

THRIVING IN A TIME OF TRANSITION:

Orphaned Youth in Lothlakane East, Botswana.

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis was to explore how young people in Botswana experience different transitions in their life, and how they cope with these. The background of the study is the severe AIDS pandemic, which has left many children and young people orphaned. All people experience transitions in their life, especially in the time period between childhood and adulthood. However, orphaned youth have to go through this challenging time period without the love and support from their parents, and they might also experience more or different challenges than non-orphaned youth.

My overall aim for the study was to find out which factors facilitate thriving for youth in a time of transition. The following were my research questions: What are the challenges faced by youth in Botswana? What experience do youth have of gender based violence? In what settings do youth feel valued, successful or supported? Which generalised resistance resources are mostly used to deal with the challenges? Can sense of coherence be identified in any of the participants?

The Salutogenic Model was used as theoretical framework for this study. Salutogenesis helps answer why people thrive and stay well despite stressful events through a focus on problem solving and the capacity to use resources available. Being able to use the appropriate generalised resistance resources (GRR) when dealing with stress, will give a person life experiences that facilitates sense of coherence (SOC).

This qualitative study utilised focus groups, individual interviews and observation as data collection methods. It included 4 focus groups with 19 participants and 4 individual interviews with young people. In addition, I undertook two semi-structured interviews with key informants from the NGO Ark n'Mark, which is responsible for the training of social workers running the orphan-strengthening program Ark for Children. I undertook a deductive

analysis based on my research questions, and a total of 35 codes were organised utilising a thematic network analysis.

The results showed that the participants found themselves in a life situation characterised by many and intertwined challenges which all affected each other. Such challenges could be living arrangements, education, unemployment, abuse or relationships. The most surprising and interesting finding was how education was seen as a compulsory requirement for being successful in life. Almost all the participants mentioned this when I asked what being successful meant for them. Academic skills have a high value in the society, and dropping out of school can make a person feel useless and unable to carry out a meaningful and productive life.

Even though these stressors might seem severe, many of the participants showed they had useful resources to cope with the challenges and transitions that affected their lives. What seemed to be the most vital factor or resource that facilitated thriving for these youth was social support. Such support seemed to be the most important asset for buffering life stress in the economic, emotional or social spheres. The orphaned youth who had been through Ark for Children and the follow-up program *Lentswe la Thlolego*, seemed to really benefit from this. It was suggested that those who graduated through these programs acquired skills and information, which could also benefit the non-orphaned youth in the community.

A sense of coherence was found in almost all the participants. They were all motivated to work for a better life; they understood the challenges affecting their lives and seemed to have resources available to overcome these challenges. Many of the youth in this study used support from groups to avoid what was seen as ‘problem behaviour’, like for example alcohol abuse. Positive collective activities with even a small stipend can make a difference. Such

activities were both valued by the community and had an effect on preventing risk-taking behaviour.

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Abbreviations

AIDS:	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
GNP:	Gross National Product
GRR:	Generalised Resistance Resource
HIV:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
JSS:	Junior Secondary School
MLG:	Ministry of Local Government
NCE:	National Commission on Education
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPE:	National Policy on Education
NSD:	Norsk Samfunnsvitenskapelig Datatjeneste
PTSD:	Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
SES:	Socio Economic Status
SOC:	Sense of Coherence
SSA:	Sub-Saharan Africa
SSS:	Senior Secondary School
STD:	Sexually Transmitted Disease
VDC:	Village Development Committee

Clarification of Terminology

Ark n’Mark- The NGO that is responsible for training social workers for retreats run by the Government, under the name Ark for Children.

Ark for Children- The name of the program that takes orphans out on a two-week long therapeutic retreat.

Mmabana- Can be translated to ‘community mother’. Mmabana is a person chosen by the village to be their representative in Ark for Children. She attends the retreats and follows up the youth afterwards, and for this she gets a small stipend from Ark n’Mark.

Kgosi- The village Chief.

Kgotla- A place where public meetings or traditional law court of a Botswana village is held.

Ipelegeng- An economic drought relief program. Unemployed people are hired for one month at a time to carry out essential development projects in the community.

Botswana- The country

Setswana- The language, the culture

Motswana- One citizen

Batswana- Citizens

1 Introduction

The time of transition between adolescence and adulthood is a risky period that in many ways will affect a person's life span. It is only recently that this transition period has begun to receive any particular attention, even though "the nature and quality of young people's future lives depend on how successfully they negotiate through this critical period" (1, p. 1). One can contend that in more developed countries, this phase is characterised by individualistic criteria like gaining economic independence and taking responsibility for one self (2). It is also argued that a transition signifies a movement within the social hierarchy, and especially in traditional societies such movements increase prestige and power (3). An example of a (former) traditional society is Botswana, where youth became adults through an initiation process. Here they underwent education regarding respect for the elders, rights and obligations in the society (4), sexual matters and family life (5). One of the major benefits from this process was the formation of age-sets; a social group characterized by internal cohesion and consisting of those of the same initiation-group (6). This type of indigenous education provided instruction in moral values for the young people (7), and arguably "was the means by which adult status was acquired" (8, p. 92). However, this initiation process was gradually abandoned as a consequence of the missionaries dislike towards it (8), and it is argued that the practices and institutions replacing the traditional ones (e.g. formal education or churches) aren't able to create the social bonds needed to build and sustain social cohesion (8). As the emergence of adulthood is informed by the values in a culture (9), how does such a transition play out in a society where traditional customs are weakening?

1.1 Background and Context

Botswana is, after Swaziland, the country which has taken the hardest hit of the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) epidemic, with adult Human Immunodeficiency Virus

(HIV) prevalence at 25% in 2008 (10). In addition Botswana has the highest number of orphaned children in Africa, with 6.5 % of children being double orphans, and 17.2 % of children being single orphans in 2007 (11). Being an orphan is a critical predictor of poor health (12), and is also associated with living in a poor household (12, 13) earlier sexual debut (14), sexual abuse (15, 16), and vulnerability towards HIV infection (17). Orphans face the challenge of overcoming these obstacles and at the same time grieving the loss of a loved parent. In Botswana there is a silence surrounding death, and secrecy around the causes of death. In addition, the children are often excluded from their parent's funeral, which according to Daniel can lead them to suffer "hidden wounds with socially disabling long-term consequences" (18, p. 195).

1.1.1 Definitions of key terms

The term 'orphan' is in itself problematic as pointed out by several authors, and it varies a lot across cultures and borders (17, 19, 20). In a systematic review on 383 articles using the concepts of AIDS and orphans, over 70% didn't clearly define the term 'orphan'. The remaining 30% used a variety of definitions, like one parent died, both parents died, mother died, father died or death of primary caregiver (21). In 1999, UNICEF and UNAIDS defined an orphan as children under 15 who had lost their mother (22), excluding paternal orphans (which can lead to an under-estimation of 45-70% of the total number of orphans (23)) and children between 15-18 years of age who had lost a parent. This definition has now been changed to term orphans as anyone under the age of 18 who has lost one or both parents (24), which is the same definition used by the Government of Botswana (11). They also include a definition of social orphan as "[a]ny child who has been abandoned or dumped, or whose parents cannot be traced" (11, p. 2).

For the purpose of this study, I have decided to use the term ‘orphaned youth’. The term orphan refers to a person who has lost one or both parents (24). The term ‘youth’ and its age-range is defined in varied ways among different writers; as individuals younger than 24 (25), individuals between 14-35 years of age (26), individuals between 15-35 years of age (27) and individuals between 15-24 years of age (28). It is because of the social and economic pressures in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) that many countries define people as old as 35 as youth (29). But to see people in these age groups as a single category might create bias, by failing to recognize the heterogeneity of experiences during this time characterized by emotional and physical transition. Frederiksen and Munive argue that the term is not bounded by age, but rather affected by events like gaining employment, establishing a family or undertaking rites of passage (30). For the purpose of this study, ‘youth’ will be defined as a person in “a transitional stage in life between childhood and adulthood rather than as a rigid construct based on age” (30, p. 251).

