.2.9 *Nikile: The fruit tree*

At the time of the interview, Nikile was 14 years old. She had been participating in the Dreamfields Project sports programme for two years. According to Nikile, she started playing netball at primary school. To depict her experiences, Nikile drew a tree (see Figure 5.18). She labelled the parts of the tree as: (1) roots; (2) stem; (3) leaves; and (4) fruit. The labels symbolise the main parts of the tree structure. The parts are connected and perform different functions. For example, roots grow underground, support the tree and absorb water from the soil; leaves use the sun from the atmosphere and water to provide oxygen; the stem supports and transports water to the leaves. In essence, a tree provides firewood for cooking, fruit to eat and shade. It is a common practice in most rural areas in South Africa for people to sit under trees for gatherings and recreational needs. The shade offers protection from the sunlight and heat. Another feature of Nikile's drawing comprises the sun and what seems like dashed lines at the top of the tree. She used the colour yellow to convey the sun. The dashed lines are a representation of rain.

She included the following description in her drawing:

I drew the tree because it gives us air, if there is no tree, we will not survive, and it gives us fruit. I drew the sun because it can give the tree sunlight so that it can grow. I also drew rain because fruit can be big [grow], and water can help roots and the soil to be wet.

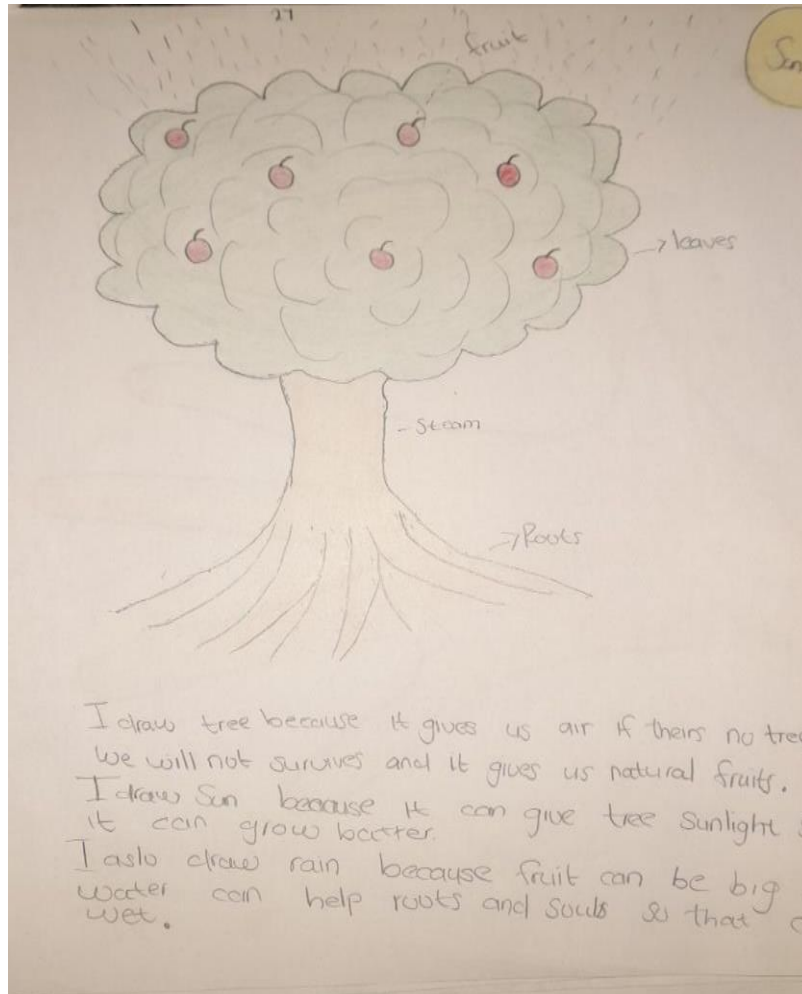


Figure 5.18: Nikile's drawing of a tree

In her interview, Nikile explained the significance of her drawing

Isiqu sesihlahla yiso esimisa ilokhunjana isihlahla, ama-roots amunca amanzi ukuze aye esihlahleni, i-futhi kunesihlahla singathamela e langa ukuze lingasishisi, Futhi sinama fruit, singakha ama fruit sidle.. Imvula iyana inisela isihlahla ukuze isihlahla sikhulekale and nelanga si liphumele esihlahleni ukuze lizonika isihlahla i-sunlight. (The stem of the tree provides support to the tree, the roots absorb water so that water can go into the tree, when there is a tree, we can sit under the shade so that the sun does not burn us. There is also fruit; we can pick fruit from the tree. The rain is watering the tree so that the tree can grow, and the sun has risen to provide the tree with sunlight.)

The tree signifies life and the features of the tree further illustrate their interrelationships and functions. The metaphorical representation of the tree appears to depict different actors (teachers, peers) and relationships in Nikile's social context. She seemed to acknowledge the role of her social environment in contributing to her experiences. This means that support and relationships might have been important aspects of her life. Another aspect of the drawing is the depiction of the sun and rain. This depiction suggests that Nikile might be striving for growth and nurturing environment. The school and sports environment have the potential to contribute to developmental skills, such as physical and social skills. My analysis highlights that the school environment, teachers and sports participation offered Nikile the opportunity to enhance her developmental skills. It is important to point out that teachers are absent from the drawing but appeared in the conversation during the interview. Nikile explained that the teachers constantly encouraged her to work hard. She elaborated,

Othisha bangisurpporte ngokuthi ngangiyitshela ukuthi vele angeke ngikwazi ukudlala ibhola bangigqhugqhuzela bathi ngena egroundini uzofunda, ngafunda kanjalo ukudlala ibhola. (Teachers support me, because I thought, I could not play netball, but they encouraged me to go to the ground [netball field] so I can learn, that is how I learned to play netball.)

Ngafunda kothisha ngesikhathi badlala ngafunda ukuthi if ukgxobe umugqa ongaphakathi yifault nokuthi uwelele ngale. (I learned from teachers when we were playing that if you step on a line that is a fault and you do not cross to the other side.)

The above excerpt suggests that the teachers created an opportunity for Nikile to learn and develop netball skills. The extract further reveals that the teachers could also have contributed to creating a positive learning environment. Nikile explicitly attributed her enhanced social development skills to the teachers and participation in netball at school. She described her experiences as follows: 'Ukusebenza nezinye ingane,if nizodlala kumele sixoxisane ukuthi ibhola mele lihambe kanjani lize lifike palini ukuze kukorwe igoli.' (It [netball] helped me to be able to work with other children. If you are going to play, you must discuss how the ball is supposed to move until it reaches the goalpost so that you can score the goal.)

Nikile further acknowledged that participation in netball contributed to her enhanced confidence and motivated her to work hard. She elaborated:

Kungifundise ukuthi ngizethembe ngizitshele nje ukuthi ngiyakwazi ukudlala ibhola. Into engyenza ukuthi ngibe confident if udlala ibhola ungabanaki abafundi abangaphandle ukuthi bathini kuwe kanjani nokuthi awukwazi ukudlala ibhola ama fault uyawayenza wena performa kwinto oyenzayo. (It taught me to believe in myself and just tell myself that I can play netball. What makes me confident is that when I am playing, I do not pay attention to what spectators are saying to me, and if you play netball, you will make mistakes and so just do what you can.)

Nikile's comments reflect her perceived development outcomes associated with netball participation. Thus, my analysis shows that Nikile believed the sports programme contributed to her personal development skills.

Linked to the above experiences, Nikile took a photograph of a tree (see Figure 5.19) to further describe her experiences. According to Nikile, the illustration of a tree denoted shade. She explained:

If sidlala ibhola mele kube nezihlahla, umpompi ukuze mawomile uzokwazi ukukha amanzi empompini uphuze lapho othola khona i-energy musudlalile. lesihlahla lesiyana uyathamela kahlehle uthamela umthunzi ukuze ilanga lingakushisi. (If we play netball, there must be trees and water taps so that when you are thirsty, you will be able to have water so that you can get the energy that you need, and the tree provides shade so that you do not get burnt from the sun and be exhausted. The tree is good for shade so that the sun does not burn you.)



Figure 5.19: Photograph of a tree (taken by Nikile)

Nikile's photograph seemed to be taken to portray her reality associated with how the tree was used in the sports context. She considered water and shade as essential aspects in sports participation. This can be clearly seen in the prominent role that Nikile gives to the tree. Her account further suggests her perceptions of being in meaningful relationships and her desire for positive interaction. Nikile described her views related to social relations as follows:

Into engiyithandile ngeprogramme ukuthi siyiteam siyakwazi ukuzwana
sihlanguanise amakhanda sixoxe ngokuthi if ngoba sisuke senza suke nenza kanjani
kuze niyofika ngyathanda ukuthi nizwane if niyiteam ningazondani. Into
engingayithandanga ukuthi umasidlala ibhola umuntu akanamali. (What I like about
this programme is that as we are a team we can get along and talk about what we are
going to do, how we going to do it. We should get along as a team and not hate each
other. We played together and did not hate each other. If we finish playing and
someone doesn't have money we buy things [food] we eat together. What I did not
like is that when you play netball and do not have money.)

The above excerpt indicates ambiguity and tension between Nikile's desire for positive relationships and the need for financial and nutritional needs. She acknowledged the positive social interaction with her peers in the programme but raised her concern about not having

money to buy food. Nikile seemed to highlight the challenges relate to financial support and nutritional needs. Her account illustrates the social realities in some of the rural environments in South Africa. This further reflects the dynamic interplay where Nikile's desire for positive interaction coexisted with her experiences of longing for financial support and having food.

Apart from financial support and nutritional needs, during the interview, Nikile described the interruption she experienced during the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. She explained that she was not happy that sports activities were prohibited, which meant, she could not participate in them. She described her experience in the following way:

Ngizizwe very sad, ngoba asisadlali asisa-practise kuyehla ukwazi ibhola asisayithembi ukuthi ibhola sisazolazi ngoba iCorona isivimbile, If singaqhubeka si-pratise ibhola singayinaki iCOVID singaba more successful. (I felt very sad because we are no longer playing [netball] and we are not practising. The netball skills are diminishing, We are no longer confident whether we will be able to know how to play netball because COVID-19 is preventing us from playing. If we could continue to practice netball and ignore COVID-19, we can be more successful.)

This extract suggests that Nikile was anxious about the potential effects of the COVID-19 restrictions on her physical netball skills. Although home-based exercise was encouraged during the period of COVID-19, it was not feasible for Nikile to continue participating in netball at home. Hence, she explicitly indicated that the COVID-19 restrictions had hindered her netball skills.

In conclusion, Nikile's representation of the tree revealed multiple social contexts and realities in terms of her experiences. Nikile seemed to be longing for a supportive environment that encouraged social interaction and facilitated development. Netball appeared to be the avenue for fulfilling her social development needs and enhancing her netball skills. In Nikile's view, the role of the teachers was prominent in creating a positive and supportive environment. For example, Nikile referred to the support and guidance that the teachers provided in the sports programme and how the positive reinforcement from the teachers had inspired her. This suggests that the sports programme seemed to be the link between Nikile and the teachers. Nikile's comments revealed the tension between her perceived benefits of sport and social realities. On the one hand, she shared positive experiences related to social interaction with the teachers. On the other hand, she expressed her concern about nutritional needs and financial

support. Thus, Nikile's experiences demonstrate multiple realities and reflect how negative and positive experiences coexisted in her social context.

5.2.10 *Dumi: My place of comfort*

Dumi was 16 years old at the time of the interviews and had been participating in the Dreamfields Project sports programme for three years. Dumi drew a house to depict her experiences (see Figure 5.20). There is also an illustration of a tree next to the house. Another feature of the drawing includes what looks like an outdoor floor. The house has two windows and one exterior door.

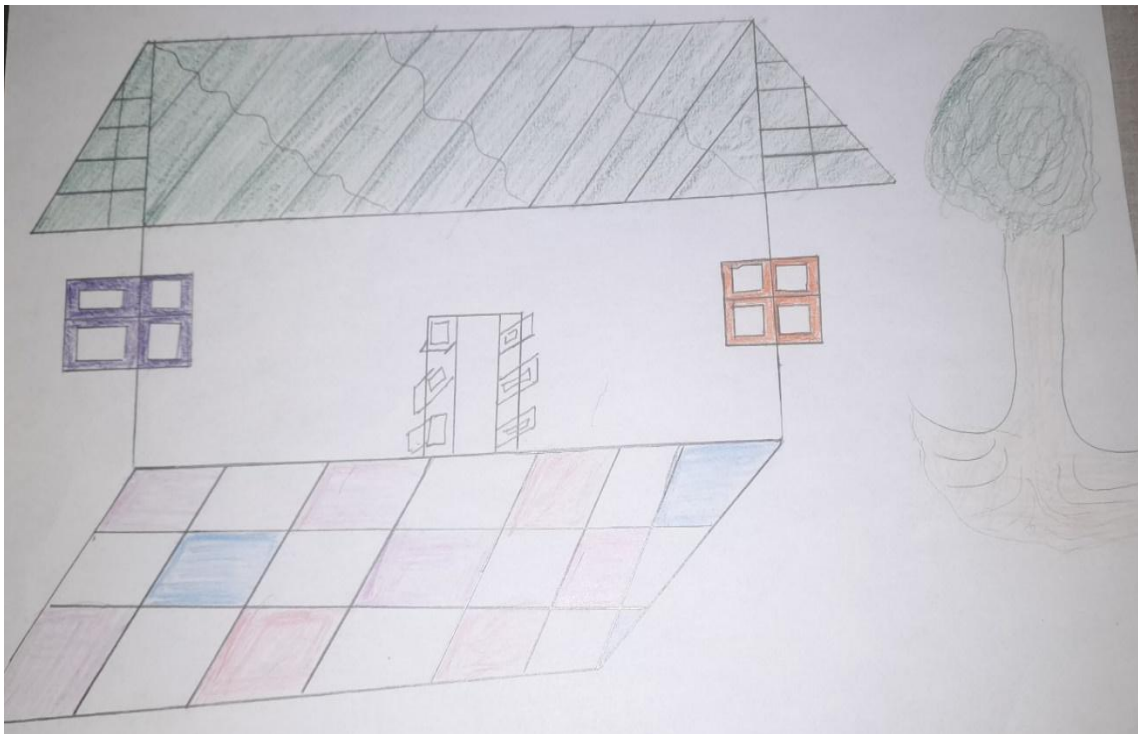


Figure 5.20: Dumi's drawing of a house with a tree

Dumi's drawing is a representation of a home and signifies a safe space. In this context, a home provides shelter and is considered a fundamental need for most families. Dumi mentioned that her drawing was a representation of a house. She described her drawing as follows:

Indlu inginikeza ngiphumule uma ngikhathele, Indlu inginikeza ukuthi ngilale endlini ngipheke ngi kline indlu ihlale iklini. Into engiyithandayo ngendlu ngithanda ukuthi uma ngikhathele, ukuphumula ngihlale esofeni. (The house allows me to rest when I'm tired, the house allows me to sleep, cook and clean the house so that it remains clean. The thing I like about the house is that when I'm tired, I can rest and sit on the couch.)

It is clear from Dumi's comments that her drawing conveyed her home and social environment. She described her home as a place that provided comfort and space for relaxation. She further associated her home with chores, such as cooking and cleaning. Culturally, girls and women engage in domestic chores and are also expected to prepare food for their families. Dumi's drawing illustrates her role and experiences at home. My analysis of her drawing shows that the house was the salient feature in Dumi's cultural and social contexts.

It is interesting that Dumi's drawing does not show her family and she did not mention her parents during the interviews. Thus, it is not clear whether the parents were present in or absent from her life. The absence of family members in the depiction might not suggest that her family was absent from her life. Rather, it might suggest a representation of how Dumi made sense of her world and what related best to her experiences. Furthermore, Dumi's account suggests she could have been involved with household responsibilities and was possibly required to cook and clean at home. Hence, she used a house to share her experiences.

Another aspect of Dumi's illustration was the tree. A tree is an important element of life; it symbolises nature and provides a variety of foods. According to Dumi, the tree is a source of energy and provides fruit. It appears that Dumi's depiction of a tree highlighted the nutritional benefits. She seems to link the tree to nutrition and directly to physical activity. To elaborate further, Dumi photographed a tree (see Figure 5.21).



Figure 5.21: Photograph of a tree (taken by Dumi)

According to Dumi, energy is required when you exercise. Concerning the meaning of her photograph, Dumi described her photograph as follows:

Isihlahla siyakhona ukunginikeza i-energy uma sikhona uma singekho ngeke ngikwazi ukuphila ngaphandle kwesihlahla. Futhi sinama fruit, singakha ama-fruit sidle, before sizodlala mele sidle ama-fruit ukuze sizothola amandla. Nokuthi uma .Ngingakha futhi ama-Orintshi esihlahleni akunikezi i-Energy ukuthi ngidlale kahle Uma ukhathele ungaphumula nalana emthunzini. (The tree is there to give me energy. If it is there and if it is not there I will not be able to live without the tree. The tree has fruit as well, [so] we can pick a fruit to eat, and before we play, we must eat fruit to get energy, and I can pick oranges from the tree. It will provide me with the energy to play well. If you are tired, you can rest in the shade.)

The extract above further indicates Dumi's perceptions and experiences related to the purpose of a tree in her life. Dumi might regard the tree as an integral part of her life. In this context, she mentioned that the tree not only provided food but also protection from the sun and could be used by sports participants to rest when they were tired. In relation to her sports participation at school, Dumi expressed contradicting views. Dumi believed that through interaction with her peers in netball, she had learned to respect and work well with her peers and friends. She expounded:

Sifunda ukuthi siphathana kahle uma sidlala ibhola. Into engiyithandile ukudlala lana esikoleni ukuthi uma, uma oThisha behamba nathi bayasinakekela endleleni. (We learned to respect each other when we play netball, I should still respect them and not fight with my teammates. What I like about playing here at school is that if the teachers are going with us, they take care of us.)

On the other hand, she commented on experiences associated with antisocial behaviour. She stated that some of the participants in the sports programme were disruptive. Dumi commented, 'Into engayithandanga ukuthi abanye abantwana babesichukuluza, kuyenzeka ukuthi ngiphatheka kabi ngokuthi vele ibhola. (Something that I did not like is that some of the children were teasing us; it made me feel sad because I love netball.) Dumi's contradictory views reveal multiple realities in sport. The positive and negative outcomes of sport are interrelated. In essence, a supportive sports environment that fulfils the need for competence and relatedness could enhance the positive experiences. However, negative interaction within

the sports environment could also lead to negative experiences. Although Dumi's comments suggest that she experienced a positive and respectful relationships with the teachers and her peers, it is worth noting that her sports participation was also characterised by some negative outcomes. Hence, Dumi discussed her experiences related to antisocial behaviour in the programme.

Dumi was strongly convinced that the sports development programme had enhanced her personal development and social development experiences. She described that she had been participating in sport in the community, but that she enjoyed participating in the Dreamfields Project sports development programme because she could meet different people and the teachers were supportive. According to Dumi, the sports development programme had provided her with the opportunity to participate in a structured sports development programme.

Dumi also pointed out some of the negative experiences associated with the sports development programme. She mentioned that she was not happy with antisocial behaviour from some of the participants. Furthermore, she elaborated on the lack of sports activities during the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. She had felt isolated because she could not participate in the sports development programme.

5.2.11 Lungi: My soccer friends

At the time of the interviews, Lungi was 15 years old. He had been participating in the sports programme for two years. To illustrate his experiences, Lungi depicted two people; one person seemed to be wearing soccer boots and was releasing the ball towards his right foot. In front of the person with the ball is another person who is barefoot (see Figure 5.22). The person without the ball is not wearing socks and is slightly shorter than the person wearing the soccer boots. This representations of the two people signifies male soccer players. These people are standing on what looks like zigzags, and the drawing also depicts chairs. The zigzags might represent grass, and chairs suggest an association with a sports field.

