



ETHICAL ISSUES AND STRUCTURAL FACTORS

INFLUENCING APPROPRIATE SERVICES

**FOR YOUTH TRANSITIONING OUT OF
CHILD AND YOUTH CARE CENTRES**

AN AFROCENTRIC APPROACH

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Introduction

- A preliminary findings on three domains
- accommodation, Education, Contact with social workers
- Qualitative, multi-perspective, purposive sample at a micro (youth), mezzo (family, Agencies) and Macro (Government and policies) levels
- The consequences of not fulfilling the ethical obligations for social reform
- Policies to direct intervention.
- Demonstrates that indigenous knowledge in this instance, Ubuntu (I am because we are...), resonates with structural social work and can have positive impact on youth transitioning out of CYCCs

eThekwini Metropolitan

- ▶ eThekwini is situated in the East Coast of SA, in KZN and is home to 3 444 361. It comprises of predominantly of Blacks (73.8%), is relatively youthful population.
- ▶ Urban, rural and peri-urban with a large number of informal settlements and a diverse population in terms of race.
- ▶ Move from specialist to ward based services (110 wards).
- ▶ In SA: 423 registered Govt. & private CYCCs, bed capacity- 23 493. Et. has the Highest number of CYCCs (22) that conduct a Children's home programme in KZN.
- ▶ The case Managers are from 15 State Service Offices and 11 CWS in eThekwini. Delegations of work is negotiated on the need in the specific area.



Youth transitioning and transitioned out of
child and youth care centres:
Perspectives of youth, family caregivers
and service providers in eThekweni,
KwaZulu-Natal

RELATES TO THE OBJECTIVE...

- ▶ To understand the perceptions and experiences of youth who are **transitioning out** of child and youth care centres (cyccs) and those who have transitioned out.

Sample 1: YOUTH TRANSITIONING & TRANSITIONED OUT OF CYCCS

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Sample 2: Family caregivers

Sample 3: Service providers



Youth Sample: Principle participants

SAMPLE 1 (A) TRANSITIONING FROM CYCC (8 youth)

- ▶ 4 cyccs will identify 2 youth each transitioning out of cyccs.
- ▶ Youth referred must meet the criteria for selection and be willing to participate.
- ▶ In-depth Interviews- cyccs.

SAMPLE 1 (B) TRANSITIONED OUT OF CYCC (8 Youth)

- ▶ 2 Child Welfare Societies & 2 DSD Service Offices will each identify two youth.
- ▶ Venue for the interviews will be based on mutual consensus by the participant and researcher.
- ▶ In-depth interviews: venue options determined by the youth(safety considered).



CRITERIA FOR RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF YOUTH & THEIR PARENT/SIGNIFICANT OTHER

- ▶ Youth: 18-23 years.
- ▶ Minimum stay of two years at a registered CYCC in eThekweni Metropolitan and for youth who had already transitioned out of CYCCs- it should be within the past two years.
- ▶ Parent and significant other identified by the youth as playing a parental role.
- ▶ All participants were provided with information about the study, ensured that they met the criteria for inclusion, confidentiality & voluntary participation assured and isiZulu interviews was an option.

Sample 3: Service Providers

CYCCs

Sample 3A: 4 Joint interviews at CYCCs with Child and Youth Care Worker & Social Worker where the youth participants are selected:

Focus group

- Sample 3B: 9 participants- of 3 social workers from each of the following:
- Service Offices, CYCCs, Child & Family Welfare Society

Key informant

- Sample 3: semi structured interviews with Management: Child Welfare SA & Management: Department of Social Development and a CYCC



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- ▶ Youth transitioning out of care commonly referred to as care-leaving or ageing out of care.
- ▶ Disadvantaged, vulnerable, marginalized and social exclusion
- ▶ International interest over the past two decades: experience, preparation and outcomes of care-leaving
- ▶ Youth were often unprepared for their transition (Tweedle, 2007; Williams, 2011; Pinkerton 2011).
- ▶ Even after programmatic & policy change, and with poor outcomes were evident (Adley & Kina, 2015)



Africa

- Lagging behind: Policy, programmes & research
- Despite the paucity of research, similar findings were evident in Africa, too (Gwenzi, 2015; Frimpong Manso, 2012;2016;2017).
- Contributed to research on care-leaving process & services within an economically constraint environment.
- A major milestone Van Breda (13 September, 2017) presented on Africa's care-leaving research at INTRAC in Oslo, Norway.
- Africa Network of Care-Leaving Researchers (ANCR).