1.2 Contextual factors that affect lives of adolescents in Botswana

There are many factors that affect the context of youth in transition, of which some of the most important for this thesis is presented below. Even though the factors might seem disjointed, it is the degree to how they affect young lives that binds them together.

1.2.1 Sexual taboos and disease in a cultural perspective

There is a widespread taboo when it comes to discussing sexual matters with young people in Botswana (8, 31, 32), especially for older people as they are afraid to encourage ‘bad’ behaviour amongst the youth if talking about it (33). This means that young people in Botswana today have limited access to sexual health education, and they often trust information from peers, the media and romance novels (31). Connected to this is the silence

surrounding HIV and AIDS. This disease, together with a range of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), is blamed on women as a consequence of promiscuity, leading to the issue that no one wants to acknowledge having the disease for fear of being stigmatized (31). As women's position in Botswana is sub-ordinated to men and they have very little decision-making power when it comes to sexual matters, they have a higher risk for HIV-infection (31, 34, 35). Current constructions of masculinity in Botswana encourage concurrent relationships and older men to have sex with younger women, a tendency that facilitate violence against women and further increases women's vulnerability to contracting HIV (31, 36).

Stigma is bound to how disease is perceived in the traditional Tswana culture. The origin of disease is often ascribed to witchcraft, anger from the ancestors, or a breach of taboos leading to 'pollution' (37). In addition to this, the notion of transmission of diseases is linked with concepts of pollution which originates in the female body (34, 37).

1.2.2 The education system in Botswana

The basic education system in Botswana contains three levels. Primary school goes from standard 1 to standard 7, junior secondary school (JSS) from form 1 to 3, and senior secondary school (SSS) consists of form 4 and 5. The students have to pass exams in form 3-5 to go on to the next level.

After independence in 1966, education was seen as a requisite for national development (38), and as a possible solution for various social problems like teen-age pregnancy (Therisana ka Thuto, 2:95 in 38, p. 460), unemployment, crime and family disorganisation (38). Thus, it is claimed that a lack of education would lead to national failure (38). Arguably, "[t]he quality of education remains a challenge. Teacher qualifications are low, students are often ill

prepared, curricula and instructional material are limited, and on comparative achievement tests Botswana scores are low” (38, p. 457)¹.

A study examining school enrolment of orphans in 10 African countries found that the relationship between the child and the household head accounts for lower school enrolment of orphans (39), while other studies show that orphans are at risk for poorer educational outcomes than non-orphans (40). In addition, it is argued that the female dropout rate is a serious national problem in Botswana (41), largely due to teenage pregnancies and restrictive school policies (42). Nonetheless, a high value is placed on education in southern Africa, and research shows that it is perceived as the ‘key to a good life’ by caregivers (43).

When youth drop out of school in Botswana, there are very few programs that can help them attain a job or earn money. One program, called *Ipelegeng*², is targeted towards vulnerable members of communities, and offer what they call “short term employment support” in working with essential development projects (44). However, to benefit from this offer one has to be over the age of 18, and the employment period is only one month at a time.

Campbell claims that age and education are important predictors of alcohol-use, and dropping out of school can lead to a higher use of alcohol (45). The frequency of drinking seems to have a clear connection to sexual activity, and in a study from Botswana, one of the participants stated that “(...) the alcohol drops below the waist (*bo a tsheta*), meaning that it causes sexual arousal and desire” (45, p. 152). Thus, looking at it this way, dropping out of school can lead to additional stressors to the youth concerned.

¹ The reference used in this section is from 1993, and thus not up-to-date. However, little has been published on education in Botswana, except when National Commissions (in 1977 and 1993) have been established to review the educational system.

² See p. x, Clarification of Terminology

1.2.3 Government-response

The Government of Botswana, one of the first to respond with support for orphans in Africa in 2000, provides a food basket to all registered orphaned children every month, and once a year they receive a package containing school uniforms and school material. But when the children reach the age of 18, this benefit ceases (46). The vulnerabilities of orphaned youth were documented in a situational analysis in 2007, and one of the points made was the lack of psychosocial care for orphans. In addition, it was argued that there was an untapped potential when it came to non-governmental organisations (NGO) and the services they could offer orphans and other vulnerable children (47).

1.2.4 Ark n'Mark

In response to the lack of psychosocial support, a small NGO called People and Nature Trust initiated an innovative orphan-strengthening program called Ark for Children in 2001. Their success was recognized by the Government, and funding was given for a continuation of the program, now under the guidance of the NGO Ark n'Mark. Orphaned children in standard 7 are taken on a two-week therapeutic retreat, and then followed up with a long-term therapeutic intervention program (48, 49), which ends during form 3. The kin-like groups formed on the retreats can be seen as a substitute for the age-sets formed during the abandoned initiation process, and provide support to the youth on return to their home village. By using group therapy and involving the community in support of the children, the program “enhances both social cohesion and resilience” (50, p. 68).

1.3 Relevance of the study

The issue of orphan hood in Botswana is a serious matter that needs to be given attention. Youth orphaned by the HIV- epidemic are under great emotional stress not only after the death of a parent, but also before. Such stress includes amongst others emotional and

economic issues, stigma (51), and risky behaviours like sexual activity and substance abuse (16). In the context of a range of stressors, it is important to recognise factors that are tied to thriving and coping for the coming generations that make up the future of Botswana.

Connected to this is the significance of an orphan-strengthening program, and what factors are related to success. Notably, there is a lack of research done in the area of thriving children and youth in SSA, which is also pointed out by several authors (52-54), and I haven't found any studies exploring the transitional stages for youth in Botswana and how such stages are coped with.

The findings of the study will be used by Ark n'Mark. If the results show that Ark for Children actually does strengthen orphaned children, they can be used to get additional funding to expand the program and help other orphans in Botswana. In addition, the study will partially fulfil the requirements of a Master's degree at the University of Bergen.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand, in the context of the HIV and AIDS epidemic, the experiences of orphaned youth in a time of transition. All young people face transition between adolescence and adulthood, which contains "changes in roles and rewards for role performance" (55, p. 125). Many youth in Botswana also experience transitions during, or at the end of, JSS, being unable to progress towards higher education and having few possibilities of getting a job. While classified as children, orphans receive some support through for example schooling and the food basket, and some get psychosocial support from Ark for Children. But these support systems all end at about the same time, leading to significantly more transitions for orphaned youth.

Hindrances in coping with times of transition for most youth can be lack of information, lack of awareness of rights, abuse and other people's attitudes towards them (56). Most youth

would receive support from parents during transitions, but this potential support is lacking for youth who have lost their parents. Even so, some of these persons are thriving. I used the Salutogenic model to look into how the youth managed this by exploring the Generalised Resistance Resources (GRR) they mobilise to deal with these hardships. The overall aim of the study was to identify factors that facilitate thriving in a time of transition for orphaned youth in Botswana.

The research questions addressed were:

1. What are the challenges faced by youth in Botswana?
2. What experience do youth have of gender based violence?
3. In what settings do youth feel
 - a. Valued?
 - b. Successful?
 - c. Supported?
4. Which GRRs are used most often to deal with the challenges?
5. Can Sense of Coherence be identified in any of the participants?