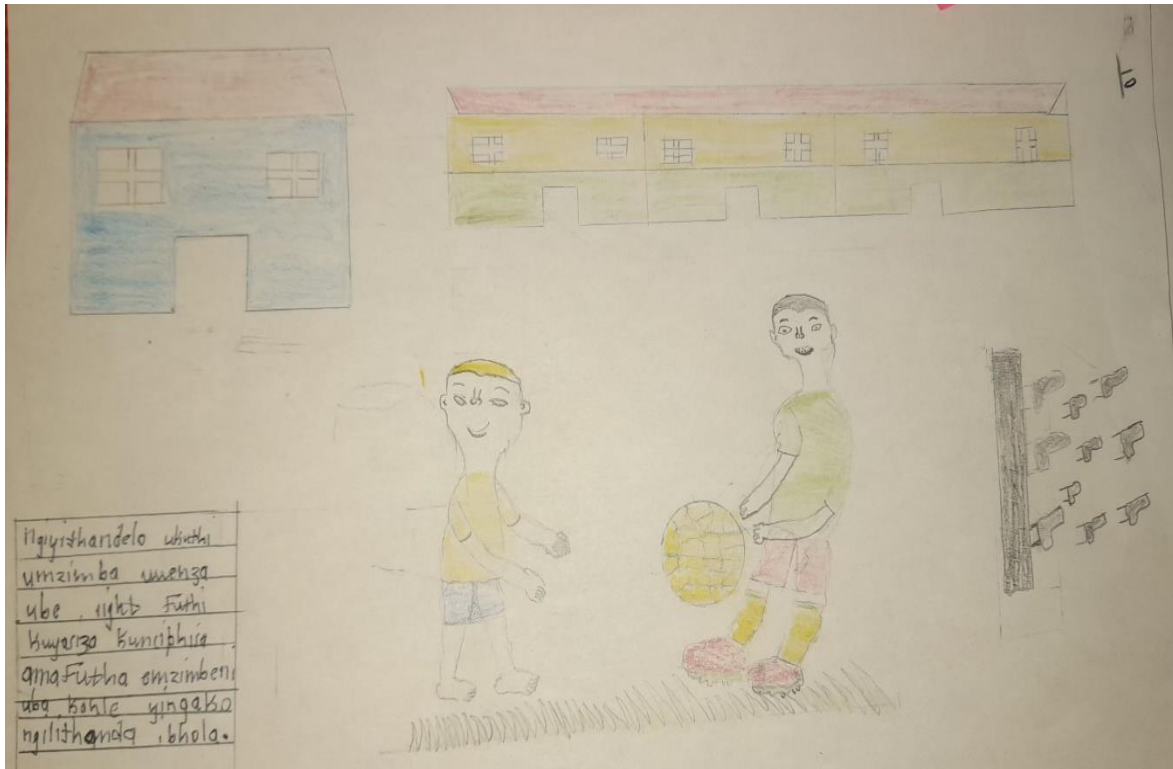


Figure 5.22: Lungi’s drawing of a school building and soccer players

Another aspect of Lungi’s drawing is that it comprises two buildings that are not far apart from each other. One of the buildings has multiple windows and doors, while the other has a single door and two windows. Buildings might be considered a representation of a house, post office or school. He has included numerous colours for the two buildings, which can be seen as a way to distinguish between them.

In our conversation during the interview, Lungi explained the meaning of his drawings in relation to his experiences. In addition, he used a caption in his drawing to assign meaning and describe his drawing: ‘Ngiyithandela ukuthi umzimba uwenza ube right, futhi kyasiza kuncipisa amafutha emzimbeni, uba kahle yingako ngithanda ibhola.’ (I love it because it makes you fit, and it helps to reduce fat in the body. Hence, I love soccer.) The drawing is about players from different teams, one of the players is in possession of the ball, and the other player without the ball represents the opponent.

It [the drawing] means when someone is having a ball, you must tackle him quickly before he dribbles you. It [the building] is my home, you get food, and then here it is

a shop, where you buy food and water. The chairs are for the spectators, every team has fans, and fans encourage you while they are outside.

Lungi explained that the house depicted a place of support where food was provided, and the shop was where the participants bought water and food. He elaborated, ‘They all support me at home by allowing me to go and play soccer and advise me that when I get there, I should never be rude, I should be respectful, be a good boy, not be rude to older people. They support me financially.’ It is not clear who in particular from Lungi’s family provided support, but from the quotation, it is likely that a parental figure provided guidance and support to Lungi.

Lungi further explained that the spectators used chairs during soccer matches. Therefore, Lungi used his drawing to convey the experience of participating in sport. By drawing the soccer players, with one player wearing soccer boots and socks and the other being barefoot, Lungi conveyed contextual realities in sport. From a social perspective, not all the children who participate in sport have soccer boots, and some play soccer barefoot. Even if Lungi did not explicitly communicate these contextual realities, this did not mean it was not a reality in the South African context. In general, a soccer match involves two teams or it is played with an opponent. Therefore, including two players in the drawing could be considered fundamental to a team sport like soccer.

In the interview, Lungi further described how the drawing related to his experiences. First, he mentioned that the programme empowered him in terms of his physical skills, sports skills, and the opportunity to belong and interact with others [friends, peers and teachers]. Furthermore, Lungi stated that the programme provided a learning experience associated with good health habits. Lungi pointed out other learning experiences related to positive development experiences. He believed that participants in the programme must work together and respect each other regardless of which team they belonged to. It can clearly be seen by the prominence of the two players in Lungi’s drawing and conversations that sport is a central aspect of his experiences.

With reference to these positive experiences, Lungi stated that when you commit a foul during a [soccer]match, you must ‘be polite, and cooperate, shake his hand, say sorry... it does not matter which team you are playing for.’ Lungi also shared his perceived health benefits from participating in sport. He described these benefits as follows: ‘This sports programme helps you lose weight, you get healthy, do not sit and become fat because you will end up having

health problems.’ Lungi also explained the value of positive relationships and being connected and valued by others. He acknowledged and appreciated the social interaction opportunities the programme created to meet new people and make friendships. Lungi’s social experience was exemplified when he stated, ‘It is good to get along on the field [playground] because you build friendships and get to know one another. So that you all can enjoy.’ He elaborated that it was

essential to have friends because you cannot live alone, you need others in your life, there are things that you will need help with from your friends, others encourage you to study so that you can finish school and do not rush to do things that will not help you in life. I want to enjoy and converse, have fun with friends and have someone in the field who will be your friend; you must not say negative things about other people ... I learned that it is easy to build friendships when playing soccer. You build friendships by apologising. When you hurt each other, you must apologise. He will also see that you did not do that on purpose. That is how you start being friends. You cannot build friendship by hurting someone and laughing. You develop it by trying to get along and play fair.

Friends seemed to be the main actors in Lungi’s social development experiences and he gave the impression that social interaction and a sense of belonging were critical aspects of the programme for him. In general, it seems he had positive peer experiences through his interaction with his friends and peers in the programme.

To elaborate further on his experiences, Lungi photographed soccer players standing on the soccer field with a ball (see Figure 5.23). The players are wearing different sports attire. Seemingly, the soccer field surface is uneven.



Figure 5.23: Photograph of soccer players (taken by Lungi)

The soccer field in the photograph is a real-life representation of some of the sports facilities in South Africa, especially in a rural context. Lungi indicated that the sports field was not in good condition, and many of the learners were injured during the sports activities. To explain his experiences, Lungi mentioned:

I don't like the sports field because when someone tackles you, you can get injured easily; on this field you can get injured and even break your leg because the field is slippery and uneven, there are small rocks here, and you can fall. However, you can still get hurt on the grass, but not that much. Some of the participants were injured, had bruises and were bleeding. Someone [a participant] was trying to jump and broke his ankle.

It seems that Lungi attributed the physical injuries to poor sports field conditions. Thus, there is no contradiction between Lungi's photograph and his experiences related to physical injuries.

Additionally, Lungi believed that a sports facility in good condition (that is, having an even playing surface) would minimise the risk of injuries. Furthermore, Lungi mentioned the struggle with sports equipment, such as soccer boots. He explained his experience by

mentioning the difficulties of sharing soccer boots with his peers. Lungi said that the participants refused to lend him their soccer boots but, through this experience, he had learned not to rely on others. This photograph also highlights the tension and challenges Lungi faced in the programme due to insufficient equipment and proper sports facilities.

Apart from the challenges with the sports field and equipment, Lungi also expressed the importance of food and water when participating in sport. In this regard, Lungi took a photograph of a tuckshop to illustrate his views (see Figure 5.24).



Figure 5.24: Photograph of a deserted tuck shop

The shop looks deserted, and the gate appears to be locked. However, contradictions were evident between the photograph and the conversation during the interview with Lungi when he described the photograph stating, ‘At the shop, they [the players] buy food and water so that they can eat. Food and water are very important, you need them even when you are running because you may faint due to dehydration.’ It is evident from this excerpt that Lungi viewed nutrition to be important to his physical development.

The teachers and coaches were silent figures in the photographs; however, they emerged in the conversation. Lungi attributed his motivation in the programme to the guidance of the teachers and coaches. He mentioned that they were always under the guidance of the teachers when they participated in sport. Lungi related that the teachers had provided him with advice that contributed to his improved sports skills. He further explained that the teachers provided food to some of the participants. Lungi described his experiences as follows:

They [the teachers] explain that when you arrive there, play on the left because you cannot play on the right, hold the ball and do not be anxious to pass the ball when you are facing the poles [goalposts]. We do get food, and other teachers put money together to buy food. Teachers and coaches treat us well. They [the teachers and coaches] do not look at how old you are, they just treat you right, and you should do the same. They tell you to encourage others to score goals and plead with you, not just because you are young. They respect you, and you should respect them. They call you and talk to you nicely, not just drag you and say, ‘Hey, you do that.’

The excerpt suggests that Lungi had positive interactions positive, supportive relationships with his coaches and teachers. This further shows the significance of the teachers and coaches in Lungi’s life. In addition, I consider the teachers and coaches to be a significant part of Lungi’s experiences. They contributed to his enhanced positive experiences in the programmes. However, when Lungi was asked about the challenges he had experienced in the programme, he said, ‘The teachers should add some other things that can make people interested. They should buy soccer boots, [as] others do not have money to buy soccer boots. We should also have a complete soccer kit. Some do not have money to buy proper socks.’ Although the teachers were a significant part of Lungi’s positive experiences, he acknowledged the challenges faced by him and other participants and he believed that the teachers could provide more support.

Apart from his positive relationships with the teachers and coaches, my analysis shows that the spectators were also prominent in Lungi’s experiences. Lungi explained that the spectators in the programme had motivated him and he was inspired by their support. He elaborated, ‘Every team has fans, and fans encourage you while outside, it encourages you.’ He also related that he had felt inspired when the spectators encouraged him during his participation in the programme. Lungi also shared some negative experiences related to the spectators’ behaviour:

Another thing that I was not happy about is when someone insults you, fans insult you when you miss the ball and when you are losing, and they just insult you. This is what I am not happy about because you miss the ball unintentionally, when you try to score, and you miss, they think you did it on purpose and insult you.

These quotations highlight Lungi’s contradictory views about the role of the spectators in the programme. On the one hand, he revealed that they were supportive. On the other, they showed

inappropriate behaviour. Such behaviour is prominent in a sports environment and could diminish the participants' self-worth and contribute to negative experiences. By contrast, positive and supportive relationships with the spectators could enhance participants' positive experiences. Those spectators appear to have critically influenced Lungi's experiences in the programmes.

In addition to Lungi's account of his experiences with the spectators, he also mentioned in the conversation during the interviews that the rewards in the programme had made him feel proud. He believed that the sports equipment, trophies and medals awarded to his team for winning the soccer league inspired him: 'Here at school, we receive trophies, medals and jerseys [sports kit]. We won and finished in the first position. I was so happy because you know that you had a purpose of playing soccer here at school.' This suggests the rewards might have enhanced Lungi's motivation and supported his need for competence.

The main finding drawn from Lungi's experiences is that a sports programme plays an important role in fostering physical and social development. According to Lungi, the programme enhanced his physical skills. Furthermore, Lungi attributed his experiences to the social interaction and support from his friends, teachers and coaches. Lungi said that his friends had encouraged him. He also described how the medals and trophies awarded to him had inspired him.

5.2.12 Sino: My football and netball passion

Sino, at the time of the interviews, was 18 years old and had been participating in the Dreamfields Project sports programme for two years. According to Sino, she participated in both the netball and soccer programmes. Sino's drawing depicts a girl standing next to the netball goalpost (see Figure 5.25). Her arms appear to be long and her hands seem to be holding the ball. She appears to be slightly taller than the netball goalpost. She is wearing a brightly coloured outfit with a GD symbol that signified the netball position Goal Defence. The top part of the outfit is purple and the bottom is orange. The outfit's colours can be considered a literal representation of netball gear. Another aspect of Sino's drawing illustrates the sun with sunrays, and the colour of the sun is orange. This can be seen as a conventional representation of an outdoor setting in which the sun conveys sunlight.

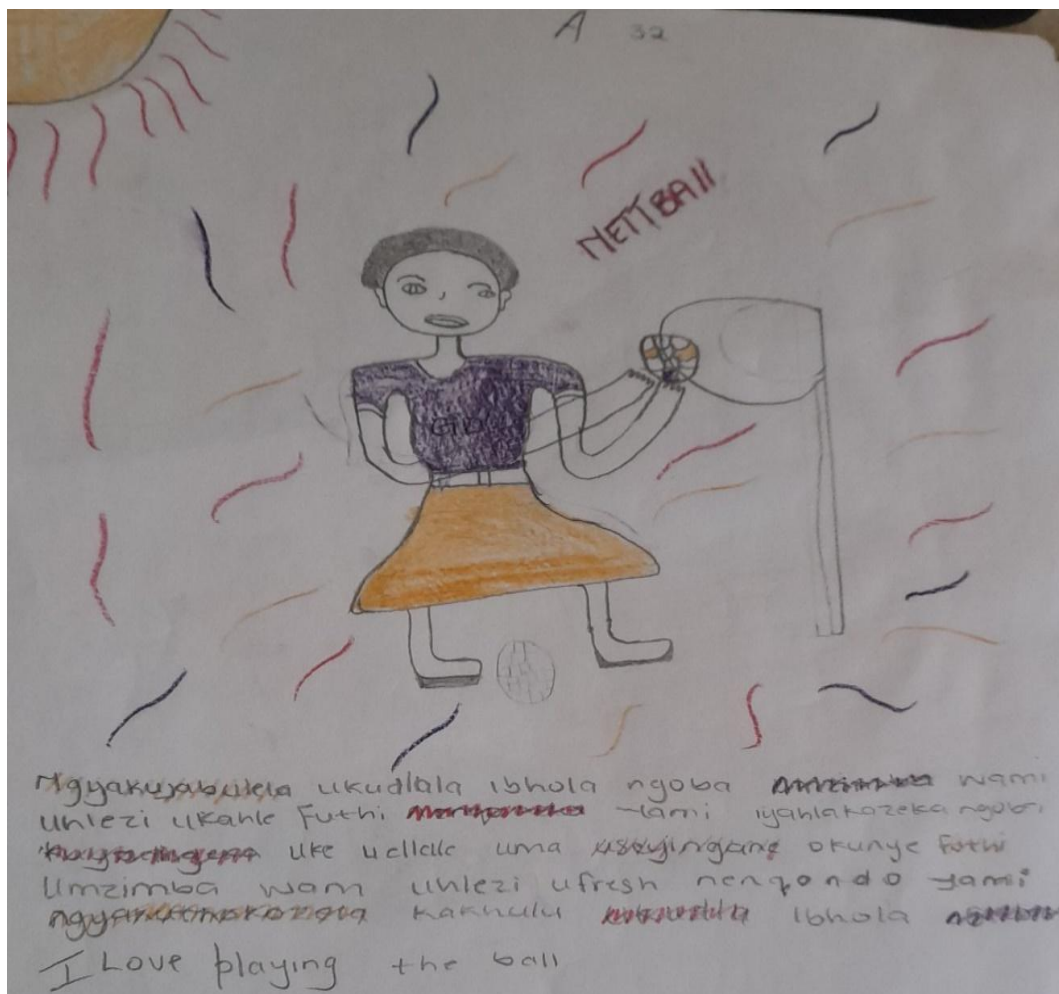


Figure 5.25: Sino's drawing of a girl standing next to the netball goalpost

According to Sino, before she participated in the Dreamfields Project sports programme at school, she had been playing netball at home with her siblings. She further explained that her favourite sport was netball. In relation to this, she wrote a description in her drawing to explain the significance of her depiction:

Ngiyakujabulela ukudlala ibhola ngoba umzimba wami uhlezi ukahle futhi nengqondo yami iyahlakazeka ngoba kuyangisiza uke udlale uma useyingane okunye futhi umzimba wami uhlezi ufresh nengqondo yami. Ngiyakuthokozela kakhulu ukudlala ibhola isikoleni. I love playing the ball [netball]. (I enjoy playing netball because my body is always in good shape and my mind is relaxed because it helps to play when you are still young, and my body is always fresh and my mind also. I enjoy playing netball at school.)

Sino's description of her drawing highlights her perceived benefits of participation in netball. Thus, it is clear that netball was a critical aspect of her experiences. Hence, she depicted a female netball player in what seemed like an outdoor environment. Sino further described her drawing as follows:

Umuntu lo, umuntu okhombisayo ukuthi uphethe ibhola ushutha phakathi epalini.

Ngifund'ukuthi k'mele ukwazi uk'buka ukuthi isandla sakho siside kangakanani nepali, If uphosa lizongenani phakathi yini ibhola epalini noma ngeke lingene.

Abanye bafishane, abanye bade. (This person is showing that she is in possession of the ball, and shoots into the goalpost. I learned that you should be able to see how far your hand is from the pole. If you throw, will the ball go in the goalpost or not.

Some [players] are short, and others are tall.)

The above extract clearly indicates that Sino's drawing signifies netball, and the long arms suggest the distance between the player and the goalpost. According to Sino, the players' height varies, possibly explaining why the girl in the drawing is slightly taller than the goalpost. In a sports context, long arms and the person's height are well suited for a sport such as netball. For example, taller players are assumed to have an advantage over shorter players. In addition, Sino explicitly articulated her views about some of the players in the sports programme. She explained, 'Abanye uthi udlala nabo, ubathole sebak'gxoba, sebak'shaya yabo, abanye bangafuni ukuk'faka egrawundini bak'tshele ukuthi umncane. Kungenza ngibe scared.' (When you are playing, others end up stepping on you or hitting you with the ball, some don't want to put you on the [netball field] and tell you that you are young. It makes me scared.)

Sino's comments highlight the contradictory views and tension between her perceived positive outcomes of participating in the programme and the actual realities of it. For instance, Sino expressed that she had a passion for netball and believed it had contributed to her good health. On the other hand, she was concerned about the negative interaction with her peers in the programme. It appears that the sports environment had exposed Sino to positive and negative experiences associated with sports participation. My analysis further suggests that the sport programme might not have created sufficient conditions for positive social interaction between Sino and her peers. Hence, she was uncomfortable with how her peers treated her in the programme. It is important to indicate that this interpretation does not suggest that Sino's experiences were entirely negative. Instead, they reflect her perspective and contextual realities

within the programme. In this context, Sino also shared her experiences related to unfavourable weather conditions. She elaborated:

If ngidlala i netball mangabe kushisa ilanga angikhoni ukukhululeka kahle because ngisuke ngishiselwa futhi ngisuke ngifuthelene, ngibe noku, ngibe scared nje about ukuthi umunti mangxeka futhi ngithukuthele. (If I play netball, especially when the sun is hot, I cannot relax because it is extremely hot, I suffocate, and then I become scared and annoyed.)

Sino's comments suggest that social conditions could have had a negative impact on her participation in sport. Thus, hot weather conditions can be viewed as a hindrance in this context. The desire for a conducive sports environment might possibly have influenced Sino's perceptions of the programme. Therefore, the sun in Sino's depiction can be seen as a representation of her fears and negative experiences. This further asserts Sino's personal experiences and how these experiences were constructed in her social context. The negative experiences and non-conducive conditions such as physical injuries and hot weather conditions are embedded in a sports environment.

Apart from her experiences related to netball, Sino also shared her experiences linked to the soccer programme. It is worth noting that Sino was the only participant in this study who narrated experiences relating to both soccer and netball aspects of the Dreamfields Project sports programme. To reflect further on her experiences, Sino photographed a boy standing next to a soccer ball (see Figure 5.26). His arms are slightly open, and he is looking at the ball. His body position seems to represent someone who is demonstrating or preparing to execute a soccer skill. In terms of soccer, players position themselves physically in order to perform certain skills. For example, they will keep their eyes steady on the ball before passing it and open their arms for balance. These are some of the technical aspects of soccer which explain the body position of the boy in the photograph.