South Africa

- ▶ BG TSA mixed longitudinal rolling cohort study in its 6th year, is replicated to foster care in SA and other parts of Africa, such as Ghana, Zimbabwe, Uganda.
- ▶ In contributing to the existing body of research:
- ▶ Previous study samples were drawn from B & G Town (Dickens 2016; Dickens, Van Breda & Marx (2013; 2014); Van Breda: 2012 to 2017)
- ▶ Except for a few, (Bond, 2017; Lee & Field, 2014; Mamelani, 2013;2014).
- ▶ Then too. KwaZulu-Natal, the youths parents/significant other and the State as a Service Provider were not included which my study address.



Point of contention

Preliminary finding: Youth are taught resilience to prepare for a life of poverty and/or “independent living”, as a normality, after being socialized within a sheltered and protected environment of routine and entitlement.

A qualitative study, underpinned on structural social work, grounded in the critical research paradigm.

Resonates with the social work values of anti-oppressive and a non-judgemental attitude (Smith (2009)).

Fusch and Sadoval (2008) -strategies to facilitate change –as is commitment for transformation of social services and policies (Murray and Hick, 2012) .

Youth can use the resilience to navigate their way through and negotiate for **AVAILABLE RESOURCES.**

POLICIES & STRATEGY: INFLUENCES ON THE THREE DOMAINS

- ▶ The Children's Act (No 38 of 2005) (CA) does not enforce resources and services to protect the youth transitioning out of CYCCs.
- ▶ UN (2010) Guidelines on alternative care- the State is obligated to care for youth beyond the age of majority- not been clearly defined.
- ▶ In practice, discretionary power utilized in Sect. 176 by CYCCs, rarely is accommodation extended until 21 years to complete education and training. Exclusion of the most vulnerable group (NEET).
- ▶ **NATIONAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF CYCCs (2014-2019)** safety net for children requiring care "Independent Living" & transition programmes but, no conceptual framework Section 19(1) & (3) of the CA. Care plan, Permanency plans, individual development an exit plan for each child.

My Argument

- Social workers have power & are positioned to influence policy but, don't. Dlamini & Sewpaul(2015) and Mthetwa (2015) - collective action and voice against injustice.
- **Treated as children but, told and expected to behave as adults:** "...I am now doing the adult's job. I have been here for 11 years.... How am I going to now find something when I have nothing but my books? I have no financial backing, no adult to depend on. I can find a place but, I still need to pay for the place, transport because the bursary will sort out studies but, I have to buy my books and pay the rent and food. "What I want to know, when they were sitting down and deciding my future what was their plans because I am having to come up with all the plans.



Children's Act or National Youth Policy (2015-2020)?

- Disrespect & lost opportunities: a space in the Children's Act.
- Youth Policy: job creation, economic freedom, implementation of developmental programmes, strategic anchor programmes for the vulnerable.
- Buzz word: dignity, empowerment, belonging to a network of structures, social and economic inclusion, youth focused interventions –needs, moral & spiritual regeneration.
- Policies are sophisticated but, lacking in implementation & Integration.
- Best results: start before their transition. Department of Social Development has a sector that deals with Youth Development.



DEMONSTRATING COLLECTIVE ACTION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

- ▶ The ANCR response to the marginalization of Global South Countries were few and isolated as an injustice that left behind the most vulnerable.
- ▶ Shows solidarity and persistently pressurizes INTRAC in recognizing the worth of African
- ▶ International and National exposure to local research, networking and lobbying within and outside the structure.
- ▶ Change is possible if the injustices are exposed & dominating power is can see change as mutually beneficial.

ACCOMODATION

- ▶ Structure: Dormitory to cottage style, infant care (0-2)-3, Urban based only one in a previously described-Black Township. Capacity -32-10 children, mostly, larger CYCCs catering, highest population-Black.
- ▶ Jamieson (2014): why youth remain in care longer that they should? Is the shortest possible time at CYCCs, with intensive reunification & aftercare services realistic. The sample: 11 were at CYCCs-10 years & over. 14 youth- 1st & 2nd -1^splacement- Temporary care.
- ▶ **Voice:** “The list of rules are not on the list that prepare you for going out”

Programmes at CYCCs: Disengagement Programme

- ▶ “They tell us what to expect out there and that things are not going to come to us as they do here. We would have to work for everything and sometimes, you might not get what you need in that specific time, yeah. There are times, we won't have food.” ...I just already know what is out there...I just don't like it...The way they talk makes me more scared..... as boring as repeating the same grade”
- ▶ She explains -move away from general stuff to more specific issues
- ▶ More trust and confidence in youth to do things on their own, for themselves Vs accountability.