1.5 Outline of thesis structure

Chapter 2 will present the theoretical framework and discuss the relevant literature for this thesis. In chapter 3 the methods that were used will be outlined and the results with related discussion will be presented in chapter 4. In chapter 5 the implications of the results are discussed in relation to the Salutogenic model, and here the limitations of the study are also

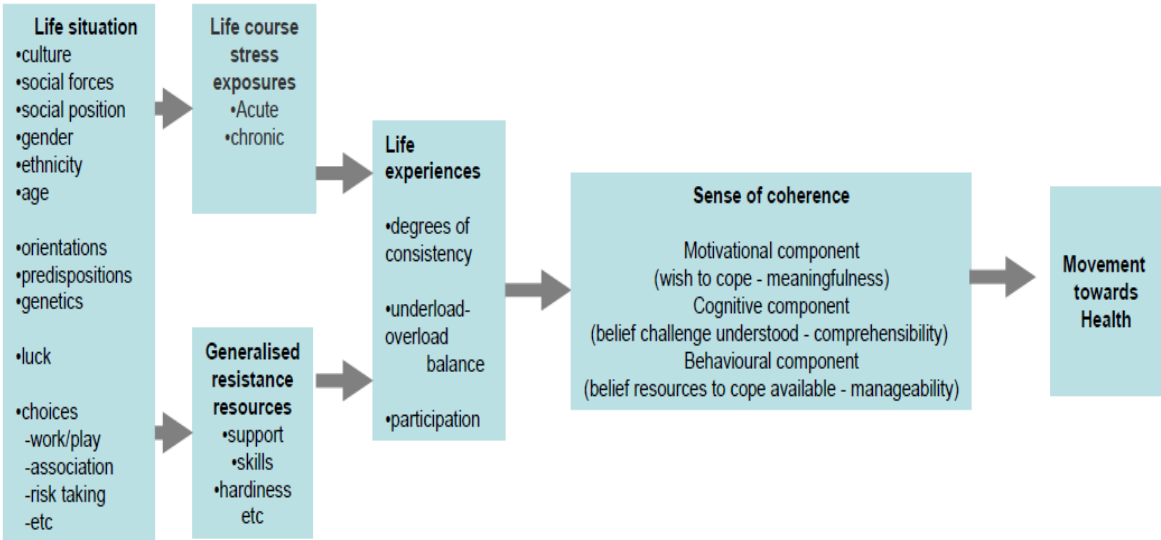
presented. The final chapter of the thesis will present the conclusions and recommendations for future research and initiatives.

2 Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1 The Salutogenic Model as a Theoretical Framework

I will now describe the Salutogenic model with relevance to the problem statement. After giving a brief overview of salutogenesis, I will systematically go through all the components of the model, and show how they apply to my study. The last part of this section will give a brief overview of the concept of resilience, which is closely related to salutogenesis, as both theories focus on how to thrive in the face of adversity.

Figure 1: The Salutogenic Model (57)



Antonovsky promotes a salutogenic³ approach to health, which moves away from the traditional classification of those who are sick and those who are not. The Salutogenic model “views health and disease as a continuum and focuses on the conditions leading to wellness” (58, p. 11). It focuses on why and how people remain healthy, that is the salutary factors that contribute to good health, in contrast to risk factors which are disease causing. Coping

³ Salutogenesis means ‘the origin of health’.

mechanisms are important in this context, and are seen as one of the main reasons why some people remain healthy despite changing life-circumstances, stress and other adverse events (59, 60). According to Eriksson and Lindström, the key elements in the Salutogenic model are a focus on problem solving and the capacity to use the resources available. The salutogenic approach helps answer why people thrive and stay well, despite stressful life events and hardship (61).

The Salutogenic model consists of two main elements, which are Sense of Coherence (SOC) and Generalised Resistance Resources (GRR). GRRs are resources which help people to cope in time of hardship and can include for example skills, spirituality or cultural stability. These resources make ‘sense’ because of a person’s generalized orientation towards the world (59, 61). Such an orientation makes the world meaningful, comprehensible and manageable, referring to the three components that make up SOC. A strong SOC will therefore enable a movement towards health, even when the person is confronted with a stressor. It enables a person to “promote effective coping by finding solutions, and resolve tension in a health promoting manner” (62, p. 376).

2.1.1 Life situation

The term life situation refers to the position a person has in the social structure, and is moulded by culture, genetics, gender, and the choices a person takes to mention a few (57, 59). It is expected that the life situation of the participants in this study will be rather poor. Concurrent with the ‘regular’ hardships (e.g. changing identities, bodies, and expectations) experienced by youth in the transition-phase between childhood and a social position as an adult, the vulnerability of these youth will probably be heightened. This can be because of a poor social position, for example in the household or in society at large (poor chances in school and few or no opportunities for work) and social forces that don’t work for their

benefit. It is found that orphans in Botswana have a higher possibility than non-orphans to live in the poorest households, and they have a higher probability of poor health compared to non-orphans (12).

When it comes to gender, there exists evidence that orphaned girls are more vulnerable to contracting HIV than non-orphans (63), and females also experience more extreme discrimination compared to men in the patriarchal society in Botswana (31). Youth with poor parental monitoring are also more vulnerable towards gender-based violence (64). The age of the participants in my study and the transitions they go through can make up a tough challenge, and probably will disturb the youth's life situation. When it comes to risk taking (which can be seen as both voluntary and involuntary), it is said that to take on the role of a caregiver with few or no resources can lead to individuals involving in risk-taking behaviour that affects their well-being (65). An example of this is how both orphaned and non-orphaned girls engage in transactional relationships, and thus increase their risk for contracting HIV (66). However, gender can also be seen as a positive factor within life situation: for boys when it comes to living in a patriarchal society (31), and for girls when it comes to their superiority in making use of social support (67).

The culture can be seen as a strengthening factor. This is because of the long tradition with a strong sense of belonging to the community which is bound together by norms, songs, dancing and last but not least, the tribal authorities (4). To see your community as your home, a place where you fit in and where the world is manageable and predictable will probably make the life situation better. Luck can be viewed as a rather weird measure in this situation, but it actually applies. The orphans are lucky if all the siblings come into the same household. They are also lucky if the caregivers show them compassion, build a trustful relationship with them and treat them as their own children.

2.1.2 Life course stress exposures

Orphaned youth in SSA have a lot of stress exposures in their lives. These can refer to lack of access to education, unemployment and poverty, as identified by McIlwaine and Datta (68). In addition, secondary losses and concurrent stressors are also seen as significant stress exposures (69). When a child loses his or her caregiver it can, together with other stressful events, lead to an unmanageability and uncontrollability when it comes to issues and problems in their lives (70). It might also lead to psychological problems, strongly affected by stigma (51, 71). Another stress factor, which also refers to the ones mentioned above, is the transitional stage these youth are in. Because of the lack of support from parents orphans are experiencing, such transitions can be very stressful.

Abuse by caregivers, teachers and other adults is a fairly common feature in many orphans' lives. It can be experienced "through moral, economic, or academic pressure" (66, p. 70). Related to this is inter-generational relationships and gender-based violence, inflicted upon girls with little or no resistance against often older boys/men (72, 73).

2.1.3 Generalised Resistance Resources

The stressors identified above can be managed by making use of GRRs. One of these, as identified by Cook et al, refers to having a meaningful and trusting relationship with a least one adult (69). Such a relationship will make a person feel safe, he/she has someone to confide to and share feelings and hopes. One such adult can be the 'local *Mmabana*'⁴, who is the local mother in communities where Ark for Children run retreats. Also, the social workers

⁴ See p. x, Clarification of Terminology

in Ark n'Mark can have this role for the orphaned youth⁵, in addition to family-members or friends.

That the youth's life is characterised by routines and predictability can also be seen as a GRR. To live in a community that makes sense, e.g. has familiar customs and values, can make the world comprehensible, meaningful and manageable, which again refers to SOC. In addition, living with siblings and/or extended family and having the ability to stay in school are strong GRRs. Also, having a special competence in something, whether it is sports, school work or household chores can be seen as a GRR. All of these can make the youth feel more valued and successful and can lead to better confidence and sense of self⁶. For those who have graduated through Ark for Children, the cohesive supportive group of fellow graduates can be seen as an alternative kinship group (74). The whole group has in companionship learned how to face and solve their different problems, and is a source of support for each other upon the return to the home-village.

Identifying such generalised resistance resources was important during my research, to see how and why the youth can thrive in their lives characterised by transition.

2.1.4 Life Experiences

According to Antonovsky "[t]he strength of one's SOC is shaped by three kinds of life experiences: consistency, underload-overload balance, and participation in socially valued decision-making" (59, p. 15). These are again affected by GRRs and stressors in a person's life.