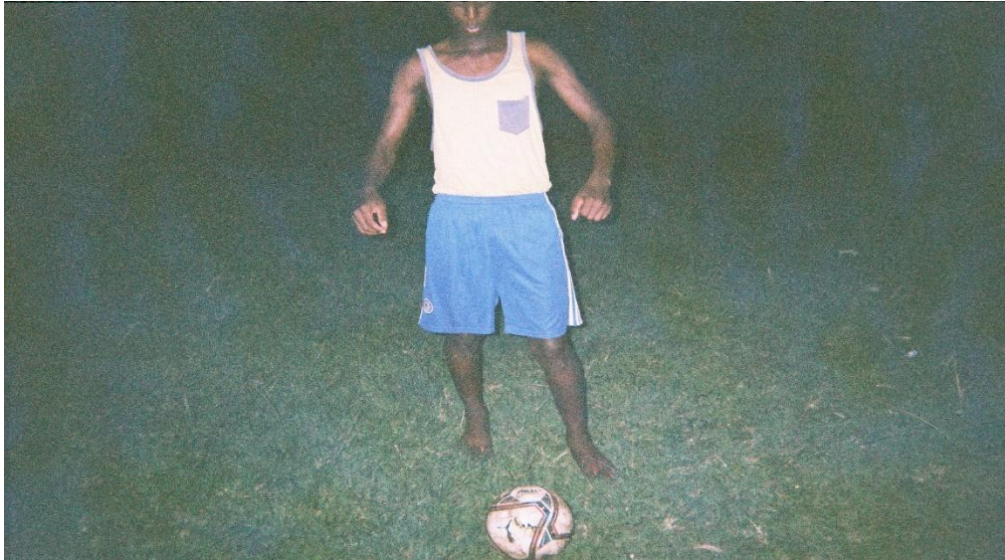


Figure 5.26: Photograph of a male standing next to the soccer ball (taken by Sino)

Sino related how the boy in her community had contributed to her knowledge about soccer. She further explained that the boy in the photograph taught her soccer skills and attributed her improved soccer skills to him. Sino explained the meaning of her photograph as follows:

Umuntu engangimshuthile wayengichazela mayelana nebhola ukuthi mangidlala ibhola labafana mele ngidlale ka-so. E soccer ngiyayidlala koda angikho ryt kuyona. Ungifundise ukuthi if uphasi bhola mele uliphase but ungaliphasi nge- stim ngoba uma uliphase umuntu oseduze kwakho, uliphase nge-stim lizodlula liye kulomunye okumele lingayikuye. (A person in the photograph was explaining to me how I should play soccer, if I play boys' soccer how I should play it. I play soccer also but I am not good at it. He taught me that if you pass the ball, you should not kick it hard because if you pass the ball to someone close to you, it will go to someone else.)

Sambelana ngokuthi ke into abangifundise yona la-eskoleni mayelana nebhola naye ufike angichazele ngalendlela abachaza ngayo la eskoleni ukuthi if udlala ibhola mele ngibe focus egrowndini nginganaki laba abasemaceleni noma umuntu ebhizi ekugquzela but ungamnaki kakhulu mele unake ibhola noma ipass. (It shows that what they taught me here at school about playing soccer he also explained it to me the way they did at school. If I play soccer, I should focus on the field, I must not pay attention to those who are outside or those cheering and not pay much attention to them, just focus on how to pass the ball.)

It seems the boy in her community had influenced Sino to participate in soccer and had contributed to the development of her soccer skills. Sino acknowledged that her soccer skills were not refined. However, she appeared to enjoy participating in soccer at school. During our interview, Sino shared her perceived sports benefits and outcomes associated with participation in the sports programme. These included improved sports skills and health. She described her experiences as follows: ‘I learned that if you play soccer, your body becomes healthy and good; you do not think a lot about things because if you are not playing soccer, you tend to think about bad things, like going to a tavern with friends and do bad things.’ Sino’s comments indicate the possibility of her seeing sport as a hopeful escape from the day-to-day life challenges in her social environment. She further seemed to believe that her participation in sport might enhance her health and positively influence her attitude and behaviour.

In addition, she shared the personal development outcomes she believed that she experienced through her involvement in the programme. She described several personal development outcomes that the programme afforded her. She used words such as focus, determination, commitment, and being prepared to describe her personal development experiences and perceived development outcomes of the programme. She described these experiences as follows:

If ngiye e groundin mele ngibe prepare ukuthi lento engiyoyenza mele ngiyenze ngokuzimisela nangokuzethemba. Kubaluleke ngokuthi mawenzi izinto ngokuzimsela uzogcina uhambile kwezinyindawo ngokuthi into mawuyenza uyenza ngokuzimisela. (If I’m going to the field, I should be prepared about what I am going to do, I should do it well, and with confidence. It is important because if you are determined to do something, you will go places because you do things well and with determination.

The excerpt reveals a possible desire for Sino for positive self-identity and the need to experience effectiveness in her life. Sino’s comments further highlight her self-determination, resilience and motivation to succeed.

Sino also believed that the programme had taught her to be responsible, respectful and to listen to other people, such as her parents, teachers and peers. She elaborated:

Mele ngihloniphe othisha ngibalalele ukuthi bathini ngiphakathi egrowndini mabengitshela ngilalele, ngigqoki impahla yeskole mele ngiyithathe ngiyibeke

ngendlela esafe because next time ngizophinde ngiyidinge mangifuna ukudlala. (I have to respect the teachers and listen to what they say when I am in the field and listen to what they tell me. When I wear school clothes [soccer kit] I should put them in a safe place because next time I will need them again when I want to play.)

Sino's views suggest that she could have experienced multiple forms of development through her interaction with the teachers. However, it is unclear how the teachers promoted and facilitated these forms of developmental experiences. My analysis shows that the developmental experiences indicated by Sino might have been exerted implicitly rather than by the teachers explicitly teaching the skills, such as respect and responsibility. For example, Sino mentioned that participating in the programme provided her with learning opportunities. In this context, Sino elaborated:

Ukuthi kwesinye isikhathi mabaya kodlala abanye wena usuke eceleni kwabo, kanti funa ube seduze kwabo ukuze ufunde ukuthi badlala nganjani ufisa ukwenze lento abayenzayo. (It is that when others are going to play, you must not isolate yourself, instead be close to them so that you can learn how they play and if you wish to do the same things that they are doing.)

It emerged from the interviews that the teachers had created a positive and supportive environment in the programme. However, the teachers were absent from Sino's depictions. Sino acknowledged that the positive relationship with her teachers had had a positive effect on her experiences. She explained the teachers' positive contribution as follows:

Ukuthi lana esikoleni badlala ibhola abo-Thisha bebahlezi beseceleni kwethu besinakile bebasigadile. Kwenzeka ukuthi abo sisi bethu abadala bangasihlukumezi ngoba kwesinye isikhathi bayasikhipha. If mele ngihambe ngiyodlala ibhola bathi siyakho mangithi anginamali bathi bona bazongokweletela and bangikhokhele sambe sodlala. (It is that when we play soccer here at school, teachers are always with us, keeping an eye on us to ensure that our older sisters⁹ do not torment us because, at times, they substitute us from the matches when we play. If we are going

⁹ Older sister in an African concept to describe a female who is older and not necessarily related.

to play somewhere and when I tell them that I do not have money, they will pay for me, and I will owe them, then we go and play.)

The excerpt above gives the impression that mutual care and connection with others were integral to Sino's social development experiences. She seemed to feel connected to the teachers and experienced positive interaction with them. Sino described how the teachers guided her and provided financial support. In this regard, Sino's need for financial support might indicate the possibility of financial constraints in her household. In the South African context, several families have multiple socio-economic constraints. For example, the majority of the people in rural South African communities are unemployed and depend on social grants for a living. This can explain why Sino needed financial support from the teachers.

It is clear from Sino's drawing and photograph that the salience of sport was paramount. This can be clearly seen by the account of her experiences in soccer and netball participation. It seems that the sports programme was the positive link between Sino and the teachers. She explicitly mentioned how the positive interaction with the teachers enhanced her motivation. It is interesting to note that Sino also shared contrasting views about her experiences. She expressed her concern about the negative interaction and experiences in the sports programme but her comments also suggest that she experienced positive relationships with her peers and teachers. Her contrasting views exemplify the multiple realities of experiences embodied in a sporting context.

Another critical aspect drawn from Sino's accounts of her experiences relates to her perceived personal development and social development skills. Sino frequently mentioned that she had learned the importance of determination, commitment and respect. This assertion suggests her need and desire for positive self-identity and self-worth might have been paramount in her life. Her experiences further indicated her need to connect with her teachers and positively engage with her peers. The positive relationships between the participants and adults in a sports environment can be seen as a way to promote positive experiences and enhance motivation. Thus, positive developmental experiences and outcomes of the sports programme are considered key to Sino's perceived benefits of a sports programme.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the experiences of youth, which revealed multiple realities and different accounts of the participants' experiences. The findings based on the analysis of the photographs and drawings of the participants presented contrasting views and dynamic perspectives. For example, in relation to their sports experiences, sport was not a priority in the context of the lives of some participants in this study.

Their depictions and narratives further revealed their socio-economic challenges, family situations and a desire to develop capabilities and connect with others in society. Most of the participants seemed to be longing for a safe space and empowering environment to thrive. Despite their different challenges and circumstances, their narratives demonstrate common experiences regarding positive identity and determination. Their experiences have highlighted the critical role of family support and a caring school environment. The participants indicated that their parents and teachers had provided support and encouragement. Furthermore, they perceived the contribution of their parents as having enhanced their self-worth, positive identity and values. Therefore, family life was a central aspect of some of the participants' experiences and their life at home coexisted with their interest in sport.

Apart from the positive and supportive relationships with the teachers, some of the participants pointed out that through their interaction with their peers, they had a few negative experiences in the sports programme. Some negative experiences mentioned by the participants included being ridiculed by peers, risk of injuries, inappropriate jokes by others and feeling like they were not talented and did not belong in the programme. Other participants related how the teachers had excluded them from participating in sport at school. The participants' experiences unfolded under conditions that would be considered ambiguous and complex. These experiences were influenced and shaped by their day-to-day interaction with their social environment and cultural contexts, such as teachers, parents, friends, and peers. Thus, the findings of this chapter support the notion that youth experiences are influenced by multiple constructs consisting of structural conditions in society. In the next chapter, I discuss the findings and analysis of the current chapter in relation to the literature and the theoretical lens of this study.

CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF YOUTH EXPERIENCES AND THE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THEIR EXPERIENCES OF A SPORTS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented the findings related to how the youth participants' experiences unfolded within their social context and the causes of their experience. The findings of the study focused on the analysis of the data based on the two research questions: 'How do the youth experience a sports development programme in rural South Africa?' and 'Why do youth experience a sports development programme in rural South Africa in the way they do?'

In this chapter, the discussion of the findings and emerging themes are presented. In addition, I discuss the findings about youth experiences using relevant literature on youth development and theories applicable to this study. Furthermore, the findings will be viewed through the theoretical lens of the proposed framework. With regard to the outline of this chapter, I decided to first discuss the findings based on the first research question in section 6.2. Then, in section 6.3, I focus on the findings related to the analysis of both the first and second research questions. Thus, the findings that emerged from the youth experiences and factors that contributed to the youth experiences of the sports development programme will be synthesised to gain insight into the data in order to respond to the two research questions.

6.2 Discussion of findings related to the youth experiences

In this section, the proposed major themes that emerged in the analysis of data, as explained in Chapter 4, are used to discuss the youth experiences.

The youth experiences in this study were multifaceted and their narratives highlighted the dynamic perspectives of the participants. Considering that the participants' experiences and views unfolded under different conditions, such as interactions with their families and teachers, the participants had divergent experiences. At the same time, the sports programme exerted both a direct and indirect impact on the participants' experiences. It is worth noting that sport was not a central feature in the context of the lives of some of the participants in this study. In addition, the participants' contrasting views and ambiguous positions revealed multiple realities related to their experiences.

Additionally, the experiences of the youth were further aligned with the notion that sport could enhance or hinder personal development and social development (Bruner *et al.*, 2011; Holt & Kacey, 2011; Singh *et al.*, 2012). The literature reviewed for this study highlighted the positive and negative outcomes associated with sports participation (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009; Gould *et al.*, 2012; Hodge & Lonsdale, 2011). According to Hodge and Lonsdale (2011), several contextual factors could contribute to the negative and positive experiences in sport, for example, unsupportive parents, teachers and coaches have been linked to negative outcomes in sport. On the other hand, a supportive environment has the potential to contribute to positive outcomes.

The experiences of the youth participants in the study highlight the role of sports development programmes in creating opportunities for social interaction and enhancing learning and development experiences. Furthermore, these experiences are aligned to Ryan and Deci's (2017) notion which recognises that the youths' development experiences in sport are influenced by multiple constructs consisting of structural conditions in society, families, organisations and communities. Therefore, Ryan and Deci (2017) embrace the viewpoint that the social environment could enhance or thwart three basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence and relatedness), which are considered important for optimal development. Three basic psychological needs are reflected in the following six major six themes in this study: (1) personal development experiences; (2) social development experiences; (3) physical development; (4) nutritional needs; (5) relationships with others; and (6) other positive personal life experiences. The challenges and barriers are grouped into five major themes: (1) interaction with peers and friends; (2) lack of support from the parents; (3) safety and physical injuries; (4) sports facilities and sports equipment; and (5) the effect of the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. The discussion will be based on the literature review and YDETS theoretical framework.

6.2.1 *Personal development experiences*

It has emerged from the findings of this study that the participants believed that they had acquired personal development skills by participating in the Dreamfields Project sports development programme. These included personal development skills, such as motivation, a sense of purpose, improved self-esteem and positive values. Thus, the finding suggests that the desire to develop capabilities, positive self-identity and the need to experience effectiveness were essential to the participants' personal development. Holt and Kacey (2011:300) reported

that individuals acquire personal experiences through involvement in organised sports programmes.

The participants in this study elaborated on their personal development experiences. They perceived that their personal development skills had been enhanced because of their participation in the programme. Some of the personal development experiences mentioned by the participants included enhanced confidence, respect, tolerance, commitment, competence and determination. The participants' views resonate with those of Taylor *et al.* (2017) who state that the goal of youth development programmes is to promote positive development and enhance personal competencies to help youth to flourish in their communities.

The positive experiences that resulted in the participants' enhanced personal development experiences concurred with the notion that positive development occurs when the youths' feeling of self-governance and self-direction were aligned with positive experiences through social interaction with the community, family, friends and school (Bowers *et al.*, 2010). In this regard, the participants in this study highlighted the positive role of the programme in enhancing their competencies and providing positive development opportunities for youth to gain personal development skills.

The participants' personal development experiences refuted the view that sport on its own automatically contributes to enhanced personal development experiences. Most of the participants acknowledged that they had had experiences related to personal development through their personal experiences in the community, school and with family. This finding agrees with Coalter's (2010) assertion that sport should be viewed and understood within a specific context in society. The participants' narratives revealed that contextual features, which included individual experiences with their families, also seemed to have contributed to the personal development skills of the participants in this study. There were instances in this study where the participants' need for positive self-identity and their need to experience effectiveness at home coexisted with their interest in sport. For example, some participants attributed their enhanced positive identity and values to their parents and sports participation. This finding appears to support the notion that personal development experiences are influenced by multiple contexts (Coakley, 2011; Singh *et al.*, 2012).

In conclusion, the participants' personal experiences reflect how youth experiences are influenced by the social environment, which can enhance or hinder their personal development

experiences (Lerner *et al.*, 2015). Similarly, Ryan and Deci, (2017) argue that sports development programmes and the development of youth cannot be understood in isolation. Therefore, the social context could enhance or undermine youth's sense of initiative to engage in activities and experience positive development. In this regard, Benson *et al.*(2011) recognise that internal assets are guided by individual personal development skills, such as positive identity, positive values and social competencies. Thus, the personal development experiences of the participants were aligned with the YDETS theoretical framework proposed in this study. The youth were the agents of their own development. This highlights the impact of social environment in either enhancing or thwarting youth experiences (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The YDETS framework considers the influence of the characteristics of the participants, such as socio-demographics (for example, age, ethnicity and gender), individual differences and how individuals acquire personal development experiences through their involvement in sport (Holt *et al.*, 2017). Hence, the personal development experiences of the participants were aligned to the YDETS framework because it highlighted enablers and possible barriers to attaining personal development experiences.

6.2.2 Social development experiences

It emerged from the participants' experiences that the programme facilitated social interaction and social development experiences. The programme was perceived by the participants to have provided a socialisation experience for them to interact, encourage new friendships and enhance positive relationships between themselves and the teachers. They explained that through their participation in the programme and their interaction with peers and friends in their communities, they had social development experiences. There was no evidence that the perceived social development experiences highlighted by the participants were experienced through an explicit process. It is more likely that the social development experiences were implicitly acquired and enhanced through interaction with others in the programme (Holt *et al.*, 2011).

The participants' social development experiences concurred with the assertion that sports programmes could promote positive development and social development experiences (Coalter, 2010; Holt, 2008). According to Camiré and Trudel (2013), the strength of sports development programmes is based on being able to utilise physical activity and sport as a vehicle to promote social development. The participants in the study affirmed that through their participation in the programme, they interacted with their peers, friends and teachers.

The participants' social development experiences were consistent with the literature which confirms that youth want to belong and through social engagement they create new friends and supportive relationships (Siegel, 2014). According to Hansen *et al.* (2003), social development is associated with social connections to others through teamwork and improved peer networks. In addition, Hansen *et al.* (2003) examined youth experiences and observed that youth involved in sports activities reported a high level of social development experiences such as teamwork, social skills and diverse peer relations. One of the participants in the current study echoed this statement by stating, 'It is good to get along on the field because you are building friendships, getting to know one another.' The participants' social development experiences in this study were consistent with Tonts's (2005) study of the Northern Wheatbelt, in which the findings indicated that sport in the rural community provided opportunities for social interaction and engagement.

The finding that emerged from the data suggests that the participants' need for social interaction is linked to the SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2017) element of the YDETS framework. According to SDT, psychological needs are based on individual differences that are learned through social interaction. Thus, when a need for relatedness is satisfied, people are likely to feel adequate, more connected with others, and in control of their lives (Martela and Ryan, 2016). In this study, the desire to connect with others seemed to be an important aspect of participation in the programme. The findings showed that the participants perceived the Dreamfields Project sports development programme to have positively facilitated their social development skills, creating opportunities for social interaction, connectedness and improved positive relationships.

Finally, the enhanced social development skills experienced by the participants resonate with Coakley's (2011) views that social development outcomes in sport depend on multiple factors, including social relationships, the context in which participation occurs, and personal sports experiences. Although the programme afforded the participants the opportunity for social interaction and enhanced social development skills, they attributed some of their social development experiences to their social interaction with peers, teachers and friends at school and in the community. Therefore, the findings of this study concur with Trussell's (2009) views on youth sport in the context of rural communities which state that rurality may be construed as a positive way of life, a good moral foundation of a caring community, and a peaceful

environment. However, while the rural landscape may be perceived as isolated, organised sport could provide youth in rural areas with opportunities for socialisation and interaction.

6.2.3 Physical development experiences

Another finding that emerged from the participants' experiences was the perceived positive contribution of the sport to improved health and physical development. In relation to physical development, the youth participants in this study emphasised the role of sport in fostering physical development and contributing to enhanced physical fitness and sports skills. Considering the aim of the Dreamfields Project sports programme, which is to enhance sports skills, it was expected that the participants would share the perceived health and physical development benefits of the programme. However, the extent to which physical development was seen as a prominent developmental aspect in the programme was not expected.

Although the participants viewed the Dreamfields Project sports programme as a conducive environment to enhance their sports skills and physical fitness, they attributed this aspect of their development not only to the Dreamfields Project sports programme but also to exercising and being actively involved in sports in their communities. They believed that their involvement in sport in their communities had contributed to their physical fitness and the development of their specific sports skills. The participants further stated that the perceived physical fitness and health benefits associated with physical activity and participation in sports had encouraged them to participate. The participants' views agree with Dudley, Okely, Pearson and Cotton's (2011) assertion that through sports participation youth could make informed lifestyle choices and be encouraged to continue participating in sports. In addition, the findings of this study are in agreement with the recent study conducted by Craike *et al.* (2018) which revealed that sports programmes were effective in improving physical activity among youth.