Changing rules & expectations: Pilot independent cottage

: “... they told us we will start cooking and doing our washing and stuff. But we only cook in the weekend but the rest of the week the kitchen cooks. The washing goes to the laundry....”

Sibling Contact reduced: “... At home we could sit and talk about stuff and here, there is no time for that. When we come back, there is an activity we have to do and then, ...its bath time, supper time, homework and then bedtime. So we don't get time to do all that stuff like just to catch up with your sister so we came here things changed. ever since there was a gap between us.”

Transformation Considerations : smaller, cottage style homes. Siblings kept together - prepared & assisted with accommodation for living together. “He is the one person that I can die for cos he is the only person I have.”

TRANSITIONING PLANS

- In the joint interviews all 4 CYCCs and in the focus too, could share how transitioning planning is approached.
- Accommodation and education are amongst other challenges that give rise to ethical issues.
- Involvement of all staff is evident.
- Lack of participation from case managers is evident. Their ethical constraint is that Youth are in they view youth in the Community as most vulnerable and that the youth are safe at CYCCs.
- Delayed timing resulted in frustrated and highly tense youth who are attempting to cope with matric exams, logistics and emotional issues surrounding their transitioning out.
- Resilience can and should be taught but, resources need your lobbying, networking and identification (surfing the net) to be able to work **with** youth on their transitioning plans.
- To reveal or not to reveal that youth were accommodated at CYCCs-on a CV
- Inconsistencies between CYCCs

BEFORE	DURING	TRANSITIONING PLAN MADE : 16
<p>Over-crowded Shacks</p> <p>Dilapidated building</p> <p>Homelessness (orphans, abandoned, streets)</p> <p>Nomadic (move away from family)</p> <p>Common problems Substance abuse, neglect, child headed households, begging, sexual abuse, unemployment, poverty. HIV/AIDs, Low educational</p>	<p>Movement between cottages- age criteria, conflict, to balance the number of children, prevent sibling squabbles.</p> <p>Only one instance that a sibling shared the same cottage.</p> <p>Last accommodation arrangement: Own room: 3 Shared with one other person:6 Shared with two others: 2 Shared with 4 others: 5</p>	<p>Parents - 4</p> <p>Host parent - 5</p> <p>Transitional home-5</p> <p>Grandmother-1</p> <p>Siblings -1</p>

Structural Changes in families

- Arising from the sample in eThekweni Metropolitan:
- Racial lines blurred – 3 inter-racial couples & 5 inter-racial caring.
- Nuclear families: reluctance to return”my heart does not feel that home is home.”
- 5 out of 12 Blacks were not fluent in isiZulu. “...at times of Xenophobia, he speaks to me in Zulu and finds out that I can't speak Zulu and he keeps me inside and takes me around ...the things that happen.” (fear of taking a taxi)
- CYCW: discourages “Zunglish” In KZN mixing English & Zulu is usual.
- All youth had someone in the Community.
- **Consideration:** Staff need to enquire about the traditions & customs that families follow. It is futile to teach it during the transition when it had not been practiced to hold value to it.

POVERTY AMONGST OTHER SOCIAL ILLS NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED BEFORE PARENTS ARE ABLE PARENT

- stresses about her siblings that are with her mum: "... what are the children eating at home and my five year old brother have to walk a long distance to get to school. So if they could take my siblings and put them in the Home maybe I will be fine even if I have to leave the Home because it will be only my mother and me."
- "...I know for sure she would not want me to come back. ...I eat too much...when I go home, I should eat one or half spoon to save. I dish out a lot, there will be no food in the morning...she is stressing about that. "
- 4 youth return to parents with the same or deteriorated circumstances-no say in the matter. As much as institutional care is considered as the last resort when all else fail, their return to family is often the last option for transition planning. **Ethical issues**

EDUCATION

- ▶ Key Informants: "...very few that will qualify for tertiary education. ...for many years our Country has been referring to tertiary education and feel that this refers to going to University and getting a degree. A majority of the children not only because they have a poor foundation but, also because they of poor nutrition whilst their mothers were pregnant because of substance abuse, physical abuse or just because of genetics where they are cognitively compromised."
- ▶ "...if the child performs average or below and returns home due to financial constraints, it is difficult for them to go further with their studies."
- ▶ "I am not sure if I am going to pass matric aunty. I am not sure if I am ever going to build the house before my mother dies, aunty. Oh aunty, and is my nephew ever going to know me or is he going to have the same attitude and mind-set as my sister."