An orphan has undergone stressful events, both prior to and after a parent's death, and has therefore experienced a lot of in-consistency in life. However, to be able to live with siblings

⁵ Personal communication with M. Daniel, 25th of March, 2011

⁶ Personal communication with M. Daniel, 25th of March, 2011

and extended family, having an adult to confide to, and experiencing social support from friends can be viewed as consistency in life experiences. Also to have the possibility of continuing school after being orphaned adheres to this. In addition to these positive factors, stressors can also be characterized as consistent. If they appear over a long period of time, it can give a person the chance to develop appropriate strategies to deal with them. An example of such a consistent stressor in Botswana is unemployment (75).

To have balance between GRRs and stressors is vital for the final outcome of well-being in the salutogenic model. If a person has an overload- underload imbalance, it means that the person doesn't experience enough stimuli to use the resources available, or on the other hand that the resources available are inappropriate or inadequate to the stressors in one's life.

Balance refers to having enough appropriate GRRs to cope with the challenges that come along.

When it comes to socially valued decision-making, Antonovsky writes that "if participation in decision-making is to lead to meaningfulness, it must be in an activity that is socially valued." (76, p. 93). If, for example, an orphan lives in a home where his or her role is appreciated and honoured, their daily activities will automatically take on significance and meaning. If that person (A) engages in socially valued participation that has a positive effect on others (B), it will hence give added meaning to B's life⁷. This is the component seen as most important to achieve SOC (77).

2.1.5 Sense of Coherence

Antonovsky maintains that people with a strong SOC will "wish to, be motivated to, cope (meaningfulness); believe that the challenge is understood (comprehensibility); believe that resources to cope are available (manageability)" (59, p. 15), which reflects the interaction

⁷ Personal communication with Prof. M. Mittelmark, 1st of April, 2011

between individual and environment (78). SOC refers to how an individual understands the situation as a whole and uses resources available to handle the situation (61). The more comprehensible and understandable the person sees the world, the higher SOC they have. If an orphan manages to cope with a stressful situation with the use of GRRs, this will add to his or her SOC. The more often a person successfully makes use of GRRs to deal with hardships, the stronger his or her SOC will be.

2.1.6 The Concept of Resilience

Closely connected to the notion of meaningful participation discussed above, a study from Tanzania found that young people express their resilience through contributing to the household and caring for immediate relatives (79). The concept of resilience focuses on the protective factors that enable individuals to manage situations of adversity, and also emphasizes the active role individuals take when engaging with these factors (80). Resilience is not a trait found within the individual, but is rather connected to the risk and protective factors working in the individual's environment (81, 82). Rutter argues that there are two kinds of experiences that will lead to a protective self-concept: the presence of a secure, intimate relationship with a significant other and to experience success and achievement (83). These experiences are equivalent to the concepts closeness and competence as described by Sommerschild, who argues that the existence of these two components to a higher or lower degree will lead to self-worth which again leads to resilience (84).

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 Introduction

“The notion of transition implies movement from one situation to another” (85, p. 1). Such alterations are accompanied by new behaviours needed in the new setting in which one finds oneself (e.g. youth) (85), which is quite different from the familiar image (e.g. childhood)

(86). It seems evident that for youth in Botswana, both non-orphaned and orphaned, exit from school will inflict challenges and a great deal of change for those it applies to. This often coincides with losing the food basket for the registered orphaned youth at the age of 18, a time characterized by new impulses, starting up sexual encounters and living the life of not quite an adult, but certainly not a child. This section of the thesis will deal with challenges that youth in SSA, and especially Botswana, face in daily life, but will also look into what skills are necessary to deal with such challenges, moving the individual towards health. It is claimed that all aspects of a child's life are intertwined, whether social, economic, or medical (20), and so it is also in this chapter. The topics discussed are difficult to disentangle, and might touch upon each other from time to time.

AIDS is one of the most serious crises currently facing human development, and threatens to reverse progress in the most severely affected countries by decades (17, 87). Supposing the epidemic would halt today, the problem it inflicts will still affect the whole region for many years. One of the main reasons for this is the virus's long incubation period, which means that the mortality rates for people in their most productive years will not level off until 2020 (19). In addition, the AIDS-pandemic leaves a trail of orphans behind. These orphans often struggle towards adulthood without the care and love of a parent (15, 88), and can also have challenges when it comes to education, nutrition, psychosocial issues, and economy.

2.2.2 Living Arrangements

Historically, there has been a wide range of living arrangements for children in SSA (39, 89, 90). In a study from 1992 Lloyd and Desai found that "children spend substantial proportions of their childhood years apart from one or both parents and, by extension, apart from at least some of their siblings" (89, p. 210), and they further state that the children most often benefit from the support that others give them (89). This is a part of the social support system in SSA

(90), and coincides with how for example community members (91) and women in Zimbabwe (92), and grandmothers in South Africa (93), were motivated by family obligation and compassion to take in orphans after the AIDS epidemic struck, even though resources would become scarcer (93). Institutional care, not a popular or wide-spread alternative for community-based care, can provide orphans and vulnerable children with basic needs (94). However, living in a residential home can separate young people from their siblings, extended family, and their home community at large (94).

Even though there seems to be a general assumption that the extended family is under increasing strain as it tries to absorb orphaned children (90, 95), Africa has in face of such adversity showed a great resilience when it comes to taking care of these children within family networks or communities (19, 40, 88, 96-98). It is argued that grandparents are, after parents, the most important caregivers for single orphans in countries with high orphan rates (90, 97). The literature argues that this fostering is especially important in many African countries, where the orphans' bond to their family is vital for social development and defines their place in society (88). In addition it preserves culture and traditions, and can provide orphans with a secure environment, continuity, and emotional support (88).

However, in Botswana orphans are more likely to live in the poorest households (12, 13, 96), where the head of household has low education and is less likely to be employed (12). Being an orphan is a grave predictor of poor health (12), and it is argued that foster children in SSA are at a higher risk of death than biological children (95, 99). In addition, there exists evidence that orphans who live with more remote relatives have lower educational outcomes in comparison with the biological children of the household (39), and that they are more likely to be mistreated (91, 100). Discrimination towards orphans from caregivers can take many forms, for example that only biological children are given food (17) or that the orphans are

forced to eat lower quality food and alone (101). Other types of discrimination cited in the literature are stigma and sexual abuse (15, 17), and property grabbing (17, 101, 102). Combined with the death of one or two parents, such strains can lead to recurrent psychological trauma (15, 17), and it is therefore more and more evident that there is a need for psychosocial support for these orphans (15, 17, 103). Nonetheless, evidence exists supporting the notion that the extended family have fewer difficulties taking care of an orphan if they can access financial or material assistance from a public safety net (13).

2.2.3 Relationships and Sexual Encounters

Some studies contend that orphaned youth are more vulnerable to sexual abuse (16), engaging in prostitution (104), unwanted pregnancy (16, 104, 105), and substance abuse (16), and they are also deemed more vulnerable to HIV infection than others (17). In addition, orphaned youth are more likely than their peers to engage in sexual intercourse earlier (16, 17, 106). Such sexual affairs are often (especially for girls) linked up with economic need or desire for material goods (14, 31, 35, 72, 104, 107, 108), peer pressure (72, 104-106, 109), lack of or poor parental supervision (104), rape or being forced to have sex (17, 45, 72, 104), and are characterized by biased power-relations (73). With regard to transactional sex, it is found that this is more common among orphans than non-orphans in South Africa (14), and, disturbingly, about one half of sexually active girls report that they were forced or tricked into the sexual onset (14). However, a study from South Africa shows how women enjoy pursuing 'modernity' through engaging in transactional sex, and even though they seem to be aware that they are being exploited, it is seen as okay, since they exploit the men as well (108). In Botswana young girls have reported to experience mutual decision-making with their partners (72), and thus seeing girls as 'vulnerable victims' and an easy prey for men might not always be correct.