Some of the participants also expressed the view that they had experienced improved physical fitness through their involvement in sports. They mentioned a variety of perceived benefits of exercising and physical activity, but the participants placed emphasis on improved health and fitness. Furthermore, the participants who mentioned the benefits of exercising that they experienced in the programme indicated that they were motivated by their perceived health and fitness benefits in the programme. It is likely that some participants engaged in the programme because of their intrinsic aspirations. This finding suggests the possibility of the participants being intrinsically motivated by the perceived health benefits of the programme, which is

consistent with the SDT component of the YDETS theoretical framework of this study. SDT through a YDETS theoretical lens emphasises that intrinsic motivation in sport can contribute to positive development outcomes (Fraser-Thomas & Côté 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

It has emerged from the findings that the Dreamfields Project sports programme seemed to have contributed to the UN SDGs. The perceived benefits of improved health stated by the participants are linked to Goal 3 of the UN SDGs, which is to use sport as a tool to promote good health and enhance well-being (United Nations, 2015a). Furthermore, the participants' experience with regard to enhanced health and physical fitness is consistent with Singh *et al.*'s (2012) notion that physical activity and sport could have a positive effect on youth's physical health and quality of life. Thus, this finding suggests that the programme might indirectly contribute to UN SDG Goal 3 to use sport as a medium in which health and other physical development outcomes can be enhanced.

It has also emerged from the participants' physical development experiences that they perceived their sports skills to have been enhanced because of their involvement in the programme. Although some of the participants had been involved in sport outside the programme, they explained that they enjoyed participating in the programme because they believed that through effective coaching, their sports skills had improved. This suggests that the Dreamfields Project sports development programme might have embraced a 'sport plus' approach. Coalter (2013) describes sport plus programmes as sport development programmes that use sport as a medium to develop physical literacy and basic sporting skills. This approach emphasises non-sporting outcomes, such as enhancing social skills and promoting health benefits. The sport plus approach is consistent with the Dreamfields Project sports programme focus, which encourages participation in sport and develops individual, sport-specific skills. This finding further suggests that the participants perceived that the programme emphasised both sport plus and plus sport¹⁰ developmental outcomes. However, it was interesting to note that none of the participants perceived the focus of the programme to be related to sporting performance and individual sporting accomplishments.

It was clear there were contrasting views and perceptions related to developing sports skills. Some participants spoke at length about the perceived enjoyment they derived from

¹⁰ Plus sport programmes focus on non-sporting outcomes, such as enhancing social skills and promoting health benefits (Coalter, 2013)

participating in the programme. Thus, the primary aim for the participants in the programme was not necessarily based on the sport-specific skills outcomes. The participants indicated that they acquired sport-specific skills as a result of their involvement in the programme and having received guidance from the teachers and coaches. This perspective is consistent with several previous studies focusing on sports development programmes and sport-specific outcomes (Chinkov & Holt 2016; Holt & Kacey, 2011; Holt *et al.*, 2009). Arguably, these studies highlight that sport-specific skills in the sports development programme are acquired and are enhanced through implicit rather than explicit processes. According to Chinkov and Holt (2016), through participation in sport, youth have reported that sports programmes facilitated improvement in sport-specific skills. Holt *et al.* (2009) agree that physical development outcomes such as sport-specific skills are some of the benefits associated with youth sports programmes.

The participants' physical development experiences are contrary to the views of Nicholson, Kingsley and Scherer, (2012) who assert that despite numerous benefits derived from sports activity, a large proportion of people, especially youth in both developed and developing countries, remain physically inactive. This further refutes the notion that youth in rural communities are less likely to participate in sport and physical activity due to a lack of organised sports development programmes (Craike *et al.*, 2018). Similarly, the physical development experienced by the participants outside the programme (that is, at school) concurs with the YDETS theoretical framework, which highlights the importance of the social environment in enabling the youth to gain positive experiences that ultimately contribute to their physical development (Holt *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, the findings in this study revealed that the Dreamfields Project sports programme enhanced sport-specific skills and health.

6.2.4 Nutritional needs

Nutrition emerged as another factor in the participant's experiences of the programme. The participants in this study described the importance of good nutrition and water in enhancing sports performance. Some of the participants explained how difficult it was to participate in the programme without food. Most of the participants considered food and water to be important in sport and exercise. Thomas, Nelson, Harwood and Neumark-Sztainer (2012) consider the youth sports programme to be an effective environment for promoting good nutrition and healthy eating.

The participant who highlighted the significance of food and water in the programme mentioned how the community and the teachers provided them with food. Furthermore, the other participants mentioned that access to water at school and food provided by the teachers and the community had motivated them to participate in the programme. One of the participants was concerned that participating in the programme without eating was detrimental to the health of the participants. The participants believed that food and water were the sources of energy, and, without energy, they were not able to participate in sport at an optimal level. The participants explained that water was required, especially during hot weather conditions, to prevent dehydration and exhaustion from intense sports activities. This view is consistent with that of Ozdoğan and Ozcelik (2011) who assert that water and food are important nutrients for the body, especially for people who exercise and are involved in sport.

The findings related to nutrition revealed that the desire for food and water was a critical aspect of participation in the programme. The participants in the present study believed that proper nutrition was essential for their health and physical development. The findings align with Thomas *et al.*'s (2012) notion that teachers, parents and coaches should actively encourage a healthy diet for youth involved in sport. It should be said that the teachers and the community supported the participants by providing food and money to buy food. Furthermore, this is in line with Trussell's (2009) study which focused on organised youth sport in the context of rural communities. She argued that rurality may be construed as a positive way of life and a good moral foundation of a caring community. In this regard, the community and teachers' support with food highlighted the important context of a supportive environment.

6.2.5 The Dreamfields Project sports development programme context

The findings showed that most of the participants in this study considered the Dreamfields Project sports programme to be a great opportunity to enhance their developmental experiences through regular sports participation. In this regard, the findings revealed distinct differences in how the participants considered participation in the programme significant versus those who regarded participation as a secondary focus. Although the participants who believed that the programme was an important aspect of their experiences mentioned the social and development skills they had acquired, enhancing sport-specific skills was a paramount aspect of their experiences. By contrast, the participants who viewed participation in the programme as a secondary focus gave prominence to experiences associated with social and personal development skills, such as social interaction, cooperation, self-determination and respect.

The contrasting perspectives were somewhat expected, considering the different priorities and interests of the participants in the programme. In addition, the majority of the participants associated participation in the programme with enhancing sports, personal and social development skills. The Dreamfields Project sports programme participants mentioned improvement in their level of sports skills and enhanced social competencies as some of the programme outcomes. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Bonell *et al.* (2015) which suggests that youth who participate in a sports programme have the potential to develop and enhance their internal assets, such as positive values and self-identity. In addition, Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) suggest that sports programmes combine sport-specific outcomes, such as basic sports skills and non-sport-specific outcomes (personal and social) to achieve positive developmental outcomes. The findings further revealed that the Dreamfields Project sports programme had partly facilitated positive development outcomes. In essence, the programme outcomes were aligned with the YDETS theoretical framework. The theoretical framework suggests that appropriately designed and implemented sports programmes could lead to positive development outcomes (Qi *et al.*, 2020). However, the findings also revealed that the positive outcomes were influenced by multiple factors, such as individual experiences of the programme and interaction with the community, coaches and teachers. It is clear that other factors could have contributed to these positive outcomes. For example, some of the participants in the programme revealed that they had already been participating in sport in their respective communities and at school. In other words, the positive outcomes of the programme could have been influenced by their experiences in the community and school contexts.

Inclusivity was another feature of the programme described by the participants. The participants highlighted that the programme had given both girls and boys an opportunity to be involved in a structured sports programme. This finding reinforces the UN (2015) notion that sports programmes should be inclusive and provide equal opportunities for participation regardless of cultural background, gender and ability. Similarly, this finding is consistent with the aim of the Dreamfields Project sports programme (Dreamfields Project, 2018) to create an inclusive programme by encouraging youth in rural South Africa to participate in football and netball activities within the school context. The Dreamfields Project sports programme idea of an inclusive programme in a school environment resonates with the work of Wright *et al.* (2016), who suggest that youth from rural communities are mostly exposed to sport and physical activity in school, therefore, structured and well-coordinated school sports programmes could be used to promote participation, schooling and teaching basic values and

life skills to learners. This statement implies that an inclusive sports programme in a school environment could promote the developmental experience of youth in the context of rural communities.

Contrary to the inclusiveness of the sports development programme, some of the participants of this study had varying perceived experiences about the inclusiveness and accessibility of the sports programme. The participants indicated that not all the learners at the school could participate in the programme. Therefore, they believed that opportunities should be created for all the learners to be involved in it. However, they recognised that there were constraints due to limited space, limited time allocated for physical activity at school, and limited sports equipment, which would make it difficult for all the learners to be involved in the programme. These findings are consistent with those of previous studies (Balfour *et al.*, 2008; Mukucha, 2017; White, 2019) which reported that youth in rural communities experienced difficulties accessing productive assets due to structural problems, social and economic challenges, and poor infrastructure. These studies highlighted the challenges faced by youth in rural communities and provided possible barriers to participation in sport. Rosso and McGrath (2017) further affirmed that sport could lead to unintended outcomes such as marginalisation and social exclusion of youth.

The participants in this study believed that the programme should be inclusive and accessible. The experiences of the youth in the present study related to the inclusive sports development programme concur with the views of the United Nations General Assembly that sport is an important enabler of sustainable development by contributing to social inclusion (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). The literature reviewed affirmed that sports development programmes could be used to realise the UN SDGs. This implies that the Dreamfields Project sports programme could be used to contribute to achieving the SDGs, specifically Goal 5 – gender equality and empowerment of girls; Goal 4 – inclusive and equitable quality education; Goal 10 – reduced inequalities; and Goal 16 – promote inclusive society (Lindsey & Darby, 2019; United Nations General Assembly, 2015).

The youth who participated in this study considered the programme to be well-coordinated by the teachers and the coaches. In addition, they believed that the programme had created a positive environment for development opportunities. Furthermore, the participants attributed the positive experiences to support received from the community, parents, teachers and coaches. Thus, positive development occurs if the strengths of youth, such as support,

competence and empowerment, are aligned with positive experiences through social interaction with the community, family, friends and school (Bowers *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, in relation to SDT by Ryan and Deci in the YDETS theoretical framework of this study, the social environment could enhance or undermine youth's sense of initiative to engage in sports activities.

In conclusion, the findings suggest that the satisfaction of the participants' need for competence and relatedness enhanced their positive experiences (Martela & Ryan, 2016). The participants believed that the sports equipment provided by the Dreamfields Project motivated them to continue participating in the sports development programme. It emerged from the study that the Dreamfields Project sports programme contributed to enhanced positive experiences and positive development outcomes. For example, there was a significant emphasis on personal, social and physical development skills throughout the study. Apart from the positive outcomes associated with participation in the programme, the participants also highlighted challenges and barriers in the programme. The contextual barriers and challenges experienced by the participants will be discussed later in this chapter.

6.2.6 *Experiences with peers and friends*

The findings of this study highlighted several adverse experiences and outcomes associated with the sports development programme. It emerged from some of the youth who participated in this study that their social interaction with peers and friends in the sports development programme had contributed to negative experiences, such as being ridiculed, inappropriate jokes and comments being made, and feeling like they did not belong in the sports development programme. These negative experiences associated with interaction with peers and friends resonate with the study conducted by Hansen and Larson (2007). Their study on development and youth experiences reported that sports participation was associated with negative experiences such as negative peer interaction, increased stress and negative group dynamics (Hansen & Larson, 2007).

Furthermore, these negative experiences highlighted by the participants also concur with SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2017), which points out that the need to experience effectiveness and be able to connect with others in society are important for optimal development. In essence, failure to satisfy these basic psychological needs could undermine the conditions for youth to thrive and possibly result in negative experiences and development outcomes. In addition, the youth in

this study perceived the conflicts and disagreements with peers and friends to have contributed to their negative experiences in the sports development programme. These perceived negative experiences by the participants are consistent with the work of Hirai and Ryan (2016). The two authors argue that for youth to develop and realise their abilities, the social environment should support processes that fulfil their basic psychological needs, however, should these needs be thwarted, this could result in unhappiness and negative development experiences.

Finally, the negative experiences highlighted by the youth in the sports development programme are aligned with Siegel's (2014) views, which affirm that youth want to belong. Therefore, while they create new friends and supportive relationships through social engagement, a lack of connectedness and social bonds could result in individuals feeling rejected and isolated. The negative experiences highlighted by several of the youth in this study indicate how peer relationships and negative group dynamics (for example, conflicts between the participants) could result in negative outcomes from the sports development programme.

6.2.7 Experiences with the spectators

Another aspect related to the negative experiences that were cited by a few of the youth participants in this study included their experiences with other learners who were spectators in the sports development programme. The participants acknowledged that the majority of the spectators in the sports development programme were supportive; however, the participants indicated that some of the spectators behaved badly and they felt intimidated by the spectators' negative behaviour. These participants deliberated on how some of the spectators insulted them during the sports activities. The youth participants only referred to the negative behaviour of the learners, they did not mention negative behaviour of the parents as spectators. According to Legg, Wells and Barile (2015), parental influence can be negative, therefore, parents' negative attitudes and behaviour are significant in the experiences of youth participants in sport. However, the notion by Legg *et al.* (2015) somewhat contradicts the views of the youth participants in this study who indicated that most of the parents were supportive and encouraged them in the programme.

The participants in the study highlighted the following negative behaviours associated with the spectators: insults, name-calling and being made fun of. The youth participants further believed that the perceived negative experiences with the spectators was unpleasant and discouraged other learners at the school from participating in the programme. A study conducted by Shields,

Bredemeier, LaVoi, and Power (2005) revealed high levels of inappropriate conduct by spectators in youth sport. Similarly, research conducted by Wann, Weaver, Belva, Ladd and Armstrong (2015) showed negative, inappropriate spectator behaviour in youth sport. The few participants who indicated that they had negative experiences related to the spectators expressed their discomfort with the insults and yelling from the spectators. These negative experiences were consistent with the findings reported by Wann *et al.* (2015), who reported a high likelihood for spectators in youth sport to engage in verbal aggression.

Finally, the negative experiences of the participants relating to inappropriate behaviour of the spectators articulate with the YDETS framework. The YDETS framework asserts that the social environment could undermine the youth's sense of initiative to engage in activities and contribute to negative experiences. This finding of the study highlights that although a few participants experienced negative effects of spectator behaviour, in general the spectators contributed to the positive experiences of the participants in the programme.

6.2.8 Experiences through interaction with the teachers and coaches

The findings indicate contrasting experiences of the participants in relation to their interaction with the teachers. In this regard, the majority of the participants described that they had a positive relationship with the coaches and teachers. However, a few participants mentioned that the teachers and coaches had favourites in the programme. These findings are consistent with several studies (Fraser-Thomas and Côté, 2009; Hansen & Larson, 2007; Hansen *et al.*, 2003), which reported that the coaches contributed to the youth's positive and negative experiences in sport. In addition, these findings are aligned with the YDETS framework (Ryan & Deci, 2017), which highlights the role of the social context with regard to the relationships between youth, coaches and teachers. Furthermore, the findings affirm how coaches and teachers could enhance and thwart youth development experiences. Some participants expressed a few negative experiences due to their interaction with the coaches and teachers. Some of the participants in this study believed that some of the teachers in the programme had favourites.

The participants' perceived favouritism by the teachers is aligned with the findings of the study by Kendellen and Camiré (2015) who reported that inappropriate interaction with the coaches had contributed to negative experiences in high school sport. Some of the negative experiences reported by Kendellen and Camiré (2015) in their study included coach favouritism and coach

superiority. Similarly, Fraser-Thomas and Côté (2009) in their study of youth experiences in sport reported that favouritism negatively affected the motivation and self-concept of the participants in sport.

On the other hand, one participant in this study described how disappointed she was when the teacher shouted at her. The participant considered the teacher's behaviour to be a reflection of poor communication skills. Furthermore, the participant was upset because the teacher was not willing to listen to her explanation. This participant's views of the teacher are reflected in the reviewed literature. Research conducted by Fraser-Thomas and Côté (2009) reported that poor communication skills contributed to negative sports experiences.

6.2.9 Experiences related to physical injuries

The study also identified another theme that emerged which related to the youth experiences of the sports development programme. Some of the participants in this study indicated that they had experienced injuries in the sports development programme. Furthermore, the participants attributed their injuries to poor sports field conditions and improper equipment. Some of the participants perceived that the injuries were caused by direct impact and physical aggression between the players. The participants' experiences related to physical injuries which aligns with the reviewed literature. For example, according to Merkel (2013), youth who participate in sport are at risk of experiencing sport-related injuries.

It emerged that the fear of injury was perceived by some of the participants to be a barrier to participation in the sports development programme. Some of the participants perceived that they were susceptible to injuries due to their involvement in the programme. One of the participants described how the extremely hot weather conditions had had a negative effect on the participants in the sports development programme. The participant further believed that the hot environment contributed to illnesses associated with heat such as cramps and dehydration. In this regard, Merkel (2013) highlights that the increased risk of heat illness in youth sport is due to the general state of an individual's health, dehydration and a high level of environmental temperature.

The research conducted by Ivarsson, Johnson, Andersen, Tranaeus, Stenling, and Lindwall (2017) revealed that sports injuries are common in youth sport and injuries are associated with cognitive and emotional reactions, such as fear and perception of pain. Hausken, Barker-

Ruchti, Schubring, and Grau (2018) further pointed out that soccer has a higher rate of overuse injuries than other contact sport, such as hockey and basketball.

Finally, although the participants in the current study deliberated on their experiences pertaining to physical injuries, it was not clear how severe the injuries sustained by the participants were. Moreover, the participants mentioned that the teachers and coaches provided support to the injured participants. The participants further explained that the teachers and coaches treated injuries by putting ice on the injured participants, and, in extreme cases, the participants were taken to hospital or the local clinic. Although not all sport-related injuries can be prevented, teachers and coaches can contribute by minimising extrinsic factors that could result in injury reduction in youth sport (Merkel, 2013). These findings from the participants' experiences highlight the role of the teachers and coaches in minimising sport-related injuries in the programme. Furthermore, the findings concur with the YDETS framework which highlights the importance of the social environment in the context of youth sport in minimising negative experiences that could lead to negative outcomes.

6.2.10 Experiences related to sports facilities and equipment

Another finding that emerged was the impact that the conditions and lack of sports facilities and sports equipment had on the participants' experiences of the sports programme. According to the youth who participated in this study, the lack of proper physical space, sports fields and equipment were some of the challenges they experienced in the programme. Some of the participants pointed out that the poor sports field conditions and limited physical space at school resulted in injuries and limited their activities in the programme. This finding seemed to suggest that the participants longed for a safe, appropriate physical space for sport.

This finding is consistent with studies focusing on barriers to sports participation (Pule, Drotsky, Toriola & Kubayi, 2014; Yakubu, Olalekan, Ikazuagbe, William & Khadijat, 2019) which reported that inadequate sports facilities, inaccessible playgrounds and lack of sports equipment had a significant influence on sports participation among youth in rural schools. Similarly, Eime, Casey, Harvey, Sawyer, Symons and Payne (2015), as part of their longitudinal study on socio-ecological factors associated with physical activity and sport among youth, reported that environmental factors such as access to sports facilities and lack of sports equipment were some of the barriers to sports participation among youth.

In conclusion, the participants affirmed that the Dreamfields Project had contributed sports equipment to their schools, and they were encouraged by the support they had received from the organisation. As some of the participants believed that sports equipment and adequate sports fields were important aspects of the sports development programme, these aspects could be viewed in isolation. The finding of youth experiences related to sports facilities and sports equipment in this study resonates with the view of Yakubu *et al.* (2019) that sports facilities are very important in youth sport because they encourage youth to participate in sport. Furthermore, poor sports facilities in most of the schools were perceived by the participants as a hindrance to their participation in the programme.

6.2.11 Effect of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown restrictions

The last experience that emerged from youth experiences of the sports development programme is related to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown restrictions. The majority of the participants in the study indicated that the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions in 2020 and 2021 had a negative effect on the sports development programme. Most of the participants highlighted that the lack of sports activities and social interaction negatively impacted their social and physical development. In this regard, according to Martin, Champ and Franklin (2021), the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown restrictions resulted in unprecedented changes in sports activities and in people's social and personal lives. Furthermore, the lockdown restrictions required schools to be closed, social distancing was implemented and sports activities were prohibited (South African Government, 2022).

These experiences of the youth in this study echo the views of Ammar, Brach, Trabelsi, Chtourou, Boukhris, Masmoudi, Bouaziz, Bentlage, How, Ahmed and Müller (2020), who stated that the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions compromised participation in physical activity which in turn increased the risk of long-term sedentary behaviours. Although the participants acknowledged that the COVID-19 restrictions were necessary to minimise the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, they were concerned about the amount of time they spent sitting at home and the lack of exercise and physical activity. The participants felt isolated and perceived that the absence of physical activities could lead to the loss of physical and health benefits, such as physical fitness and the sport-specific skills acquired in the programme. In addition, they commented on how they missed the social interaction with their friends and teachers at school.