ADDING VALUE

- ▶ Sample: 2 still at school, 12 youth completed matric, 2 in special schooling- one completed Grade 10 the other, struggling at school. Two had entered skills development and 2-in tertiary institutions. One youth bachelor pass entered employment after school due to financial constraints.
- ▶ Van Brede and Dicken (2015) research found education formal to be key to successful adulthood (I agree but,
- ▶ Education makes for “normalized” care. Ubuntu principles are told through stories that at CYCCs are denied. The “inside” and “outside” is a fallacy created by the lack of Community integration that commences in care. Education of life in the Community is achievable through regular Community engagement & mentorship, stayovers that will make the transition easier in the long run.

UBUNTU prevails...

- Access to extended family was not equivalent to accommodation - due to poverty. It provided contact and a sense of identity (A common surname brought youth & the caregiver together).
- Service providers saw the development stage to youth for the desire to trace an unknown parent/ relative. However, losing their identity and family at the CYCC places an urgency for a new one and potential support (**social workers & CYCCs help nurturant**).
- Good intentions: youth: “just to change home around.”
- Mentorship and sponsorship, hosting by Youth, CYCW, and other Community members, youth on Boards of Management, families with children at facilities supporting other children in care.
- Behind every story is at least 1 unsung hero that went beyond the call of duty, a social worker, CYCW, educator, host parent, f/parent.



CONTACT

- Most often, youth did not know or have contact with their case managers but, they remembered their 1st one fondly.
- Exception, and challenges “They can’t find her When the social workers or anyone comes she disappears when no-one is around, she appears. “
- As Govender (2009) found that even with limited resources some social workers made the initiative.
- Sibling contact was very prevalent and a likely choice for transition.
- **SERVICE PROVIDERS:**
- Case managers: quick to admit and quick to forget”
- CYCCs: Keep “good” children, want to get rid of youth who need them the most.



Child and Youth Care Workers

“I first came here in 2009 ...it was more comfortable then...You know you have different Child and Youth Care Workers. Old staff went and when new staff came in. We are used to the old staff and when new staff come, it's like you don't understand them and they don't understand you... Previously, “..they (the staff) took long to leave It was nice though.”

Some of the challenges practitioners mentioned that impacted on contact and effectiveness with youth:

Change of system of working e.g. ward based work, heavy caseloads, demanding administrative responsibilities, individual target driven rather than impact driven integrated services, pre-mature closing of files, poor assessment & no follow up, poor or no supervision, no capacity building, priority given to children in the Community.



A youth :“ ... you know what they do, no offence, not all of them, like some of them, they

just want to bring us to the Home and once they brought us into the Home their job is done”

Key informant: “...we don't have aftercare and continuous services...It is that we carry

them to this level and then, we drop them.”

ARE YOUTH BEING REDUCED TO PAPER?



APPROPRIATE SERVICES

- Policy: transitioning Extension of the State role as parent of youth out not just Social Development.
- Programmes: teach both Refrain from terms like “independent Living” - inter-dependency & independence skills
- Mentors: Peer screened mentors who transitioned out of care and from the Community-family preservation manual.
- Sponsors: Each Facility should attempt to develop a Data base of a resource pool.
- Transitional Homes: Youth who are NEET
- Community: models. Community advocacy for CYCC-suitable
- Service Providers: Capacity, resources, advocacy, commitment

Parting thoughts

- Failed attempts at reunification VS stability and permanency within a CYCC.
- Transformation of CYCC to be specific on global debateable issues such as deinstitutionalization by dialoguing & taking a decisive stance.
- Transitioning or ageing out of CYCCs is controversial as it very often involves institutionalization.
- In South Africa, in fact, in Africa, do we accept it or do pretend that we have the resources.
- Prevention and Early intervention to be allocated resources to match with the prioritization.
- Programmes and strategies to meet the local needs of our people.



Concluding Remarks

Care-leaving is not as simple as shutting the door as they exit the CYCC where they automatically cope. Therefore there is a need for policies integration for implementation that prepare, plan for the transition and aftercare support services to increase the chances of positive outcomes.

We need to amend existing children & youth Policies but, not increase them as we already are struggling in implementing what already exists. Integration of implementation of policies into Practice, lobbying and networking for resources, commitment & dedication of multidisciplinary stakeholders with preparation and planning can yield positive outcomes for the youth.