Nonetheless, in addition to higher risk for acquiring HIV, females also experience more extreme discrimination compared to men (31, 107, 110). In a study done in South Africa, it becomes clear that traditional notions of masculinity, regularisation of inter-personal violence and rape myths are a core driver of gender-based violence, and can be reversed with a “collective re-negotiation of social peer norms” (64, p. 1245). Botswana have a deep-seated unwillingness to talk about sex openly due to the respect the kinship-ties are built upon (72, 111, 112), and there also exists a parallel silence around relationships and abuse (72, 113-115). In a survey from 2007 in Botswana, almost 25% of the respondents reported “having had a concurrent sexual relationship over the course of their relationships with a recent partner” (116, p. 828), which dramatically increases the chance of acquiring HIV (116, 117).

It is found that “sexual activity, as well as substance abuse and other risky behaviours, often begin during adolescence” (16, p. 4), and are more common for youth without the protecting factor of having parents (16). In Botswana, drinking alcohol is for men closely connected to being masculine (118), and a study from South Africa shows that men use alcohol as a coping mechanism for HIV and related stressors (119). When it comes to the relationships between alcohol consumption and risky sex in Botswana, 40% of men and 20% of women report to drink habitually before having sex (73). Alcohol is also strongly correlated with other risky sexual behaviour in South Africa, Botswana and Zambia (45, 73, 105, 107, 109) and violence towards women in Botswana (107). A study from Botswana found that females’ frequency of casual relationships was positively correlated with more frequent alcohol consumption (120).

2.2.4 Issues concerning education

Schools are seen as critical institutions for youth when it comes to facilitate a soft transition to adulthood (1), and particularly for orphaned children, schooling is seen as a basic need (121).

Arguably, the school can serve as an environment characterized by predictability and routines

where a child can build confidence and hope in life (121), it can contribute to children feeling mastery (122), and it is seen as essential to succeed out of a transitional stage in life (1). It is suggested that investment in education for vulnerable children may lead to great benefits for the individual, the community, and the society as a whole (19). However, a case study looking into secondary schooling and life transitions in Zimbabwe and Lesotho, argues that education disrupts the normal transitions from childhood to adulthood which are characterized by marriage, wage-earning and child-rearing (123). Two studies show how respondents viewed secondary education as a means only for obtaining paid jobs, and hence better lives (122, 123). In Southern Africa, where having paid employment is a basic need for obtaining a modern version of adult, independent life, the widespread unemployment is an additional transitional barrier (123).

A decade after independence in Botswana, the report from the First National Commission on Education (NCE), also known as Education for *Kagisano*⁸, was published. The emphasis was put on national unity, and to promote nationalism in Botswana was to be done through education (124, 125). Scholars argue that in Botswana, education is seen as “the remedy for the present and the recipe for the future” (38, p. 455), and it has been seen as of extreme relevance for acquiring better life circumstances by youth in Botswana (41). Interestingly enough, it is claimed that aims (whether from parents or young people) when it comes to schooling attainment go far beyond actual attainments (1). A pressure like this to perform through education can have grave impacts on a person’s sense of self if not succeeding.

An alternative to the formal education system in Botswana is provided through the vocational training facilitated by the Brigades, initially developed as an answer to the problem of adolescents leaving primary school (126), giving these youngsters a possibility of leading

⁸ *Kagisano* can be translated to ‘social justice’

productive lives (126, 127). The Brigades has been seen as a solution to the problem of youth unemployment (128), but also as a way to utilize resources to secure a large proportion of necessities to the people (127). However, “schooling of this nature can be perceived as restricting, rather than creating opportunities for upward mobility” (129, p. 46) , and it is also argued that girls have poorer access to technical and vocational training than boys (41). Nonetheless, a study from 1990 found that the Brigades, in addition to City Guilds⁹, both are associated with high economic returns (130).

There exists evidence that the educational system in Botswana generally is biased when it comes to social economic status (SES), and that high SES and low SES students are prepared for different kinds of jobs (131). The school environment also tends to leave girls’ learning opportunities severely constrained, and this discrimination seems to be a bigger problem in rural rather than urban areas (132). Orphans in a study from 2005 saw it as more likely that they would drop out of school than other children (18), and a girl said that “my life is not continuing” (18, p. 202), given the fact that she didn’t pass form 3.

Longitudinal studies show that parental death has a negative impact on primary school participation, and the impact is larger for maternal than paternal death (40, 100, 133, 134). Determinants for school enrolment can be economic situation, readiness for school, relationship to adult decision makers (39) and abuse by teachers (100, 135). Being unable to progress to higher education reduces the probability to find paid employment, in addition to undermining the self-esteem of a young person (18). Here I would like to note that many of the sources in this section are quite old (from 1971 and forward). This is due to the fact that much of the writing on this topic in Botswana has been connected to the publishing of reports

⁹ UK-based vocational qualification awarding organisation

from the first and second NCE, and very little subsequent research, to my knowledge, has been done on the matter.

2.2.5 Social Support

For the purpose of this thesis social support will be defined as having one or more persons available that one can turn to for economic, emotional or physical advice or assistance. Social support is an important asset when it comes to buffering life stress, and can also add to a person's positive adjustment and personal development (136). This can help enable continued functioning and thus mitigate trauma (137). A longitudinal study done on transitions for adolescents and youth find that these go smoother with availability of social support (138).

Peer social support is found to be a strong predictor of self-esteem (139), and a study from South Africa elicits the importance of loving caregivers and supportive friends for orphans (140). To have a secure intimate relationship with a significant other (adult) bolsters resilience, in addition to being a protective factor (83, 84, 141) by building competence and confidence (141). It is suggested that girls might experience higher rates of perceived care and support than boys (67, 142-144), as the genders differs in "how they seek, perceive and receive support, care and attention" (145, p. 180).

There exists evidence showing how material support from extended family and the wider community is an important asset for an orphan (102). A study on orphans in Uganda found that those residing in child-headed households or with an unrelated caregiver are more likely to lack this kind of support from a caring adult (122). In a study looking into goat ownership in Kenya, the researchers found that such an ownership could contribute to both access and contribution to community support, as the children had socially valued lives in their community (146).

Registered orphans in Botswana are entitled to support from the Botswana National Orphan Program, set up in 1999. This provides a monthly food basket in addition to offering school uniforms and transportation fees to attend school (147). However, a study from 2011 found that a total of 85% of the study participants were in one way or another dissatisfied with the program in Botswana for various reasons (147). A cause for this can be limited resources to the program and top-down intervention (47).

2.2.6 Group Participation and Support

Social capital refers to cohesion in the community resulting from positive aspects of community life (148), and Putnam with colleagues argue that “features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks (...) can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions” (149, p. 167). Social capital is found to be positively related to protective factors in the HIV era, such as use of condom (150) and community solidarity (151). In addition, it is also argued that it reduces women’s vulnerability to HIV (152).

A study on AIDS-orphans using a cluster randomised trial to measure the effects of peer-group support, found that the intervention group, compared to the control group, had considerably lower anger, depression, and anxiety at follow-up (153). It is argued that membership in a group can heighten a person’s self-worth on the background of judgement by the group as valued (154). In addition it can promote the use of collective agency to achieve valued goals (155). The literature also shows that being a member of a group will give individuals a sense of belonging and social connectedness (156, 157). However, while a group includes some, it inevitably excludes others. Thus, it is important to note that “a network structure which effectively meets one need may be inappropriate to another” (158, p. 37), which illustrates how different crises can emerge where some social networks can be more effective than others (158).

Access to psychosocial support and youth programs has been found to provide a sense of purpose and identity that can positively influence an orphan's life (102). The death of a parent or caregiver is "associated with noncompliant behaviour in children" (159, p. 438), but culture-appropriate psychosocial support, as given by Ark for Children in Botswana, can prevent such behaviour (50, 74). The aim of the program is to strengthen these adolescents in preparation for productive participation in Botswana's society (74), and the instrument for achieving this is a two-week long therapeutic retreat, with a 3 year follow-up. During the retreat, the orphans undergo extensive therapy, both in groups and individually, and the retreat also includes 'rites of affirmation' which help the children commit to transformation (74). A study from 2012 evaluating the effectiveness of the Ark for Children-retreat found that the children seemed to have acquired both competence and closeness (74), two components Sommerschild argues are the basis for resilience (see 84, p. 58 for model). A study done on peer-group support interventions points to the fact that social support from peers has proven effective when it comes to addressing mental health and behavioural issues among AIDS orphans (153). McClachey and colleagues found that a short-term therapeutic retreat was effective towards reducing posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic grief symptoms for children who had lost a parent (160).