The finding of the participants' experience of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown restrictions and cancellation of sports activities at school complements the findings of the study conducted by Martin *et al.* (2021) who assessed the impact of lockdown on recreational athletes. They reported that COVID-19 lockdown restrictions had a negative impact on social interaction between youth and their peers and also caused a decline in physical activity and exercise. This finding further resonates with the YDETS theoretical framework which considers youths' sports experiences to be influenced by multiple constructs that include structural conditions in society, for example, socio-economic challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown restrictions.

In conclusion, the major findings based on the 11 main themes that emerged from the analysis of the data were discussed in this chapter. The main themes were related to the analysis of the first research question of this study which focused on the youth experiences of a sports development programme. In the next section, the findings of youth experiences and factors that contributed to the youth experiences of a sports development programme related to the first and second research questions of this study will be discussed. In addition, these findings will be linked to the reviewed literature and the proposed YDETS framework, which integrates the PYD and SDT theoretical frameworks.

6.3 Discussion on youth experiences and contributing factors to their experiences

This section of the chapter will focus on the final phase of the data analysis (conclusion drawing and verification) and will attempt to explore the 'why' question of this study, which is to understand the contextual features that may have influenced the way youth experience the Dreamfields Project sports development programme the way they do.

In the following sections, the four main themes related to the findings of the two research questions are deconstructed and discussed with reference to the literature review and the YDETS theoretical framework of this study. As mentioned previously, the YDETS theoretical framework is deemed appropriate and is aligned with the rural youth's experiences in the South African context. The YDETS framework further challenges the Global North perspective that focuses on PYD but provides little guidance on cultural and contextual factors that could lead to negative outcomes in sports participation. Thus, YDETS recognises rural youth's unique knowledge and asserts that social context and sports development programmes could produce positive and negative developmental pathways. Through personal life experiences and

interaction with the social environment, youth are considered to have the potential to acquire the skills and knowledge required to thrive in their lives (Sigelman & Rider, 2017).

6.3.1 *Personal life experiences outside the sports development programme context*

The participants' personal life experiences in this study differed significantly from each other. The significant aspect of the participants' experiences revolved around family, community and school environment. This finding reinforced the notion that social contexts are different and could lead to different experiences (Standage & Ryan, 2012). The participants mentioned contextual factors such as financial constraints, family dynamics, and social and economic conditions as either enhancing or hindering them from gaining positive experiences.

The ambivalence of the participants' accounts reflected multiple realities and perspectives of their lives. For example, the Dreamfields Project sports programme was a significant aspect of some participants' experiences in this study while, for others, family life and the desire to connect with others in society seemed paramount. The findings revealed that sports participation was seen as a secondary focus in the lives of some of the participants in the study. The data analysis revealed the following factors that influenced and contributed to the youth's experiences: (a) individual context; (b) sports environment; and (c) social environment. These personal life experiences emerged in the study as the sub-themes and are discussed in the following subsections:

6.3.1.1 *Individual context*

The first subtheme that explains the factors that influence youth experiences is related to the individual context. The youth participants in this study described themselves as individuals with capabilities, resilience and determination. These views were reflected through the participants' narratives, drawings and photographs. They showed illustrations related to their family backgrounds, school environment and community in which they expressed their learning experiences and desires in their lives. The participants also discussed their aspirations, challenges and how they overcame uncomfortable situations. Previous research reported that the deficit perspective disregards human strengths and multiple contexts that shape the livelihood of youth (Shek *et al.*, 2019).

The findings of this study revealed the strength and potential that the participants possessed before participating in the Dreamfields Project sports programme. The participants expressed

developmental skills such as responsibility, respect, cultural competence and commitment to learning. In addition to the development skills which they acquired through interaction with parents and other family members, the participants shared their desire for positive self-identity and self-worth and their need to be self-sufficient. This finding is in agreement with the views of Benson *et al.* (2011), who reported that youth possess positive values, have a sense of purpose and appreciate the importance of learning.

The dynamic individual experiences shared by the participants suggest that the youth in the study were autonomous and actively involved in their development. This finding is in agreement with Holt *et al.* (2017), who consider youth in the rural community to be the agents of their own development. In addition, a study conducted by Seligman and Rider (2012) reported that youth have unique knowledge and are active agents who can contribute to their development and pursue fulfilment through their choices and decisions. Therefore, it is possible that the participants in this study had positive traits and skills acquired through their interaction within social and cultural contexts (Benson *et al.*, 2011). This implies that the Dreamfields Project sports programme could have nurtured and enhanced the participants' strengths and skills developed by interacting within their multi-level contexts. The findings in this study are consistent with the study conducted by Kendellen and Camiré (2015), who reported that youth enter a sports context with existing skills and experiences.

Finally, these findings are linked to the YDETS theoretical framework. Ryan and Deci (2017) point out that youth motivation to participate in sport is influenced by individual extrinsic and intrinsic goals, such as personal development and their interest in sport and enjoyment. The research by Hansen and Larson (2007) indicated that most youth participate in structured sports programmes because they consider sports activities to be enjoyable. In addition, according to Fraser-Thomas and Côté (2009), positive outcomes in sports programmes and youth development are associated with intrinsic goals, such as social integration, improved peer relationships and teamwork. Although other factors might have motivated and influenced the participants to be involved in sport, the findings in this study indicate that their motivation to participate in sport at school was due to their preferences and desire for social interaction.

6.3.1.2 Sports environment

The second subtheme related to the main theme, which describes the factors contributing to youth experiences, is the participants' personal life experiences in sport and physical activity.

The youth participants in this study believed that their involvement in sport and physical activity before they participated in the sports development programme had motivated them and contributed to their decision to engage in sport at school. The youth participants indicated that they were engaged in unstructured sports activities in their community. Some of the participants further explained that they were also involved in other physical activity such as jogging and road running. They attributed their physical development to their involvement in unstructured sport and physical activity in the community. The participants in this study further indicated that they participated in sport and physical activity for pleasure and enjoyment. The participants' views are aligned with those of Kinder, Gaudreault, Jenkins, Wade and Woods (2019), who state that youth participation in physical activity is based on youths' perception of the pleasure and fulfilment derived from engaging in the activity.

The youth's personal life experiences linked to their involvement in sport highlighted how the sports environment had afforded them an opportunity to develop sport-specific skills (for example, netball and soccer skills). One participant, Kwazi, mentioned that he had started playing soccer in the streets with his friends and he affirmed that through his participation in soccer with his friends, he had learned fundamental soccer skills and soccer rules. Although the participants' involvement in sport and physical activity was through unstructured sports activities, their experience highlights the importance of how the implicit structure, for example, non-guided sports activity, could facilitate sport-specific skills and physical development.

On the other hand, the participants highlighted the contribution of physical activity in creating awareness of a healthy lifestyle and developing physical fitness. From the data analysis, it emerged that some of the participants perceived health benefits associated with involvement in sport. The emphasis was placed on healthy eating and improved physical fitness. For instance, Sam depicted his views by drawing a boy in a garden. Sam explained that the drawing represented healthy eating, and he believed that his energy levels had increased by eating healthily.

The youth's personal life experiences in sport and physical activity are similarly consistent with the study conducted by Kinder *et al.* (2019), which affirmed that youth perceptions of engaging in unstructured or structured sport and physical activity is motivated by a need for competence, autonomy and relatedness. Autonomy is highlighted as an important factor that motivates youth to be physically active and engage in unstructured and structured physical activity (Kinder *et al.*, 2019). In this context, these findings resonate with the youth experiences

of the present study, which highlight how the youth's personal life experiences and freedom to make their own choices had motivated them to participate in the sports development programme at school.

These findings are also consistent with the reviewed literature, which highlighted that youth enter sports development programmes with already developed skills, such as their existing physical and sport-specific skills (Gould & Carson, 2008; Kendellen & Camiré, 2015; Kinder *et al.*, 2019). According to Benson *et al.* (2011), youth enter a sports development programme with pre-existing internal assets, such as existing skills, physical abilities and physical inabilities, and they warn against the assumption that when youth get involved in structured sports development programmes they lack competencies.

Therefore, these findings suggest that sports development programmes should be purposefully structured to nurture and enhance pre-existing skills and positive developmental outcomes. In this case, sports development programmes should further consider adopting implicit and explicit approaches in the design and programme implementation strategies. The explicit approach focuses on creating a positive environment in which the new and existing skills are enhanced and explicitly taught by the coaches and teachers (Turnnidge, Côté & Hancock, 2014). On the other hand, the implicit approach relates to the sports development programme designed to enhance and develop sport-specific skills (Turnnidge *et al.*, 2014). In addition, coaches' training and courses should not only focus on technical aspects of sports coaching, such as empowering the coaches on how to develop sport-specific skills, but should also incorporate pedagogical content focusing on psychosocial skills and the transferability of these skills to other social settings other than sports environment.

6.3.1.3 Social environment

The third subtheme relates to the youth participants' personal life experiences is their interaction within their social context. The participants in this study highlighted the contribution of their families to their experiences. Furthermore, the participants highlighted specific social development skills that they believe they had acquired through their interaction with parents and other family members.

Several personal life experiences of the participants are related to the role of parents and family before they participated in the programme. For example, the role of parents in facilitating, supporting and encouraging the youth to participate in sport, for example, providing sports

equipment. The participants in the present study further related how their parents' support outside the programme had encouraged them to be involved in sport in their community.

It was evident from the participants that their parents had contributed to their personal life experiences. The analysis of the data revealed that family had also facilitated positive experiences for social interaction. Although some participants highlighted a lack of support from their parents, most of them affirmed that these positive experiences had motivated them to continue participating in sport. These positive experiences with parents and peers included, for example, developing an interest in sport, continuing to be involved in sport regardless of the lack of sports equipment, learning to respect others, and the importance of teamwork.

In terms of the contribution of family to their programme experiences, there is consistency between the participants' personal life experiences. Their experiences resonate with the YDETS theoretical framework, which highlights the contribution of positive relationships between parents and family in the support of personal and social development experiences. Bowers *et al.* (2010) state that positive development occurs if the strengths of youth, such as competence and empowerment, are aligned with positive experiences through social interaction between youth and their families.

Furthermore, the participant's personal life experiences are consistent with SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to Ryan and Deci (2000), a social environment supporting youth's psychological needs could enhance or disrupt the quality of motivation and engagement in social activities. The youth experiences in this study are similarly aligned to BPNT, a sub-theory of SDT (Legault, 2017). In this context, the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness are important for optimal development. Therefore, failure to satisfy these basic needs could undermine the necessary conditions for youth to thrive (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The social environment is an important context that facilitates youth development and encourages social interaction among youth. The youth's personal life experiences through interaction with family, friends and peers outside the sports development programme embrace the basic psychological needs highlighted by Ryan and Deci.

The participants emphasised the influence and contribution of their previous personal life experiences outside the sports development programme. The pre-existing experiences of the participants influenced their experiences in sport and contributed to their involvement in sport at school. This finding is aligned with the reviewed literature, which indicates that youth

development in a rural context is based on relations at multiple levels that range from social relationships to basic psychological needs (Holt *et al.*, 2011, 2017; Lerner *et al.*, 2015; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Furthermore, this finding suggests that youth in rural communities enter a structured sports system with already developed personal and social skills, such as their current level of competencies, positive self-identity, and positive relationships with others (Gould & Carson, 2008; Holt *et al.*, 2017; Lerner *et al.*, 2011).

The impact of the participants' personal life experiences is an interesting finding of this study. This finding further demonstrates that multiple contexts influence youth experiences. The participants expressed their needs for financial support and how they experienced financial difficulties. It is noteworthy that several studies have shown that youth in rural communities experience poverty, difficulties accessing productive assets, lack of quality education, and limited employment opportunities (Falls, 2017; Frost *et al.*, 2013; Lee & Macdonald, 2009; Edwards & Matarrita-Cascante, 2011). However, despite these disparities and challenges, youth who participated in this study highlighted personal strengths, such as resilience and psychosocial skills to overcome these barriers.

6.3.2 Relationships with peers and friends

Another dominant theme that emerged as a contributing factor to the youth's experiences was their relationships with their peers and friends. The participants' experiences and perspectives of social interaction with their friends and peers were diverse and ambiguous. In terms of friendship and peers, the participants in the study seem to have experienced both negative and positive interactions. There were instances where the participants attributed their negative experiences to their peers and friends in the programme. However, they also discussed their positive relationship.

Although most of the participants emphasised having positive relationships with their peers and friends in the programme, some also mentioned that they were ridiculed by their peers and some experienced negative comments. Social interaction and support from their peers and friends were emphasised as the main contributing factors to the positive experiences of the youth participants. The data analysis revealed that the opportunity to interact with friends in the sports development programme had enhanced the experiences of the youth who participated in this study. Furthermore, the participants perceived that the support from their friends and peers had motivated them to continue participating in the sports development programme. For

instance, Lungi pointed out that she was encouraged by the mutual respect between her and her friends in the programme. On the other hand, analysis of the data indicated that various participants had negative experiences related to conflicts and disagreements between the participants. In this regard, Kwazi explained that there were times when he experienced disagreement and conflicts with his peers.

The contrasting experiences of the participants related to peers and friends resonate with the reviewed literature (Blom *et al.*, 2013; Bowers *et al.*, 2010; Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009; Kendellen & Camiré, 2015) which highlighted both positive and negative peer-related experiences associated with sport. According to Blom *et al.* (2013) and Bowers *et al.* (2010), contextual assets, such as friends and peers within a sports context, could facilitate positive development or hinder youth development. Similarly, the role of peers and friends has been highlighted as significant contextual factors of youth development (Jones *et al.*, 2017; Lerner *et al.*, 2011). These findings highlight contradictory and multiple perspectives related to social interaction within the sports programme context. Thus, contrasting views exemplify the realities of multifaceted relationships between youth and their peers.

The findings in the study are consistent with the YDETS theoretical framework proposed for it. These findings further highlight the importance of social context in enhancing or hindering youth experiences in a sports context. According to Bowers *et al.* (2010), caring, compassion and positive relationships with peers and friends contribute to positive development experiences such as social competence and self-determination. Ryan and Deci (2017) argue that a lack of support and positive interaction between peers in the sports environment could result in unhappiness and negative development experiences. It was somewhat expected that the participants might experience negative interactions in the programme, considering the complex nature of a sports environment and the diversity of the individuals in the programme.

It is worth noting that some of the youth participants in the study believed that their friends encouraged them to be involved in the sports programme at school. This notion concurs within SDT, which indicates that a supportive environment and positive relationships amongst youth positively affect their experiences and motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This finding indicates that friends and peers play a significant role in encouraging youth to participate in sport. Yakubu *et al.* (2019) state that youth develop relationships with their peers through their involvement in sport. The participants of this study further affirmed that the opportunity for new social networks and enjoyment offered by the programme were some of the motivators for

their participation in sport. It is clear that the participants in the programme experienced both negative and positive social interactions with their peers. However, despite the negative interaction expressed by some of the participants, it seems that most of the youth in the study experienced positive relationships with their peers and friends in the Dreamfields Project sports development programme.

6.3.3 Relationships with teachers and coaches

The teachers' and coaches' contributions emerged as another main theme explaining the factors that contributed to the youth's experiences. It was interesting to note that the majority of the participants in the study referred to the teachers as coaches in the programme. It is a logical finding because the teachers were responsible for implementing the Dreamfields Project sports programme. Therefore, it can be assumed that the teachers facilitating the programme were the coaches. However, it is not clear whether the teachers were qualified coaches when they performed the coaching role in which coaches are expected to teach sports skills, provide guidance and create a supportive environment in order to enhance the potential of the participants.

Based on the analysis of the participant's views of the factors that contributed to their experiences of the programme, the following sub-themes were identified: (a) the support of the teachers and coaches; and (b) the motivational role of the teachers and coaches.

6.3.3.1 Support from the teachers and coaches

The participants in the study believed that the teachers provided support and guidance. They stated that the teachers created a positive and supportive environment that contributed to their enhanced positive experiences in the programme. In this regard, the participants perceived the teachers and coaches to be supportive based on their encouragement, assistance with transport, responses to their nutritional needs, and the positive, respectful relationships they had with the teachers and coaches. In contrast to the supportive relationship that some participants had with their teachers, others felt excluded by the teachers in the programme. The findings in the study imply that although some of the participants felt excluded, this did not necessarily lead to a lack of desire on the part of the participants to participate in sport. A positive environment and support from the teachers and coaches seemed to be important to the participants. In this context, a caring school climate and positive relationships with adults appear to have enhanced the participants' positive experiences (Travis & Leech, 2014).

The participants attributed the teachers' support in creating a safe physical environment as a significant factor that enhanced their social development experiences. Analysis of the data indicated that the contribution of teachers to the social development experiences was exerted through the implicit process rather than the teachers explicitly teaching social skills. For example, the teachers created a positive environment for learning and social connection. In other words, the teacher's contribution to the enhanced participants' social skills was not necessarily based on the teachers deliberately teaching these skills, rather it was the perceived support and positive environment created by the teachers that provided opportunities for the participants to acquire social skills.

These findings related to the support of teachers and coaches indicate how a positive and supportive environment in sport could facilitate the development of social skills (Holt *et al.*, 2011). The findings in this study further concur with the reviewed literature (Bowers *et al.*, 2010; Holt *et al.*, 2017; Lerner *et al.*, 2011) which highlights the impact of mutually beneficial relations between youth and their social environment. According to Bowers *et al.* (2010), positive development occurs if the strengths and skills of youth are aligned with positive experiences through social interaction with the social environment.

Similarly, the positive relationships that contributed to the participants' experiences of the programme are consistent with the YDETS framework. Holt *et al.* (2017) point out the effect of the social environment, which indicates that the positive interaction between youth and their teachers could facilitate positive development outcomes in sport. It is clear from the participants' views that the strong support and attributes of the teachers and coaches facilitated their positive experiences. Finally, the findings in this study are consistent with Holt and Kacey's (2011) notion of a PYD climate, such as positive relationships between youth and adults, and the importance of creating an appropriate social environment that enhances the development experiences of youth in rural communities. In addition, Holt and Kacey (2011) assert that support in youth development is crucial to achieving positive social development outcomes.

The supportive role and positive relationships that emerged from the data analysis in this study relates to the Dreamfields Project sports development structure. The Dreamfields Project sports development programme is organised in schools where teachers and community coaches implement the programme. Teachers and coaches in the programme are often volunteers, and some are without coaching qualifications. According to Super, Verkooijen and Koelen (2018),

a lack of pedagogical knowledge, skills, and formal coaching training could hinder the ability of teachers and coaches to create positive sports experiences and a supportive environment. In this context, community sports coaches and teachers in the Dreamfields Project sports programme should have the necessary skills and knowledge to enable them to create a conducive sports environment that supports the psychosocial development of the programme participants. Contrary to this view, regardless of the lack of formal coaching training, teachers and community sports coaches in the Dreamfields Project sports development programme were perceived by the participants to have created optimal social conditions for positive developmental experiences. However, it is not clear which aspects of the programme were implemented by the coaches and teachers in the programme to support and enhance the development of the participants.

Turnnidge *et al.* (2014) reports that it is possible that sports coaches can create meaningful sports experiences without intentionally teaching specific developmental skills. In the context of this study, it is possible that the teachers and community coaches, without using deliberate strategies to teach the specific skills, created a conducive and meaningful sports environment in which the participants felt supported and appreciated. The youth participants in this study affirmed that a supportive and positive sports environment should provide opportunities to learn, develop skills and enjoy sports activities.

6.3.3.2 The motivational role of the teachers and coaches

The youth participants in this study also emphasised the importance of the motivational role that the teachers and coaches played in the programme. It was widely recognised by the youth participants that motivation by the teachers and coaches was a significant factor in promoting positive experiences in the programme. In addition, the majority of the participants indicated their belief that the teachers' motivation encouraged them to maintain their participation in the programme.

The motivational role of the teachers and coaches as a factor that contributed to the youth experiences of the sports development programme is in line with the GCT sub-theory of SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2017). According to Ryan and Deci (2014), positive relationships between adults and youth positively affect youth experiences and motivation. For Ryan and Deci, social conditions supporting the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness could either enhance or undermine human motivation and development. The findings of this

study illustrate how a supportive environment and motivational climate can facilitate and improve youth motivation in rural communities. The findings further highlight the contribution of the teachers and coaches in promoting intrinsic motivation. For example, most of the participants described their participation in the programme as an enjoyable experience.