2.2.7 Positive Well-being

Resources or characteristics that are valued by society are found to be strongly correlated to happiness (161, 162), but it is also argued that it is the other way around- that happiness is a predecessor to such desirable values (163). In the case of Botswana, where traditional religion still plays a role in everyday life, "the well-being of an individual (...) is a function of his or her relationship with other people, ancestral spirits, and even nature" (4, p. 38).

According to Hoyt and colleagues, “adolescence represents a sensitive developmental period in which psychological characteristics such as positive well-being may play a pivotal role in physical health” (164, p. 67). They further see positive well-being as encompassing “positive emotions and expectations for the future, perceived social acceptance, and high self-esteem” (164, p. 66). Others scholars argue that life satisfaction, and to a lesser degree self-esteem, is derived from in-groups in collectivist cultures (165, 166).

Having positive well-being during adolescence is correlated with good perceived general health and less risky health behaviours (164). A study from Uganda found that the young participants achieved a sense of mastery and felt useful when doing their chores (122), which can be seen as displaying competence (Snipstad 2005, in 122, p. 452). Emerging skills and having responsibility in a young person’s life are important for developing self-worth and hope (146). In addition, to exercise agency and experience decision-making can bolster certain psychosocial processes, and ultimately resilience (146). The literature argues that children who help sustain their family’s livelihood can acquire essential life skills because of this (167). Such contributions are a prime example of meaningful participation (discussed in section 2.1.4), which might give youth a greater sense of control, meaningfulness and connectedness (168, 169). In Kenya it was found that orphans contribute to the household through working for cash, or work in the household (101). Children who do this learn responsibility and mutuality through their chores, which, if you want to be a full-grown social person, are necessary traits (170). In many African societies, it has been seen as normal for children to move between the households of kin and neighbours (89, 170). During this they learn various work-activities and learn to appreciate that their contributions benefit a larger group of people (170), which again is connected to meaningful participation (76). During a study looking into positive psychological states and severe stress when it came to undertaking

palliative care of AIDS-affected spouses, the author found that the most reported sources of meaning “were feeling connected and cared about, feeling a sense of achievement and self-esteem, and having an opportunity to be distracted from everyday cares” (171, p. 1215).

Interestingly, these were not major life events, but rather ordinary events of everyday life that were infused with positive meaning (171).

2.2.8 Coping with adversity

A study from 1991 questions the need for working through grief as the only way of recovery from bereavement (172), contradictory to the belief that absence of distress or depression following a personal loss is a pathological response (173, 174), also called in-effective coping by scholars in the developed world (175). It is found that grief stemming from AIDS-related losses is associated with a greater use of such in-effective coping (176, 177). A study from South Africa found that HIV-positive men used alcohol as a coping mechanism to deal with their life-situation (119). Evidence support that diverted thinking, denial and forgetting bad incidents in a person’s life can be a way of coping in many African countries (102, 122, 137, 177, 178). This geographical division when it comes to in-effective coping displays how loss is entrenched with different cultural meanings in different settings. Orphans in Uganda are advised to forget and not think about their deceased parent(s) as a way to cope with the grief (122). Likewise, a study on bereavement found that an often-used coping mechanism was to not talk about the issue as to avoid getting emotional (177). A reason for such in-effective coping can be the notion of AIDS as an effect of witchcraft, thus inhibiting people from sharing their grief (4, 177).

Another way of coping with loss can be to compare oneself with others who have fared worse, or focus on the way ahead to build a better life (137). To try and frame a loss positively is an acknowledged way of coping, and can make people stronger and more able to deal with the

different challenges that life serves you (171, 177). Also, it is suggested that optimism can promote effective coping measures, and thus it is a resource for coping (179).

Religion or spirituality is a much-used coping mechanism to understand the loss and make sense out of the event, and it can also be seen as a source of strength and comfort (171, 177). Balk argues that this happens as a direct consequence of bereavement, as the latter can invoke questions when it comes to the meaning of life (180). It is found that positive religious coping is associated with happiness (181). In addition, it can be argued that if religiosity is related to happiness, it is also inextricably linked to psychological well-being which might reflect positive functioning, human development, and existential life challenges (181). It is maintained that under circumstances of chronic and severe stress, spirituality and religiosity can enable positive reappraisals of the situation and support adaptive coping, which again can lead to positive psychological states (171). Bereaved individuals in KwaZulu-Natal drew on their spiritual beliefs as a way to gain meaning from their experience in addition to derive comfort (177). Findings from another study from KwaZulu-Natal suggest that elements from religion, for example faith in God and hope, can create resilience in both children and youth, and that such resources are utilized when working with children in difficult circumstances (182). In addition, maintaining hope for the future is a source of strength for some (177).

All these coping mechanisms discussed above can give meaning to life (171), which is an important aspect of SOC and well-being (discussed in section 2.1.5). It can also be mentioned that successful coping is more likely if the person has a sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy, which again can stem from success in one life-sphere (83).

2.2.9 Conclusion

It is clear from the literature that there is a need for locally-based NGOs for helping the growing number of orphans. This is seen as a very important tool to rebuild the African continent after this devastating epidemic (183-185). It is argued that there is a gap in the literature when it comes to children's adaptation and resilience-skills (52), and the literature on transitional stages for youth in Botswana is close to non-existent.

It was quite challenging to find current literature on certain topics, like for example education in Botswana (old), social support and positive well-being (from western countries and somewhat old). On the other hand, I had no problems finding literature on relationships and sexual encounters that were both up-to-date and from the sub-Saharan African region. A lot of research has been done on this topic, arguably because it is viewed as problematic. Actually, it is much easier finding literature on what is terrible and devastating, compared to what is working and contributing towards well-being when it comes to SSA. Skovdal recognizes this when it comes to children, and argues for more research "on how AIDS-affected children, in interaction with their social environment, give meaning to and cope with stressful circumstances" (54, p. 2). In addition he calls for "more research which seeks to untangle the pathways that facilitate resilience" (54, p. 25).

Thus, my research aims to start covering these gaps, looking into how youth in transitions manage to thrive during difficult and challenging times.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research design

In this qualitative study, a phenomenological research design was implemented. The phenomenological tradition was originally developed by Husserl and Schutz (186, 187). Creswell's definition states that "a **phenomenological study** describes the meaning for several individuals of their **lived experiences** of a concept or a phenomenon" (188, p. 57) (author's emphasis). Accordingly, the main task in phenomenology is to describe the worldview as experienced by the research subjects (187). In order for this to happen, I as the researcher had to put my worldview aside, and openly accept that of the participant.

3.2 Participants and methods of data collection

According to Creswell, one of the main ideas behind qualitative studies is to purposefully select participants, together with site, for the study. This means that the participants selected are the ones best suited to "help the researcher understand the problem and the research question" (189, p. 185).

The location for the study was a midsize village in Botswana called Lothlakane East which lies about 100 km from the capital Gaborone. The data collection was done mostly in focus groups where I as a researcher could set "the agenda in terms of the topics covered" (186, p. 94), but where the participants' answer determined the kind of data that were gathered. The advantage of applying focus groups when gathering data is that it often gives more in-depth information than interviews, as the participants are able to reflect on answers and trigger each other to get a discussion going. When it comes to me being a white women doing research in Botswana, I think the use of focus groups facilitated more equal power-relations than one-on-

one interviews would have. Before I left for Botswana I made a semi-structured focus group guide (Appendix 1), with relatively open-ended questions based on the research-questions “to elicit views and opinions from the participants” (190, p. 181). Some of the topics covered were challenges after finishing school, relationships and what makes a person successful. It also contained heading (date, place and group) and instructions for me so that I could follow the same procedures at each group-session.

Originally, I had planned to have six focus groups in the age-range from 17-22 years, two with orphans who were graduates from Ark for Children, two with orphans who hadn't been through Ark for Children, and two with non-orphans. I wanted to do this to see if I could find any difference between those orphans who had been through Ark and those who hadn't.

Unfortunately, this proved difficult. Ark for Children has been active in Lothlakane East since 2001, and each year all orphans in standard seven, when they are approximately 13-15 years old, are taken out on psychosocial retreats by Ark. This means that there were only those who had lost their parent(s) after they finished standard seven who might be eligible for my study as participants in the group of orphans who hasn't been through Ark. The inclusion-criteria as described above had to be abandoned, and in pure desperation I accepted everyone who could be described as a young person. The age-range ended up to be 16-26 years, something quite different than I first planned.

The participants were recruited with help from gatekeepers in Ark n'Mark and the local *Mmabana* in Lothlakane East. She is engaged via Ark n'Mark and follows up the youth after the psychosocial retreats. She is also a member of the Village Development Committee (VDC). From the beginning it seemed like a good idea to cooperate with *Mmabana* when it came to my study. She had a lot of knowledge about the community and those who lived there, and could give good help with recruiting participants. However, the problems started

piling up. For the purpose of my study, I wanted to talk to young people who were thriving; who were doing well in life. Scales, Roehlkepartain and Benson writes that “‘Sparks’ is a metaphor for describing how young people experience talents, interests, or strengths that make them feel really happy, energized, and passionate, and that give them real purpose, direction, or focus.” (191, p. 4). I think this is a good way of describing a person who thrives. However, *Mmabana* (and a large number of Batswana in general) obviously associate the phrase “doing well” with education, and education only. This was a misunderstanding that was difficult to sort out and no matter how ‘thriving’ was phrased or described, the message didn’t seem to go through.

It is also an issue that *Mmabana* might have favoured Ark-graduates (which was okay), Ark-activists¹⁰, her family (children) and their friends. Perhaps she found it difficult to recruit participants that she didn’t know that well. It reached a critical point when I got the message “There are no more young people“. Apparently, school had started again, and therefore there were no more thriving youth (young people attending school) in Lothlakane East. Even so, she was able to gather one more group for me. My range of participants is presented in the three tables below.

¹⁰ Ark-graduates who have left school have the opportunity to join a follow-up program called Lentswe la Thlolego, which means ‘The Voice of Nature’. The activists are trained on forest-conservation and tree-planting in groups. They also have the responsibility for monitoring and taking care of the trees that are given to the community by the Forestry Department. In addition, they are responsible for teaching in the schools and holding trainings in the wards. For this, they get a small stipend to help them out financially.

Table 1. Details of pilot study participants

	Age	Girl, Non-Orphan	Boy, Orphan, Ark-graduate
Pilot-study	21	1 Mary	1 Macau

Before I set up the focus groups, I did a pilot interview with two participants. One girl and one boy, who were both 21 years old, participated in this. One of them was an orphan who had been through Ark for Children, the other was not an orphan. This interview was done to see if I needed to rephrase any of the questions and to see if they gave me the information I needed. The interview went very well, the participants were both very articulate and had a lot of interesting viewpoints they were willing to share. I left with a really good feeling. How hard could this be?

I would find out soon enough. The week after the pilot study, *Mmabana* had helped me set up three focus groups, of which two were to be held on one day. As shown in the table below, the first focus group consisted of four boys, aged 16-18 years, and the second consisted of 7 girls aged 17-19, all of whom were Ark-graduates. Even though I had really emphasized the importance of building rapport in my proposal, this was something I to some extent had forgotten, mostly because of the success with the pilot study. The effect of this was that my first real focus groups went really badly, and I didn't get very much good information from them. But there were also other circumstances that affected my first day of research. Both of the groups had been told to meet at the same time, but *Mmabana* argued that I should interview the boys first since they had to go out to the fields to work. I felt the time pressure, and this certainly affected the atmosphere. The translator I used was *Mmabana's* daughter. Initially I had also planned to engage a boy who could translate for me in the focus groups

with boys. The thought was that the participants would feel more comfortable with a translator of the same sex as them, especially when it came to discussing sexual issues, abuse and relationships. As it turned out, this was difficult to arrange, and I ended up using only one translator, the earlier mentioned *Mmabana*'s daughter. At first this didn't seem like a problem, it was convenient, cheap, and she had a lot of knowledge about the community. I discussed this with my supervisor, and we agreed that it would be a good idea. The focus groups were held in a small house near the *Kgotla*¹¹. I felt that this might not be beneficial, as this place in the village often is saturated with traditional power. In addition, *Mmabana* sat outside with other members from the VDC. But it was difficult for me to say anything, she had spent her time and set up everything for me and I didn't want to be ungrateful. However, it reached a limit when she came into the room during the focus group. I started to wonder if the atmosphere could get any more un-hospitable. Therefore I decided to use another venue for my third focus group, and with some persuading, *Mmabana* gave me the keys to the preschool in the village. I also spent more time before the focus group started to loosen up the tension, and we played cards which proved a useful way of getting the participants to relax. The difference was clearly noticeable. The participants were 3 women, aged 21-23, of whom two were orphans and one was not.

A few weeks after the first focus groups were held we had help translating the Setswana on the tapes to English. That was when I discovered that the translator, *Mmabana*'s daughter, had been very rude to the participants, telling them that they were lying and also answering questions for them. This was something I could not have known, as my skills in Setswana were limited to greeting and saying good bye, but still it made me feel awful on behalf of the participants, and it also got me thinking of how they had experienced the sessions. The

¹¹See p. x, Clarification of terminology

translator, in addition to being the daughter of a very powerful woman in the community, is also a student at the university-level and the power dynamics between her and the participants might have been intimidating. Also, there could be a gender-issue here, as it might have felt uncomfortable for the boys talking about relationships to a girl, in Setswana, making it more personal.

Table 2. Details of focus group participants¹²

	Age	Girls	Boys	Orphans	Non-Orphans	Ark-Graduate	Pseudonyms
Group 1	16-18		4	4		4	Baruti, Fenyang, Tau, Mosegi,
Group 2	17-19	7		7		7	Boitumelo, Mpho
Group 3	21-23	3		2	1		Goitsmedime, Kagiso, Lerato,
Group 4	20-26	2	3		5		Neo, Mogorosi, Pono

The fourth and last focus group was done only a few weeks before I left Botswana, and consisted of 2 girls and 3 boys who all were non-orphans. The age-range was 20-26 years, and even though this exceeded the age-range I initially had set, I realized that I couldn't afford to be picky at this stage. As my supervisor also was doing research in Lothlakane East at this time, I had the benefit of borrowing her translator, and the result was very good. The focus group went really well, and I feel that the participants also enjoyed it.

¹² I have only made pseudonyms for those who actually spoke during the focus groups, hence the difference between participants and number of pseudonyms.

Table 3. Details of individual interviews

Pseudonym	Age	Girl	Boy	Orphan	Non-Orphan	Ark-graduate
Sam	19		1		1	
Donald	20		1	1		1
Christy	19	1		1		1
Boitumelo	18	1		1		1

In addition to the focus groups, I had 4 individual interviews with young informants. These were selected on the basis of being articulate and thriving, and that they seemed comfortable speaking about their lives. Two of the informants I met when I was a research assistant for my colleague Vivian Midtbø in a village called Ramotswa, where Ark for Children also operates. One of the informants was a participant from the second focus group, and the last person was mentioned to me by the workers at Ark n’Mark, *Mmabana*, *Mmabana*’s daughter and some of the participants as a successful young person who I really should interview. For the participant from the second focus group, I made a questionnaire based on the information she gave in the focus group (Appendix 2). Two of the young informants answered the questions from the focus group guide, while the last one, after I told him what the study was about, just talked about his life and challenges, and how he coped with these. I took notes during this interview, as I didn’t have my recorder. All the other individual interviews and all focus groups were audio-recorded. All individual interviews were done in English.