The experiences of the youth participants who participated in this study support Ryan and Deci's (2017) contention that a social environment that enhances basic psychological needs and intrinsic motivation can facilitate positive development experiences and enable the youth to feel self-determined and realise their full potential. In this regard, the participants in this study confirmed that the motivation from teachers and coaches in the programme promoted autonomy and competence. The autonomy, in this case, was based on the participants' feelings of encouragement and freedom to make their own choices (Legault, 2017). On the other hand, competence was related to the participants' feelings of effective interaction (Lerner *et al.*, 2011), with the teachers and coaches recognising their potential and skills.

In addition, the findings in this study agreed with the literature reviewed (Benson *et al.*, 2011; Bonell *et al.*, 2015; Hodge & Lonsdale, 2011; Shek *et al.*, 2019; Standage & Ryan, 2012) which stated that external assets (caring teachers, positive school climate) and social structure are linked to positive experiences that support youth to be effective in their lives and enhance the youth's capacity for development and motivation to thrive. In this regard, the findings in this study suggest that youth motivation in the sports development programme was enriched through the support and guidance of the teachers and coaches. Furthermore, the teachers and coaches contributed to the youth participants' intrinsic motivation, such as enhancing the youth's interest in the sports development programme and enjoyment.

6.3.4 *The contribution of the community*

The contribution of the community emerged as another theme related to the factors that contributed to the youth experiences of the sports development programme. The youth participants illustrated that their communities were caring and supportive. This notion was articulated best by one of the participants in this study, Thelo, who affirmed that the community had supported and inspired her to work hard.

The participants emphasised the important role that community played in facilitating their development. For example, the food and water provided by the local tuckshop owners were an integral part of the participants' experiences in the programme. In relation to the participants'

views, the community included people in their villages other than their families, peers and teachers. Furthermore, the participants associated their communities with a sense of belonging and positive relationships between themselves and the people in their communities. These findings demonstrate the importance of a supportive community in creating social networks and an appropriate environment that fosters positive development in rural communities. These findings further relate to Trussell's (2009) notion of rurality and sport. Trussell (2009) argues that rurality may be construed as a representation of a caring community and a peaceful environment and sport could provide youth in rural communities with the opportunity for socialisation and interaction.

Similarly, previous research by Tonts (2005) demonstrated that sport in rural communities provides an opportunity for physical activity and social interaction. The participants in this study stated that the community's efforts and support had encouraged them and facilitated a sense of belonging. According to Holt *et al.* (2017), positive development occurs when youth are engaged in an appropriate environment and surrounded by caring adults and a positive community. This study revealed that regardless of limited resources and socio-economic challenges, rural communities possess the capacity to build a supportive structure for the youth. These findings further refute the notion that rurality is viewed from a perspective of deprivation, deficiency and backwardness. By contrast, Balfour *et al.* (2008) view rurality from a transformation and strength-based perspective. Thus, these findings are in agreement with the study of Balfour *et al.* (2008), which revealed that youth in rural communities possess personal strength and abilities that can be harnessed.

It can be argued from the findings of this study that the participants positioned rurality as an asset with the capacity to support, empower and enhance youth motivation. The participants' experiences in this study highlighted the influence of social-contextual factors, such as the influence of the community on the development of youth in a rural context. These findings are in line with the YDETS theoretical framework which affirms that community-based sports approaches promote positive experiences and competencies that could lead to positive development outcomes (Lerner *et al.*, 2011).

6.4 Conclusion

The findings of this study highlighted multiple perspectives of the participants' experiences and complexities of relationships within the social context of the youth participants in the study. It emerged from the findings that social interaction, a sense of family, the desire for positive relationships and a conducive sports environment were considered critical aspects that promoted positive experiences in the programme. On the other hand, the findings also revealed negative experiences which were associated with the participants' relationships with peers, teachers and parents. The participants highlighted financial constraints, circumstances at home and physical injuries as some of the critical factors that they perceived to have contributed to the negative development outcomes. These findings demonstrate that although participants in this study experienced a diversity of positive developmental experiences, they also accumulated negative experiences in their lives and the sports programme.

It is evident that personal life experiences within social and cultural contexts contributed to the participants' experiences. Their desire to develop positive self-identity and positive relationships and their need to experience effectiveness motivated the participants to want to thrive in their lives. It also emerged from the study that the participants acquired positive traits through their interaction in the community and school. The findings of the study highlight the youth potential and social competencies they already possessed before their participation in the Dreamfields Project sports development programme. These findings further suggest that the Dreamfields sports Project development programme provided opportunities for learning experiences and enhanced the developmental skills already possessed by the participants.

The findings of this study demonstrate that diverse youth experiences and participation in sports programmes do not necessarily lead to positive outcomes or similar experiences for all the participants. The findings also refute and call into question the views held by some of the Global North countries that rural South African youth are backward and non-progressive. I present a view which argues that although rural youth in this study experienced socio-economic challenges, such as financial constraints and fragmented family life, they were not disadvantaged in totality and should not be viewed from a perspective of deprivation and deficiency. Instead, the findings of the study suggest that rural youth are a heterogeneous group of individuals with aspirations and determination to overcome their challenges and succeed. In addition, the findings highlight both the positive and negative developmental pathways associated with sports participation. The next chapter presents the conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUDING THE GAME ON YOUTH EXPERIENCES OF A RURAL SOUTH AFRICAN SPORTS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

7.1 Introduction

This final chapter concludes the research by linking the research objectives and research questions to the findings of the study. Thereafter, I discuss the contributions of the study and how the research journey impacted me personally and professionally. This is followed by an outline of the recommendations and implications for future research and practice of sports development programmes in South Africa. The final sections will focus on the limitations of the study and implications for further research.

7.2 Overview of the study

This study on youth experiences of a rural South African sports development programme comprised seven chapters. In this section, I briefly discuss an overview of the study by focusing on the major points covered in each chapter.

Chapter 1

The first chapter provided an introduction and background to the study. The rationale and motivation for conducting this study was discussed within the context of rural South Africa. Thereafter, I provided a view of the broad context of the location of this study, which was Ingwavuma rural area in the north-eastern part of KZN in South Africa (refer to section 1.3.2). To contextualise the sports development programme in this study, I briefly discussed the Dreamfields Project sports development programme and outlined the focus, purpose, research questions and objectives of the study (see section 1.6). I then discussed the rationale for the proposed theoretical framework, briefly explained the methodological aspects, data gathering process and analysis of the study and provided an outline of the chapters of the thesis.

Chapter 2

The literature review related to the study was unpacked in the second chapter and provided a comprehensive overview of the research conducted on the topic. This helped to identify gaps in the literature. This chapter focused on issues related to the perspective of rurality and the landscape of community development. Furthermore, in Chapter 2, I discussed the role of sports development programmes in the context of youth experiences. I discussed the involvement of

various NGOs and non-profit organisations in sport and youth development. Thereafter, I discussed the context of sports development programmes in South Africa and the importance of school sports programme on the development of youth. The second chapter also focused on the background of the Dreamfields Project sports development programme and school sports programmes. Schools are highlighted as an ideal environment for the development of youth and where well-coordinated school sports programmes could be used to promote participation and teach fundamental values and social development skills. The personal and social development experiences of youth resulting from sports participation were also discussed.

Chapter 3

The third chapter focused on the theoretical framework, thereby extending the review of the literature. I reflected on the theories framing the study and how theories can be used to inform how existing knowledge is challenged and extended. This study integrated multiple theories to construct theoretical frameworks that addressed the different conceptual levels of the study. I explained the rationale for using multiple theories and proposing the theoretical framework for the YDETS framework (sections 3.4 and 3.5). Although the proposed framework has not been empirically tested, it has been proposed to address the contextual gaps in the current PYD framework and provide youth development through sport with a theoretical framework specific to the South African context.

Chapter 4

The research methodology applied in this study was discussed in the fourth chapter. This study followed a qualitative, descriptive research design and was guided by the interpretivist paradigm. The interpretivist paradigm is based on the notion that a meaningful reality is constructed through interaction between people and their environment. Therefore, a decision to use the interpretivism paradigm was informed by the desire to better understand youth experiences and perspectives in the context of a rural South African sports development programme. In this chapter, I also unpacked the research design, ontological and epistemological assumptions, and ethical considerations of the study. The sample choice and justification for using purposive sampling were also explained. I used an arts-informed method, which consisted of drawings, photovoice and in-depth semi-structured interviews as data gathering methods (sections 4.5 and 4.6). Thereafter, I discussed the research methods for data analysis and the criteria selected for this study to authenticate the findings (see section 4.8).

Chapter 5

The fifth chapter presented the findings related to the analysis of the participants' drawings and photographs of their experiences in a rural South African sports development programme. I presented the themes that emerged out of this study which explain the youth's experiences and contributing factors to their experiences. The findings in this study revealed multiple perspectives of the participants' experiences and complexities of their relationships in their social environment. The findings suggested that youth experiences were strongly shaped by their personal life experiences and social and cultural contexts, such as teachers, parents, friends and peers. These findings support the notion that the sports development programme led to several positive experiences and developmental outcomes, but some negative experiences and outcomes were also associated with participation in the sports programme.

Chapter 6

In the sixth chapter, I discussed the findings presented in the fifth chapter. I also presented the findings related to the research questions (refer to section 7.2). The findings discussed in this chapter are theorised and linked to the literature review. Furthermore, the proposed YDETS theoretical framework provided an additional lens to view my data and theorise the findings in this study.

Chapter 7

The seventh chapter concludes the study.

The following section presents the conclusions by linking the objectives of the study to the findings and theoretical framework.

7.2.1 Linking the research objectives to the findings of the study

This study set out to explore the youth experiences of a rural South African sports development programme in order to provide a better understanding of the youth experiences of a sports development programme and factors that might contribute, influence and shape their experiences. This study addressed two research questions: (1) How do the youth experience a sports development programme in rural South Africa? and (2) Why do youth experience the sports development programme in rural South Africa in the way they do?

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- To describe youth experiences of a rural South African sports development programme
- To determine the contribution of sports development programme to the personal, social and development of youth in rural South Africa
- To identify the factors that influence and contribute to the youth experiences of a sports development programme
- To analyse and theorise the PYD and SDT frameworks in relation to youth experiences of a rural sport development programme

The theorising and summary of the findings in the following subsection are presented according to the objectives of the study and highlight how the study addressed the research questions.

7.2.2 Youth experiences of a rural South African sports development programme

This research objective aligned with the first research question, which dealt with how youth experiences a sports development programme in rural South Africa. The findings of this study revealed multiple realities and different accounts of the experiences of the youth. The diverse experiences reported by the youth in this study included: personal development experiences; social development experiences; physical development experiences; nutritional needs; experiences with peers, friends, teachers, coaches and spectators; experiences related to physical injuries, sports facilities and equipment; and the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown restrictions.

One significant finding of this study that related to youth experiences was that participation in sport did not necessarily lead to positive outcomes or similar experiences for all the participants. Youth experiences varied significantly due to the youth's personal life experiences and interaction with their social environment. In essence, this finding suggests that youth personal and social development experiences and sports skills were influenced by multiple contexts and were not only attributed to participation in sport. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Kendellen and Camiré (2015) which found that youth enter a sports context with existing skills and experiences.

Another finding that emerged from the study was the perceived positive contribution of the Dreamfields Project sports development programme to improved physical development and health. This includes improvement in physical skills, sports skills, physical fitness and health benefits associated with sports participation. It is worth noting that although the participants pointed out that the Dreamfields Project sports development programme contributed to their enhance health and sports skills, they also attributed the development of their sports skills and perceived improved health to their participation in sport within the contexts of community and school. This finding aligns with the study conducted by Holt *et al.* (2009) who assert that physical development outcomes such as sport-specific skills are some of the benefits associated with youth sports programmes. In this context, the finding suggests that the Dreamfields Project sports development programme could potentially contribute to sports developmental outcomes such as the enhancement and further development of their existing sports skills.

The other finding related to the youth's experiences was the significance of good nutrition and water. This finding revealed that the desire for food and water was important to the participants in this study. These desires resonate with Ozdoğan and Ozcelik's (2011) assertion that water and food are important nutrients for the body. It is unclear how the Dreamfields sports development programme responded to the participants' nutritional needs. However, it appears that the teachers and community members supported the participants by providing food and money to buy food. In this regard, the findings of this study highlight how the Dreamfields Project sports development programme could possibly be used to promote good nutrition. Thus, sports programmes, such as the Dreamfields Project sports development programme can develop explicit strategies that promote healthy eating and respond to the participants' nutritional needs by integrating a feeding scheme into the sports programme. In addition, the programme could provide classroom sessions focusing on healthy eating and nutrition.

On the other hand, the findings also revealed several negative experiences and developmental outcomes. The study's findings indicate that social interaction with peers and friends in the sports development programme contributed to some negative experiences for some study participants. These included being ridiculed by their peers and being subjected to inappropriate jokes and comments. The negative experiences expressed by the participants in the programme could also have been acquired through social environments other than the sports development programme. These findings confirm that negative experiences in social settings, such as a sports environment, are inevitable. The negative experiences related to social interaction

resonate with the work of Hirai and Ryan (2016). The two scholars argue that for youth to develop and realise their abilities, the social environment should support processes that fulfil their basic psychological needs as negative experiences could undermine the necessary conditions for youth to thrive (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Therefore, I argue that a sports development programme alone is not the sole contributor to ensuring positive outcomes in a rural South African context. To minimise negative experiences, special attention should be given to creating a supportive environment in which building positive and respectful relationships between adults and peers is embedded and integrated into the sports programme.

The study found undesirable and negative spectator behaviour (such as abusive, disruptive behaviour) to be a barrier for youth participating in the sports development programme. The findings revealed that some of the spectators insulted the participants. Interestingly, the negative behaviour was attributed to other learners, and the participants did not mention negative behaviour by the parents as spectators. This finding is a cause for concern for sports development programmes. Therefore, to combat negative spectator behaviour, deliberate efforts from the programme facilitators are required to ensure that the disruptive subculture of spectators is discouraged. One example to mitigate negative spectator behaviour and ensure it does not permeate the sports programme is for teachers to enforce discipline and rules that discourage undesirable behaviour.

Another negative experience highlighted in this study was related to the interaction between the participants and some teachers and coaches. Some of the participants believed that the teachers in the programme had favourites. Contrary to this, the majority of the participants mentioned that they had a positive relationship with the coaches and teachers. Thus, the findings indicate contrasting experiences of the participants. They also illustrate how the coaches and teachers could enhance and thwart youth experiences. This finding is consistent with several studies which found that the coaches contributed to the youth's positive and negative experiences of sport (Fraser-Thomas and Côté, 2009; Hansen & Larson, 2007; Hansen *et al.*, 2003). In this respect, these negative interactions with the teachers and coaches highlight the need to train the teachers and coaches on how to create conducive conditions that could facilitate a sense of belonging and make the participants feel part of the programme. Thus, the Dreamfields Project sports development programme should develop strategies to expose the coaches and teachers in the programme to learning situations that will enable them to promote positive experiences.

Another experience shared by the participants about the programme related to physical injuries. The findings showed that some participants experienced injuries in the programme. However, it was not clear how severe the injuries sustained by the participants were. The participants attributed their injuries to poor sports field conditions and improper equipment. The findings imply that sports participation can result in negative physical outcomes, such as physical injuries. This finding has been reported in other studies, which indicate that sports injuries are common in youth sport (Hausken *et al.*, 2018; Ivarsson *et al.*, 2017; Merkel, 2013). Participants will inevitably be exposed to physical injuries in sport, however, the coaches and teachers can minimise the risks of physical injuries by ensuring that the participants are playing on an appropriate surface and wearing protective equipment. In addition, the coaches and teachers should be trained in the basics of managing sports injuries, such as first aid training.

The last experience that emerged from youth experiences related to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown restrictions. The findings in this study indicate that the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions in 2020 and 2021 had a negative effect on the participants. The lockdown restrictions required schools to be closed and sports activities were prohibited. These findings imply that limited sports activities and physical activity for youth contributed to an increase in the risk of long-term sedentary behaviours. Furthermore, the findings indicate that the participants felt isolated and perceived the absence of physical activities would lead to the loss of physical and health benefits, such as the fitness and sport-specific skills acquired in the programme. In essence, this finding highlights the overall positive experience of the programme because the participants missed the programme during the COVID-19 lockdown and wanted to be back playing on the sports field.

The finding related to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown restrictions and cancellation of sports activities resonate with the study conducted by Martin, Champ and Franklin (2021), which found that COVID-19 lockdown restrictions had a negative impact on social interaction between youth and their peers and also caused a decline in physical activity and exercise. This finding highlights the importance of sports development programmes to integrate innovative strategies that will enable the adaptation to unexpected circumstance and uncertainties. This could require modification of the programme activities to fit the environment and social contexts.

In summary, the findings presented above highlight the complexities related to the youth's experiences, which varied significantly due to their personal experiences, interaction with

peers, teachers and coaches, and the context in which they found themselves. The contribution of the environment and social context to youth experiences will be discussed in section 7.3.3. I will discuss personal and social development experiences in the next section.

7.3 Contribution of a sports development programme to the personal and social development experiences of the youth

The study shows that the programme provided opportunities for personal development experiences. Some participants' personal development experiences included enhanced confidence, respect, tolerance, commitment, competence and determination. The participants perceived that their personal development experiences had been enhanced as a result of their involvement in the programme. This finding concurs with the study conducted by Holt and Kacey (2011) which found that individuals acquire personal development experiences through their involvement in organised sports programmes. In this context, personal development experiences are essential to the rural youth as it may help them to be effective and in control of their lives.

The youth participants in this study refuted the notion that a sports development programme automatically contributes to personal development experiences. Most of the participants acknowledged that they had had experiences related to their personal development through their personal experiences in the community, in school and with family. This finding highlights the significance of the intersection between youth and the social context. Furthermore, this indicates that the lives of young people are complex and that their experiences cannot be viewed in isolation.

The findings also indicate that the programme contributed to the development of youth by enhancing and further developing their social skills and providing them with opportunities for social interaction. Although the sports development programme afforded the participants the opportunity for social interaction and enhanced their social development skills, they attributed some of their social development experiences to their social interaction with their peers and teachers. These findings suggest that social development outcomes are influenced by multiple factors, including social relationships and contextual contexts in which participation occurs (Coakley, 2011).

In conclusion, the findings show that the youth's personal and social development experiences were influenced by the social environment that enhanced or hindered their personal

development experiences. The findings also show that social interaction was considered an essential part of their participation in the sports development programme. Although the findings highlighted that the sports development programme had afforded the participants the opportunity for social interaction and enhanced social development skills, some of their social development experiences could be attributed to the social interaction between the youth and teachers. These findings highlight the potential influence that the environment and social context can have on youth experiences. I now focus on the next section to explain why the youth experienced the sports development programme the way they did.

7.4 Factors contributing to and influencing the youth experiences of a sports development programme

A combination of multiple factors and contextual assets contributed to the views and experiences of the youth in the current study and are related to the social contexts and the participants' personal life experiences. The personal life experience of youth was identified as an emerging factor that explains why youth experiences emerged the way they did. This finding suggests that the youth's pre-existing experiences influenced their experiences and contributed to their involvement in the Dreamfields Project sports development programme. It can be argued that although the participants' involvement in sport and physical activity was through unstructured sports activities in the community, their experiences highlight how the social and cultural contexts facilitated the development of sport-specific skills, social development skills and personal development skills.

Although the findings revealed negative experiences related to lack of support from some parents, conflicts and disagreements between participants, the influence and support of family, peers and friends outside the sports development programme seemed to have facilitated positive experiences for social interaction. This finding suggests that a supportive community, school and family create an appropriate environment that fosters autonomy, competence, relatedness and resilience. These contrasting experiences resonate with the reviewed literature which highlights both positive and negative peer-related experiences associated with sports participation (Blom *et al.*, 2013; Bowers *et al.*, 2010; Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009; Kendellen & Camiré, 2015). This study has shown that although the participant's views reflected contrasting experiences and multiple perspectives related to the social context, parents, peers and friends played an essential role in enhancing or hindering youth experiences. The findings in this study suggests that the individual context and social environment influenced youth

experiences. Social interaction with peers, friends and family cannot be assumed to lead to positive experiences, and the findings show that youth participating in the Dreamfields Project sports development programme experienced both positive and negative social interactions with their friends and peers.

The findings also highlight the influence and contribution of teachers and coaches in enhancing or hindering the youths' experiences. The participants perceived the teachers and coaches to be supportive. It could, therefore, be argued that the teachers and the coaches created a positive and supportive environment for the participants. In addition, the findings revealed positive relationships between the youth participants and the teachers existed for some participants due to the regular interaction in the sports development programme. Previous studies have shown that positive development occurs if the strengths of youth are aligned with positive experiences through social interaction with the social environment (Bowers *et al.*, 2010; Holt *et al.*, 2017). However, it would be naïve to assume that all the youth participants experienced positive relationships with the teachers, resulting in positive experiences. The findings also revealed how negative interactions and favouritism could lead to negative experiences. Therefore, this finding highlights contrasting experiences of the participants' relationships with the teachers and coaches. In essence, the findings suggest that a lack of a supportive environment and social interaction between teachers and youth could also lead to negative experiences and development outcomes.

Another factor that contributed to why the youth experienced the sports development programme the way they did is related to the community. The findings in this study highlight the importance of a supportive community in creating social networks and an appropriate environment that fosters positive development. The participants associated their communities with a sense of belonging and positive relationships. They considered their communities to be caring and supportive. This notion is supported by Trussell's (2009) argument that rurality should be construed as a foundation of a caring community and a peaceful environment that provides youth in rural communities with the opportunity for socialisation. The finding of this study position rurality as an empowering and supportive environment that promotes social interaction and PYD.

The study indicates that youth experiences are vast and influenced by different factors, including personal life experiences, environment and social context. These findings resonate with the PYD framework and SDT, which support the notion that youth sports experiences are

influenced by multiple constructs consisting of structural conditions in society, families, organisations and communities. However, there are several concerns relating to the gaps in the application of the PYD frameworks in the context of sport, especially in the South African context, which were discussed in Chapter 3 (refer to 3.4.1).

I argue that the current PYD framework might not necessarily reflect the development and youth experiences in the sports development programme in rural South Africa. Thus, a theoretical framework specific to the rural South African context is recommended. The proposed YDETS framework is drawn from the findings of this study and the current PYD framework and SDT. The YDETS framework was explicitly described in Chapter 3 of this thesis. It includes five key elements: (1) SDT (GCT and BPNT); (2) youth viewed as agents of their own development; (3) social context based on relationships between youth, peers, adults, parents, coaches and teachers; (4) sports development programme design and implementation; and (5) positive and negative outcomes associated with the sports development programme.

The proposed YDETS theoretical framework emphasises how three basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence and relatedness) are important for optimal development. Failure to satisfy these basic needs could undermine the necessary conditions for youth to thrive and possibly result in negative experiences (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The findings of this study highlight the significance of the social context in providing support and encouragement for youth to thrive. With regard to the second and third elements of the YDETS framework, the findings indicate that youth are autonomous and actively involved in their own development. This suggests that the youth's experiences were influenced by their personal strengths, and potential and bi-directional interaction with their social context. Bringing this into the context of this study, youth in the rural community are often perceived as disadvantaged and non-progressive. However, the findings in this study highlight the youth's potential, capabilities and social competencies.

The fourth and fifth elements relate to the role of the sports development programme in enhancing and hindering development outcomes. These elements align with the findings of this study, which indicated contrasting views about the programme outcomes. For example, the findings highlighted contextual challenges such as poor facilities, which resulted in physical injuries. On the other hand, the findings suggest that the programme contributed to positive outcomes, such as the development of sports skills, social skills and personal development skills.

7.5 Contribution of the study's findings

This study employed a YDETS theoretical perspective to explore the youth experiences of a rural South African sports development programme. The YDETS theoretical framework proposed for this study is an important lens through which I could challenge the belief held in most of the Global North countries that view South African rural youth from a deficit perspective without embracing diversity in youth development and the social and cultural contexts. In addition, there is a gap in the literature related to the youth experience of rural South African sports development programmes. Therefore, the current study provides authentic knowledge constructed through South African youth voices within their social environment.

This study also provides thought-provoking contributions to conversations regarding youth development through sport and rurality in the African context. In Africa, there is currently an influx of international agencies implementing sport-for-development programmes to empower youth and address social ills, such as crime, drugs and alcohol abuse. Similarly in South Africa, there has been an emergence of international organisations, sports federations and NGOs focusing on youth development through sport in order to facilitate PYD. Thus, this study expands the conversation on the potential role of these organisations and sports development programmes in promoting youth development in a rural context. The findings of this study contribute to the knowledge by providing insight into the youth experiences and factors that influence their experiences.

In light of the above and in attempt to broaden the understanding of youth experiences of a rural South African sports development programme, throughout this thesis I identified three significant contributions to the body of knowledge, namely contextual, theoretical and methodological.

7.5.1 Contextual contribution

Sport is viewed as a mechanism that leads to positive development experiences for youth. In essence, sports participation is often linked to positive outcomes and it is believed that it can positively affect youth experiences and improve their quality of life (Singh *et al.*, 2012). This view led to the rapid growth of sports development programmes in South Africa, using sport as a vehicle for youth development and addressing social issues such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic. For example, SRSA initiated mass participation programmes and school sports

development programmes to provide sports participation opportunities for youth in black townships and rural areas in South Africa (Burnett, 2009).

One of the significant findings of this study is related to the need to consider the unique and varied realities of the youth experiences and how the youth's lives are constantly shaped and re-shaped by their personal life experiences and social environment. This implies that sport should not be viewed in isolation and treated as a magic box, but rather understanding sport should be viewed within a specific context in society. The findings of this study revealed that the Dreamfields Project sports development programme did not automatically lead to positive experiences and development outcomes. This contradicts the narrow conception which assumes that sports participation often leads to positive development outcomes. The findings showed contextual features that positively and negatively impacted the youth experiences. The youth participants in this study highlighted several adverse experiences and outcomes associated with the sports development programme.

It is, therefore, important for sports programmes similar to the Dreamfields Project sports development programme to recognise the strengths of the youth and deliberately structure their programmes to nurture and enhance youth's pre-existing skills. The participants in this study positioned themselves as individuals with resilience, determination and capabilities to thrive in life. This study provides an important context for understanding the extent to which sports development programmes can contribute to enhancing or hindering youth experiences.

What is clear from the findings is the need for sports development programmes to adopt an explicit approach in the design and implementation strategies to enhance the youth's existing and new skills. For the sports development programmes to enhance and further develop youth skills, both the sport-specific and non-sport-specific outcomes need to be embedded in much broader practices that will explicitly ensure that development is at the forefront of the programme. In addition, sports programmes can be strategically implemented to attain some of the UN SDGs. In this regard, the facilitators' and coaches' courses in the sports development programmes should incorporate pedagogical content focusing on psychosocial skills to enable the programme leaders, coaches and teachers to facilitate PYD. It can, therefore, be argued that although an implicit approach in sport can lead to positive development outcomes and experiences, using explicit strategies to facilitate both sport-specific and psychosocial skills could enhance and stimulate the transfer of such skills to other social settings.

Finally, the YDETS theoretical framework suggests that positive experiences through youth interaction with the social context and sports development programmes designed to achieve both sport-specific and non-sport-specific outcomes could produce positive outcomes and contribute to achieving some of the UN SDGs. In terms of the SDGs, the findings in this study suggest that the Dreamfields Project sports development programme has indirectly contributed to Goal 3 of the UN SDG – good health (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). The study could not identify the policy framework developed by the Dreamfields Project sports development programme focusing on SDGs. However, the findings revealed that the programme is perceived to enhance the health of youth.

The findings of this study indicate that the Dreamfields Project sports development programme provided development and learning opportunities for the participants. Thus, I argue that an inclusive sports development programme in the school context could promote equality and physical health and address a range of UN SDGs. This argument is aligned with Taylor *et al.*'s (2017), which states that participation in sport and physical activity could be regarded as an effective tool for promoting physical and psychosocial benefits for youth. It is not clear if the Dreamfields Project sports programme was intentionally designed to promote the UN SDGs, but has done so indirectly. However, it will be naïve to assume that a sports development programme could address the SDGs without considering contextual contexts in which participation occurs and formulating an explicit approach and strategies aimed at promoting the SDGs.

7.5.2 Theoretical contribution

The proposed YDETS theoretical framework and findings of this study contribute to our understanding of how the youth experiences in different contexts intersect and are influenced by multiple constructs, such as family, peers and coaches. The YDETS theoretical lens also further addresses the contextual gaps in the current PYD framework and provides a theoretical framework specific to the South African context. This study's theoretical perspective offered a unique opportunity to explore youth's multiple realities and to identify enablers and possible barriers to attaining positive development outcomes in a sports development programme.

The YDETS theoretical framework, which emanates from the PYD framework and SDT, is multimodal. The integration of multiple theoretical approaches provided conceptual clarity on youth experiences and contributed to a broader perspective on the individual, cultural and

social contexts of South African youth, especially youth in rural areas. The YDETS framework further provides insight into how sports development programmes can produce positive and negative developmental pathways. The findings in this study revealed the potential of the Dreamfields sports development programme to enhance and further develop youth personal and social development skills. This finding adds an interesting perspective to the conversation regarding the sport-specific and non-sport-specific outcomes of sports development programmes. In essence, sports development programmes can effectively enhance basic sports skills and social skills, such as teamwork, and reinforce the importance of cooperation, but might not lead to the transferability of these skills from the sporting environment to other contexts.

In addition, the findings in this study highlight how a conducive sports environment and supportive relationships within the social setting can lead to positive development outcomes. Similarly, the findings revealed that an environment that is not supportive, such as a fragmented family life or feeling uncomfortable around peers, can result in negative developmental outcomes. Although empirical evidence supports the contribution of sports participation to positive and negative outcomes (Gould *et al.*, 2012; Lerner *et al.*, 2010), this study was the first to use the YDETS framework, which asserts that sports development programmes could produce different developmental outcomes. This study further challenges the Global North perspective that focuses on PYD and provides little guidance on cultural and contextual factors that could lead to negative outcomes. Thus, I argue that YDETS provides a holistic view of youth experiences and offers multiple theoretical perspectives that address different conceptual levels of youth experiences in the South African rural context. In addition, the YDETS framework provides an essential starting point for a theoretical framework specific to the South African context and guides future research in sports development programmes.

7.6 Methodological reflection and contribution

It is important to note that I encountered some challenges in this research due to lockdowns and restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Challenges included gaining consent and assent, access to the participants, and risk management to ensure that the participants were safe. I used arts-informed methods of gathering data, and this process required deep conversations and insightful dialogue with the participants. Gathering data remotely would have been problematic, considering that the participants in this study were based in a rural community where access to digital technologies was limited; it would not have been easy to

facilitate the data gathering process online based on the nature of my research methods. I had to wait a year for the South African government to ease COVID-19 restrictions before I could gather data.

In the context of this study, arts-informed methodologies through drawings and photographs became a tool in which the participants shared their personal experiences within and outside the Dreamfields sports development programme. The arts-informed methodological approach proved effective as it allowed the participants to share their experiences and express their views openly. The drawings and photographs that the participants took allowed them to openly share their lived experiences within the community and family contexts. The drawings and photographs provided multimodal forms of expressions that reflected the multidimensional and contextual nature of the youth's lived experiences.

Initially, I was concerned about the willingness of the participants to share their lived experiences with me, considering that I was a stranger to them. Furthermore, I was uncertain if they would be able to grasp the data construction process, which required them to take photographs and create drawings related to their experiences. To address these concerns, I organised a meeting at the schools with the participants to explain the purpose of the study and the process involved in data gathering. During the meeting, the photovoice procedure, ethical considerations, and the roles of participants when taking photographs were discussed. Furthermore, I trained the participants to operate a camera and take photographs.

Another challenge related to the research methodology was processing and analysing data. I realised how complex it was to integrate the data construct from visual material and develop codes inductively. I realised during the data analysis that analysing visual data combined with written data was a lengthy process and required diligence. In the first cycle of coding, I realised that most of the personal life experiences of the participants were not coded. I had to revise and change the codes to ensure that the constructed codes were focused and represented the participants' views. In addition, the multimodal data analysis methods, such as semiotic visual data analysis, photovoice data analysis, and thematic data analysis, were used in this study to gain insight into the youth experiences. Thus, the integration of the three methods of analysis brought diversity and clarity to the interpretation of the experiences and multiple perspectives of the participants in this study.

The multimodal research methodology used in this study encouraged an active conceptualisation of ideas and experiences of the participants and further enhanced my collaboration with the participants in this study. The methodology further provided an enabling environment for the youth to express their views freely and share insights into their experiences. The photovoice method and the drawings combined with the semi-structured interviews in this study highlighted the youth's visual voices and experiences in a creative and engaging way. This study has shown the significance of giving the youth a voice to share their experiences within their social context. Therefore, the multimodal methodologies used in this study enabled in-depth exploration and analysis of the youth experiences that would not have been possible through interviews alone. The arts-informed methodology used in this study could be considered for future studies on youth experiences in the rural context.

7.7 Limitations and implications for future research

It is important to indicate the limitations of this study. The study was a small-scale, in-depth study and the small sample restricted generalisability of the findings across South Africa and other contexts. It was limited to a sample of a few youths who participated in the Dreamfields Project sports development programme in three schools in KZN. Given these limitations, more in-depth research should provide more insight into youth experiences of a sports development programme in other contexts, such as urban areas. However, the study raised significant issues that could be further explored in different contexts.

It is also worth noting that the nature of youth sports development programmes and their intended outcomes differ from programme to programme. In addition, the participants' narratives represent their lived experiences unique to the rural South African context. Therefore, the findings might not be entirely transferable to other sports development programmes and other African countries. It would, therefore, be important for further studies to expand the youth experiences of the sports development programmes to other community contexts and sports programmes within Africa to further understand the cultural and social influences.

This study explored youth experiences from the participants' perspectives. In most sports development and school sports programmes, the coaches and teachers are responsible for facilitating the programmes. Therefore, lack of voices from teachers and coaches is another limitation identified in this study. Their participation would have been beneficial in providing

a more detailed picture of their contribution toward enhancing or thwarting youth experiences and development outcomes. Therefore, further research is needed to explore the role and impact of coaches and teachers on the development and experiences of youth in the rural context. Another possibility for future research would be to explore how the personal development and social development skills gained from the sports development programme could be transferred to other social settings. In addition, it is important to understand how a supportive environment created by coaches and teachers influences youth self-determination and motivation to thrive in life. Thus, future research is needed to explore the influence of coaches and teachers on the motivation and determination of youth to flourish.

Another aspect of the youth experiences that this study did not explore in detail is the negative experiences related to physical injuries and spectator behaviour. The findings revealed several adverse experiences associated with participation in the sports development programme. Given the findings of this study, further research is needed to explore how sports programme experiences affect and hinder youth experiences. Future research could also examine the frequency and types of physical injuries in sports programmes. Another avenue for future research would be to explore how the teachers and coaches can minimise and combat negative spectator behaviour in sports programmes.

Despite some limitations, the findings of this study have provided insight into how a sports development programme can be used as a tool to enhance positive experiences and development outcomes of the youth in a rural context. The findings have also raised interesting questions that future research should explore. Considering the findings and the nature of the studied sports development programme, future research is needed to better understand how development and positive experiences could be attained through implicit learning in sport. Given that the proposed YDETS theoretical framework has not been empirically tested, further testing and theory-building are needed to explore how the theoretical framework is applicable in a rural context, especially in Africa.

7.8 Recommendations emanating from the study

Based on the findings of this study, it is clear that the lives of rural youth are dynamic and influenced by multiple contexts. Therefore, their experiences and perspectives cannot be viewed in isolation.

The sports development programmes need to consider working with schools, parents, teachers and coaches. The findings of this study indicate that teachers and coaches in an educational context contribute to the development and enhanced positive experiences. On the other hand, the parents within the social context support the youth. Therefore, the organisations facilitating sports development programmes need to continue supporting teachers, coaches and parents by educating them about the importance of positive relationships and inclusive sports development programmes that provide development opportunities. The teachers and coaches should ensure that the sports activities are inclusive by involving boys and girls, and youth with different skills.

Another recommendation is that sport development programmes could be strategically designed and implemented to contribute to achieving some of the UN SDGs. I recommend that the sports development programmes be implemented in partnership with community organisations, especially those focusing on youth development. These partnerships could enhance the efficacy of the sports development programme to achieve positive development outcomes.

7.9 Personal reflection on my research journey

This study has provided me with invaluable experience and insight into the world of social research. As I navigated my way through the study, I learned to appreciate the complex relationships between individuals and their social and cultural environment. This study has taken many turns and has evolved. I also encountered numerous challenges and learning opportunities. In the process, I have learned that the research journey cannot be simplified and requires resilience, persistence and, most importantly, discipline.

The COVID-19 pandemic posed unprecedented challenges to my research journey. I could not have anticipated the extent to which the pandemic would have affected my research plans. Owing to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, access to the participants was limited, and it was difficult to conduct research during this period. I remained hopeful and eventually, in March

2021, I had an opportunity to gather the data. The research interviews were conducted face-to-face, and, based on conditions related to COVID-19, a robust participatory risk management process was required, which included screening and sanitising the participants regularly. I was always mindful of the safety of the participants and had to ensure that I did not take unnecessary risks by keeping the participants in the same place for a long period of time.

The situation taught me to be patient, flexible and committed. In addition, the unwavering support I received from my supervisors helped me to remain focused throughout my study. Their knowledge and experience have been an asset to my academic journey, and they nurtured my study through deep conversations that stimulated my thinking process. Furthermore, the supervisors' valuable feedback and guidance kept me motivated and determined to work towards my end goal.

On the professional side, I gained valuable experience and knowledge in the field of youth and sports development. This study provided me with insight into the complexities of youth development through sport in a rural context. For instance, rural youth are often perceived to be disadvantaged and marginalised, but I learned that post-apartheid youth living in rural South Africa have different experiences and continue to embrace their cultural wealth. I now understand that social contexts are different and could lead to different development outcomes and experiences.

Finally, on a scholarly level, this study provided me with an opportunity to engage critically with the research process at a level that would not have been possible if I had not embarked on this study. The insight gained from this study is enriching and has contributed immensely to my knowledge of the innovative research approach used in this study. The use of arts-informed methods of gathering data was a new experience and allowed me to engage in this study with a high level of authenticity.

7.10 Conclusion

This research explored youth experiences of a rural South African sports development programme and the factors that contributed to their experiences of a sports development programme. This study contributed to the current literature on youth experiences of rural sports development programmes and understanding of why these experiences emerged. Therefore, this study provided new insight into the unique and unexplored experiences of youth by increasing our understanding of how a rural sports development programme can be used as a

tool to contribute to the already enhanced youth experiences. The findings from this study suggest that positive and negative experiences can occur within the same sporting environment. In this context, sports development programmes need to be cautious regarding possible development outcomes and not assume that participation in sports programmes will lead to positive outcomes and experiences. This study challenges the narrative presented by sports evangelists¹¹ in many Global North countries who assume that sports participation automatically leads to positive experiences, personal success and civic engagement (Coakley, 2011).

The youth participants in this study experienced many positive experiences as a result of their participation in the sports development programme. The most significant were those perceived to be in the personal, physical and social domains. In line with these findings, I argue that these sets of skills and experiences already existed but were enhanced through participation in the sports development programme. Furthermore, it was not only one aspect of the sports development programme that led to the improved positive experiences and development, but a combination of the environment and the social context, such as teachers, friends and families. A significant finding in this study indicates that it is inevitable for youth to encounter negative experiences in the sports environment.

Despite many similarities in how the youth experiences unfolded in the Dreamfields Project sports development programme, the participants' experiences were unique. This notion affirms that youth experiences are not absolute and youth represent a heterogeneous group of individuals who are influenced by multiple contexts within a socio-cultural system (Cooper *et al.*, 2019). The explanation as to why youth experiences emerge in the way they do can possibly be located in youth personal experiences and interactions within their social context. The youth who participated in this study showed resilience and determination to overcome uncomfortable situations in their lives. In essence, the youth participants in this study positioned rurality as a multifaceted community that is transformative and progressive. The findings from this study lead to the conclusion that sport cannot address all social problems but rather it has the potential to contribute to the participants' already enhanced experiences and developmental skills.

¹¹ Sports evangelists are individuals who strongly believe that sport participation leads to a positive impact on youth development and they are less inclined to explore positive and negative experiences associated with sport (Coakley *et al.*, 2011: 307).

The effectiveness of sports development programmes in enhancing youth experiences depends on the programmes that are appropriately designed and implemented to meet the developmental needs of the youth. Therefore, there is a need for sports development programmes to embrace the plus sport approach and integrate an explicit approach in the design and programme implementation strategies in order to enhance the potential to achieve positive development outcomes. This study suggests that the Dreamfields Project sport development programme consider the design and implementation of the programme so that the non-sport-specific outcomes that were documented by the participants are explicit and at the forefront of the programme. This suggests that the sports programme and programme leaders, such as teachers and coaches, identify the needs and current skills of the participants so that they can adapt the programme content appropriately to increase the positive outcomes.

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Appendices

Appendix A: First phase interview questionnaire

Code no.

Interviewer: M F Interview no: _____ Gender: _____
Age: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____

INTRODUCTION

I am doing a research project about your experiences of Dreamfields Project sport programme happening in your school and community. This research is about a way to learn more about your experiences in this sport programme. You will be asked some questions about the sport programme. The research project topic is “**Youth experiences of a rural South African sport development programme.**”

I am going to ask you to create drawings using blank paper and coloured pencil crayons. The drawings can be anything you chose and should symbolise or relate to your experiences of **Dreamfields sport development programme**. Feel free to draw whatever you have in your mind related to your experiences of Dreamfields Project sport programme. In general remember, I am interested in what you draw, and not how well you draw.

Once you are finish with the drawings, I will ask you questions about your drawings (interview). The interview will be recorded and will be taking notes during the interview. Whether you agree to participate in the study or not will have no effect on your participation in the sport programme in the school or community. Could you please spare a few minutes to answer some questions? Your answers will be treated confidentially and you do not have to give your name.

Do you have any questions about confidentiality or other aspects of this research?

Eligibility Screen

First, I would like to start by asking you some general questions about yourself.

What is your date of birth? _____

Do you participate in Dreamfields Project sport programme? _____

How long have you been participating in the Dreamfields Project sport programme? _____

Where are you from? _____ Rural area Yes No

Q1 – Q7

1. Thinking about your experiences in a Dreamfields Project sport programme, please tell me more about your drawing?
2. What is happening in your drawing?
3. Why did you make a drawing of this, please explain?
4. What does this drawing relate to your experiences of Dreamfields sport programme, please explain?
5. How can this drawing relate to contribution of this sport programme in your life, please explain?
6. What do you like or do not like about this drawing, please explain?
7. What can be done better to improve this situation or make your experiences better?

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer these questions

Appendix B: Second phase interview questionnaire

Code no.

Interviewer: _____ Interview no: _____

Gender:

 M F

Age: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the second session of the research project. I asked you to take pictures, please select two meaningful or most descriptive photographs from the photographs you took. I am going to ask you questions about the pictures.

The interview will be recorded and notes will be taken during the interview. Whether you agree to participate in the study or not will have no effect on your participation in the sport programme in the school or community. Your answers will be treated confidentially and you do not have to give your name.

At the end of the interviews, you will be asked to select your favourite pictures for photo sharing session. During this session, you will discuss and share your experiences about your picture with other participants.

Do you have any questions about confidentiality or other aspects of this research?

Q1 - Q12

1. Thinking about your participation in a Dreamfields sport programme, can you tell me about this picture, Please describe your photo.
2. Looking back on your participation in this sport programme, how does this picture relate to your experiences of Dreamfields Project sport programme?
3. Please share with me, why did you take this picture?
4. How does this picture relate to the way this sport programme affected your life?
5. How does this picture represent your experiences with others (coaches, teachers, and friends) in this sport programme?
6. What did you learn from the participants, coaches, teachers and others in this sport programme?
7. What does this picture tell us about your personal experiences of this sport programme?
8. Let's talk about your participation in the sport programme, how did you feel?
9. What did you learn about yourself in the sport programme?
10. What do you like or do not like about this photo?
11. What were the activities that you remember the most about this sport programme and why?
12. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experiences in the sport programme?

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer these questions

Appendix C: Consent form

Dear Parent

I kindly request your child to take part in a research project, which will be done at your child's school. The research project topic is "**Youth experiences of a rural South African sport development programme.**" This research project will require that your child to be asked questions about her/his experiences of a sport programme happening at the school.

Your child will be asked to do some drawings, take photos and questions about this photos and the Dreamfields project sport programme. This information will be treated with strict confidentiality, only used for research purpose. What is discussed in the interviews will only be between your child, Department of Basic Education and supervisors at University of Pretoria. Your child is not forced to participate in this research project and can stop at any time and it is okay.

I would like to thank you in advance for your assistance in this research project and hope information, which will be provided in this research project, will help us to understand the contribution of a sport programme that your child is participating in at school.

Yours Sincerely

Leepile Motlhaolwa

082 048 4655

Appendix D: Assent form

Dear Participant

I am doing a research project about your experiences of Dreamfields Project sport programme happening in your school and community. This research is about a way to learn more about your experiences in this sport programme. You will be asked to make some drawings and take pictures of things that relate to your experience of a sport programme in your school and community. You will be asked some questions about this photos and drawings. The research project topic is **“Youth experiences of a rural South African sport development programme.”**

If you agree to participate, you will receive a digital camera for taking pictures during the project and trained about using the camera. The digital camera will be returned to the researcher after the research project. You need to know that you are not forced to participate, it is your choice, and you can stop at any time and it is okay. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to be. Your parents were told about this study. What is discussed in the interviews will only be between us, Department of Basic Education and supervisors at University of Pretoria. The report will not include your name or that you were part of the research.

We also would like to request your permission to use your data, confidentially and anonymously, for further research purposes, as the data sets are the intellectual property of the University of Pretoria. Further research may include secondary data analysis and using the data for teaching purposes. The confidentiality and privacy applicable to this study will be binding on future research studies.”

If you are happy and want to be part of this research project, please sign your name.

I, _____, want to be in this research project.
(Name and Surname)

(Sign your name here)

(Date)

Appendix E: Private property photograph release property

Private Property Photography Release Form

I _____, give permission for the person participating in this research project to be take photographs on my property. By signing my name below I understand that this photographs may be used for the research related reports, exhibits and presentation that might happen as the part of this research project.

Signature: _____
(Sign your name here)

(Date)

Appendix F: Drawings and photograph subject release form

Drawings and Photograph General Release Form

Your drawings and photographs will be used for the research report and presentations and kindly request your permission to use your photos and drawings for the research purpose. If you agree, please sign your name below.

I _____, give permission for my drawings and photographs to be developed and used for the research related reports, exhibits and presentations.

Signature: _____ (Date)

(Sign your name here)

Appendix G: Photography Subject Consent Form

Photography Subject Consent Form

I _____, give permission for my photographs to be taken and used for the research related reports, exhibits and presentation that might happen as the part of this research project. I understand and agree that the person doing this research project and possibly people from my community will see my photo.

Signature: _____ (Date)

(Sign your name here)

If Subject is under 18 years (minor)

Parental Consent:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix H: Letter to the Department of Basic Education

Dear Sir/Madam

I am conducting a research project for a PhD degree. My research topic is “**Youth experiences of a rural South African sport development programme.**” The overall aim of this study is to explore youth developmental experiences of a sport programme in rural communities in the South African context. The research will further explore the contribution of a sport programme to personal development and social development of youth.

I hereby request permission from the Department of Basic Education to conduct research in Ingwavuma, North of KwaZulu Natal province, uMkhanyakude District. Ingwavuma High School, Nqobizazi Secondary and Hhoye Secondary are the schools identified for this research. This study will involve semi-structured interviews with the participants. The semi-structured interview questions will focus on the participants’ experiences of a sport programme initiated by Dreamfields Project and Department of Basic Education. I intend to select 15 males and 15 females, ranging in age from 14 to 20 year, from schools participating in Dreamfields Project sport programme in Ingwavuma on basis of availability to participate in the study. A total of 30 participants will be requested to participate in the study and semi-structured interviews will be conducted during the breaks and after school hours.

This research focus becomes imperative for future sustainability of Dreamfields Project sport programme and will provide insight about the contribution of a sport programme on developmental experiences of youth. The participation in the study is voluntary, and all the information disclosed will be confidential, and will be used only for the purpose of the research and should the participants decide to withdraw from the study, the data will be destroyed. The information provided will be accessible to the Department of Basic Education, researcher and Sport, Exercise Medicine and Lifestyle Institute and supervisors at the University of Pretoria, and will be disseminated through a PhD thesis, scientific articles and congress presentations.

Researcher



Leepile Motlhaolwa

Supervisor



Dr S. de Jager

Appendix I: Letter to the school Principal

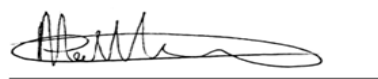
Dear Sir/Madam

I am conducting a research project for a PhD degree. My research topic is “**Youth developmental experiences of a sport programme in rural communities in South Africa.**” The overall aim of this study is to explore youth developmental experiences of a sport programme in rural communities in the South African context. The research will further explore the contribution of a sport programme to personal development and social development of youth.

The permission from the Department of Basic Education to conduct the research has been granted and kindly request to conduct the research at your school. This study will involve semi-structured interviews with the participants. The semi-structured interview questions will focus on the participants’ experiences of a sport programme initiated by Dreamfields Project and Department of Basic Education. I intend to select 5 males and 5 females learners, ranging in age from 14 to 20 year, from your school. The learners will be requested to participate in the study and semi-structured interviews will be conducted during the breaks and after school hours.

This research focus becomes imperative for future sustainability of Dreamfields Project sport programme and will provide insight about the contribution of a sport programme on developmental experiences of youth. The participation in the study is voluntary, and all the information disclosed will be confidential, and will be used only for the purpose of the research and should the participants decide to withdraw from the study, the data will be destroyed. The information provided will be accessible to the Department of Basic Education, researcher and Sport, Exercise Medicine and Lifestyle Institute and supervisors at the University of Pretoria, and will be disseminated through a PhD thesis, scientific articles and congress presentations.

Researcher



Leepile Motlhaolwa

Supervisor



Dr S. de Jager

Appendix J: Ethical approval



Faculty of Education

Ethics Committee

15 April 2020

Mr Leepile Motlhaolwa

Dear Mr Motlhaolwa

REFERENCE: UP 19/04/01 SCHWELLNUS 19-001

We received proof that you have met the conditions outlined. Your application is thus **approved**, and you may start with your fieldwork. The decision covers the entire research process, until completion of the study report, and not only the days that data will be collected. The approval is valid for two years for a Masters and three for Doctorate.

The approval by the Ethics Committee is subject to the following conditions being met:

1. The research will be conducted as stipulated on the application form submitted to the Ethics Committee with the supporting documents.
2. Proof of how you adhered to the Department of Basic Education (DBE) policy for research must be submitted where relevant.
3. In the event that the research protocol changed for whatever reason the Ethics Committee must be notified thereof by submitting an amendment to the application (Section E), together with all the supporting documentation that will be used for data collection namely; questionnaires, interview schedules and observation schedules, for further approval before data can be collected. **Non-compliance implies that the Committee's approval is null and void.** The changes may include the following but are not limited to:
 - Change of investigator,
 - Research methods any other aspect therefore and,
 - Participants.

The Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education does not accept any liability for research misconduct, of whatsoever nature, committed by the researcher(s) in the implementation of the approved protocol.

Upon completion of your research you will need to submit the following documentations to the Ethics Committee for your

Clearance Certificate:

- Integrated Declaration Form (Form D08),
- Initial Ethics Approval letter and,
- Approval of Title.

Please quote the reference number **UP 19/04/01 SCHWELLNUS 19-001** in any communication with the Ethics Committee.

Best wishes



Prof Funke Omidire
Chair: Ethics Committee
Faculty of Education

Appendix K: Phase 1 and Phase 2 data gathering sample breakdown

Participants	Gender	Age	School	Data gathering phases
01	Female	15	High School X	Phase 1 and Phase 2
02	Male	15	High School X	Phase 1
03	Female	15	High School X	Phase 1 and Phase 2
04	Male	14	High School X	Phase 1 and Phase 2
05	Female	14	High School X	Phase 1 and Phase 2
06	Male	15	High School X	Phase 1
07	Female	14	High School X	Phase 1
08	Female	15	High School X	Phase 1
09	Male	14	High School X	Phase 1 and Phase 2
10	Male	15	High School X	Phase 1 and Phase 2
11	Male	16	High School Y	Phase 1 and Phase 2
12	Male	16	High School Y	Phase 1 and Phase 2
13	Male	15	High School Y	Phase 1
14	Female	18	High School Y	Phase 1 and Phase 2
15	Male	15	High School Y	Phase 1 and Phase 2
16	Male	17	High School Y	Phase 1 and Phase 2
17	Male	16	High School Y	Phase 1 and Phase 2
18	Male	18	High School Y	Phase 1
19	Female	16	High School Y	Phase 1 and Phase 2
20	Female	17	High School Y	Phase 1
21	Female	14	High School Z	Phase 1
22	Male	16	High School Z	Phase 1 and Phase 2
23	Male	14	High School Z	Phase 1 and Phase 2
24	Male	14	High School Z	Phase 1 and Phase 2
25	Male	14	High School Z	Phase 1 and Phase 2
26	Female	14	High School Z	Phase 1 and Phase 2
27	Female	14	High School Z	Phase 1 and Phase 2
28	Female	14	High School Z	Phase 1 and Phase 2
39	Female	14	High School Z	Phase 1 and Phase 2
30	Female	14	High School Y	Phase 1 and Phase 2
31	Female	14	High School Y	Phase 1 and Phase 2
Phase 1: N = 31 Phase 2: N = 23				Phase 1 (Female 15, Male 16) Phase 2 (Female 9, Male 14)

Appendix L: Final sample

Participants	Gender	Age	School	Reasons for choosing the participants
Kwazi	Male	15	High School X	Kwazi has drawn a house, and next to the house, there are two birds, including an adult and a child playing soccer. Then, he wrote that the drawing is a representation of how he started participating in soccer. Kwazi also took a photograph of grass. More often, in rural areas, the grass in the open field is eaten by cows. I chose this participant because his data provided insight into his home experiences. I wanted to explore and contextualise his photograph and understand the contradictions between his drawing and his photograph.
Thelo	Female	14	High School X	Thelo drew a house with two girls outside the house, and the other girl is holding the ball with one hand. The girls are neatly dressed, and her drawing is dominated by the yellow and blue colours, which complement each other and symbolise happiness and calmness. She wrote a short description highlighting her views about exercising. Thelo's also revealed her fears of being excluded. Her narrative provided in-depth information related to her relationships and the influence of those relationships on her personal and social development.

Participants	Gender	Age	School	Reasons for choosing the participants
Lungi	Female	15	High School X	Lungi photographed a tuckshop, which she associated with food and water. Tuckshop in the rural area is the heart of the community and is not only seen as a space for consumption but is where people meet and exchange news. Children accompany each to the shops and use it for social interaction. Aligned to this perspective, Lungi drew school and herself playing soccer with her friend. Apart from Lungi's photograph, I was interested in applying visual analysis to both her drawing and photograph to gain insight into her personal and social experiences
Bonga	Male	16	High School Y	Bonga drew a house with a garden, and next to the house, a boy playing with a ball and a man sitting on a chair. I also noticed that he drew a snake next to the tree, which might symbolise his fears. From a social and cultural context, a snake is associated with evil and distraction. Bonga's drawing captions written in Isizulu, state: "kumele usebenze empilweni ukwazi ukunakekele umdeni" (you must work hard in life to take care of your family). The conversation with Bonga was more related to his family, specifically his father, who was unemployed. Bonga's textual data provided a different perspective from most of the participants and more profound information about his experiences within a social context. Hence, I chose him as one of the participants.
Sino	Female	18	High School Y	Sino shared her experiences by drawing a girl standing next to the netball goalpost and the sun. The sun symbolises life, energy and positivity. The following caption from her drawing written in isiZulu

				drew my attention. “ Ngyakujabulela ukudlala ibhola ngoba umzimba wam uhlezi u fresh nenqondo yami”(I enjoy playing soccer/netball because my body is always fresh and my mind is healthy). She also took a photograph of a boy standing next to a soccer ball. Her narrative provided a rich exploration of the participant’s perceptions, views and experiences.
Sandile	Male	15	High School Y	Sandile used a photograph of the cows to relate his experiences. In rural communities, boys are expected to herd the cows. Therefore, the photograph reflects the realities of rural boys who are expected to herd the cows. He also drew two runners, and the drawing included lanes for the runners and the trees. According to Sandile the lanes reflects the direction and focus. His visual and textual data yielded a very interesting perspective related to this study.
Zee	Male	17	High School Y	Zee drew a boy carrying a bucket of water on his head. He also used a photograph of a boy standing next to the water drums. This portrayal highlights the importance of water in Zee’s life. Zee's photographs and drawings were not related to sport. However, he shared some sports-related experiences, which indicates that sport might not have been important in Zee’s life. I chose Zee as a participant to explore his drawing and photograph to better understand his multiple perspectives on this study.
Amu	Male	16	High School Y	Amu explained his experiences by drawing a woman carrying a bucket of bananas on her head and holding the other bucket of fat cakes with her hand. Most rural women work as subsistence farmers,

				<p>while others sell food and fruits in the streets in order to afford basic expenses, such as food and clothes. Similar to Zee, Amu experiences were more related to his life at home and his mother's influence. I was intrigued by his personal experiences and felt his narrative brought a different perspective to the study.</p>
Busi	Female	16	High School Y	<p>To illustrate her experiences, Busi photographed a female teacher at her school. She regard the teacher as a mother. A mother plays an important role in the different development stages of a child. She also drew a hand with spread fingers, a young girl with a ball next to the netball goalpost. She wrote a description in the drawing about how her mother has been supporting her, and according to Busi, the hand is a representation of her abilities and strengths. Busi's drawing, photograph and captions yielded rich dialogue and data as she shared her personal experiences.</p>
Sam	Male	14	High School Z	<p>Sam took a photo of his siblings and shared his experiences by drawing a vegetable garden. A green colour dominates his drawing, and more often, a green colour is associated with nature, plants and trees. The garden is not only a representation of space to grow vegetables, fruits and plants, but a representation of growth and space with potential. Sam's narrative integrated all these concepts and highlighted the complexities of a social system.</p>

Participants	Gender	Age	School	Reasons for choosing the participants
Nikile	Female	14	High School Z	Nikile drew a tree, and also the drawing illustrates rain and the sun. She labelled the main parts of the tree (roots, stem, leaves). She also took a photograph of a tree to elaborate on her experiences. A tree serves a variety of cultural functions. In the African context, the tree is associated with wisdom and the power to give life. Elders use large trees in rural communities for meetings and to solve conflicts or resolve disputes. On the other hand, rain is associated with blessings and the end of the drought, and rain facilitates the growth of vegetables, fruits and trees. Her caption highlights how the water and the sun enable the tree to grow and produce fruits. Nikile's views provided rich cultural and social contexts
Dumi	Female	16	High School Z	To explain her experiences, Dumi drew a house and a tree. She associates a house with comfort, safe space and a sense of belonging. Dumi took a photograph of a tree to signify good health and nutrition. I was intrigued by the contradictions between her illustrations and the discussion. Dumi's illustrations do not reflect her peers, friends and sport. However, they emerged in the conversation during the interviews. Dumi's views highlighted that in everyday realities, contradictions exist and should be embraced.

Appendix M: Guideline for photovoice process and taking photographs

1. Meeting with participants
 - a. Introduce and discuss the photovoice to the participants
 - b. Discuss the ethics, roles of participants when they take photos
 - c. Discuss the informed consent form, assent forms and photograph release form
 - d. Basic photography session, how to use camera and take photographs
 - e. Give digital cameras and logbooks to the participants
2. Ethics for participants and potential subjects of photographs
 - a. The participants will be informed about the project before they participate, including the research process, how the information is going to be used and how they can withdraw their participation if they want to withdraw at any stage of the research. Parents of the participants will complete informed consent form on behalf of the participants(Appendix B), the participants will complete the assent form (Appendix C) and photograph general release form (Appendix D)
 - b. Research participants are required to respect the privacy of the community, including individuals' private space. Will encourage participants not take photos of the people, if they do, then should get a written permission before taking a photograph of an individual (Appendix E) and also of a private property (if the private property is the main focus (Appendix F).
3. Photovoice timeline
 - a. Meeting with participants
 - b. Participants will be given 3 weeks to take a minimum of 5 photographs that represent their experiences of the sport programme
 - c. Semi-structured interviews to discuss participants story behind the pictures, will upload and print the digital photographs for the interviews and photo sharing session.

Appendix N: Permission from the KwaZulu-Natal DBE



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma/Buyi Ntuli

Tel: 033 392 1063/51

Ref.:2/4/8/4058

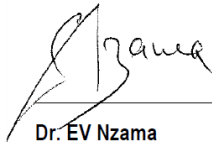
M Leepile Motlhaolwa
71 Seoul Complex
43 Mulder Street
Centurion
PRETORIA
0157

Dear Mr Motlhaolwa

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: “**YOUTH DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES OF A SPORT PROGRAMME IN RURAL COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA**”, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 06 February 2020 to 10 January 2022.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma /Mrs Buyi Ntuli at the contact numbers above.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.



Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 06 February 2020

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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