I found that it would be interesting to also interview some of those who worked at Ark n’Mark, and set up key informant interviews with the director and one of the employees there. The employee is the one responsible for ‘The Voice of Nature’ program (*Lentswe la Thlolego*), which is a tree-planting program that is run with Ark-graduates that are no longer

in school. For each of these interviews, an individual interview-guide (Appendix 3 and 4) was formed based on their expertise and data from the focus groups. Both interviews were audio-recorded and done in English.

As my supervisor also was doing research in the same village as me, she asked some of her participants questions relevant for my study on behalf of me. This research was done after most of my focus groups so we were able to ask questions to clarify some of the issues arising out of my data. The questions were related to what makes a person successful and why education is so highly valued in their society, and were asked to the VDC, a group of old women and *Mmabana* (Daniel, M. Local and global discourses on child protection in Botswana, forthcoming). All questions asked were designed by me for use in my study.

3.3 Data management

After each focus group and individual interview, the audio-recordings were transferred to my private computer which only I have access to and which is secured with a password. No names were given to the files which could reveal where it was done or who participated. I continuously transcribed the data as soon as possible after each focus group or interview. This made it easier for me to remember the situation, mood-changes and who it was that spoke when. I was most sensitive to write the precise words that my participants had used, and after I had finished transcribing I always listened to the recording one or two times extra to be sure I had captured everything exactly like it was said. My colleague Vivian Midtbø took notes during the focus groups, which I actively used during the transcriptions if there was something that needed to be cleared up.

The finished transcriptions were sent to my supervisor as required. None of the files contained information that could reveal the identity of the participants. A document which only I have access to was made to give pseudonyms to the participants. This document is secured by a password, and only exists on my personal computer.

Since some parts of the focus groups were done in Setswana, I needed to get this translated. My colleagues and I hired two young men to do this job, one to transcribe everything that was said in Setswana, and one to translate from Setswana to English. Both of them, when working with my data, used my computer and/or memory-stick. This was done so that they could not misuse the data. The work was done where we lived, under our surveillance. After one interview was fully transcribed with what was said in Setswana, the Setswana-parts were copied and pasted in to a new document where it could be translated. This was done so that the translating would not be coloured or affected by what was said before, after or by the translator used in the interview. As my last focus group was held relatively late in my stay in Botswana, there was no time to transcribe and translate the Setswana. However, since this focus group was the one where I had a professional translator, I don't see this as a big limitation for my data.

After I had finished transcribing and translating all my focus groups and interviews, the audio-recordings were deleted from my computer. The transcribed documents will be kept up until two years after the thesis is handed in. This is because I might write one or more article(s) based on this material. All participants were informed about this in the informed consent forms.

3.4 Data Analysis

The whole process of data analysis and interpretation is to make sense out of the data.

According to Creswell, some researchers see this process like peeling back the layers of an onion, and thus moving deeper and deeper into the substance of the data and coming to the destination which is the larger meaning of the data (190).

For me, the data analysis began already during the pilot interview with initial reflection over the preliminary data, and has been on-going until the final draft of this thesis was ready. Step 1, the organization and preparation of the data was done during my stay in Botswana. I synthesized the transcriptions with the field-notes, read through the transcriptions several times, and began to get an overall sense of the data.

I decided to use a directed content analysis (192), since the theory already was in place. I undertook a deductive analysis based on my research questions. One excel-sheet was created for each focus group and the pilot study, one for all individual interviews, and one for key informant interviews. I ended up with 37 codes of which two were merged with others, giving me a final number of 35 codes, covering topics like unemployment, abuse, religion and Ark. All codes were given a number, as to make it easier to see where the same code came up in the different interviews. In addition, I counted how many times the different codes came up, and based on this I created a code impact-list, to make it easier to see how frequent the codes came up and which were more common than others.

To organise these codes, I utilised the thematic network analysis (based on 193, p. 388), where I used GRRs and Stressors as global themes in two different networks (Appendix 5 and 6). I used the revised salutogenic model (57) as a base for the thematic analysis because I

wanted to look more closely into challenges, how these are coped with and finally if SOC could be identified in any of the young people I interviewed. Under GRRs, 5 organising themes (e.g. religion, support, coping) covered 11 basic themes (e.g. ARK, skills, money). Under Stressors, 5 organising themes (e.g. abuse, relationships) covered 23 basic themes. Both organising themes and basic themes were developed on the basis of codes that emerged during the first part of the analysis.

It was difficult to operate with mutually exclusive categories, as I experienced that many of my codes were closely related and intertwined with each other. For example would the code 'relationships' appear in both the stress exposures and GRR box in the model, as it could be seen as both a stressor and a buffer towards stress. But, "owing to the intertwined nature of human experiences" (194, p. 107), this is quite natural and in some instances inescapable.

3.5 Validity, reliability and generalisation

Validity refers to the correctness, strength and truth of a finding (195). In the social sciences, validity often points to whether a method investigates what it intends to investigate (195). As discussed under section 3.2, *Mmabana* influenced my data collection. I set out to investigate thriving young people with 'sparks'; young people who were doing well in life. However, mainly because of *Mmabana's* perception of the word 'successful', a large portion of my participants were recruited on the basis of undertaking education.

Validity is not checked with a procedure at single point of time during the research, it reoccurs through the entire research process. To ensure validity in my study, I applied 'Validation at 7 stages' as proposed by Kvale and Brinkmann (195, pp. 248-249). The steps regard thematising, adequacy of the design, the "trustworthiness of the subject's reports and

the quality of the interviewing” (195, p. 249), transcribing, analysing, validating (!) and reporting. Thagaard argues that the validity of a study is connected to the quality of the interpretation and whether the knowledge the study produces can be supported by other studies (187). Thus, the most important task to improve validity is to have a transparent research procedure, and I have strived to deliver this.

Kvale and Brinkmann argue that “[r]eliability pertains to the consistency and trustworthiness of research findings” (195, p. 245). To add to the reliability of my study, I have tried to make the research process as transparent as possible, especially when it comes to research strategy and data analysis. My study has been strengthened by the use of an audio recorder, since this gave me the opportunity to transcribe precisely what the participants said. Consistency is strengthened by the fact that I have used the same interview guide in all focus groups and in those individual interviews where it seemed appropriate, and that I conducted all the research myself¹³.

According to Creswell “generalization is a term that is used in a limited way in qualitative research, since the intent of this form of inquiry is not to generalize findings to individuals, sites or places outside of those under study” (190, pp. 192-93). However, Thagaard argues that generalisation in qualitative research can be replaced by transferability, which refers to how results from one study can have relevance in another context (187). As discussed by Green and Thorogood, a conceptual generalisation will lead to the development of new concepts which might affect how we think about a similar situation or context (186). Such a conceptual generalisation is possible because of the in depth investigation that was carried out

¹³ I did collect all the data, except for two questions my supervisor asked for me during some of her groups. However, I don’t see this as a limitation when it comes to the reliability of my study.

during my research, and by gaining insight into a phenomenon that may be relevant in other contexts.

3.6 Role of the researcher

During qualitative research, one of the most important tools the researcher brings to the site is actually himself or herself. As Creswell emphasizes, the inquirer is “typically involved in a sustained an intensive experience with participants” (190, p. 177). Since the researcher is active in producing the data, it seems clear that he or she will also affect it in some way.

As a white woman from the West, social distance might have been an issue during my research. This can lead to that the participant becomes sceptical to what the researcher represents (186). I tried to avoid this by (in most cases) building good rapport, taking advice from gatekeepers and visiting the village on several occasions. But because of some barriers with language and a tight schedule set up by Mmabana on the days I did research, I didn't always feel that this issue was taken good enough care of. This is reflected on in detail under section 3.2. Before each focus group started I set out to make rules for the group by asking “What would make you feel comfortable speaking in this group?” and using the answers as basis for the rules. Before each individual interview, time was spent on informal chatting with the interviewees to make them feel at ease and comfortable in my presence.

During the focus groups, I enjoyed the advantage of having my colleague Vivian Midtbø as a research assistant. She was in charge of the digital recorder and taking notes, which meant that I could spend all my attention on questioning and listening to the answers. It also gave me the opportunity to make good follow-ups, which might not have been the case if I had to worry about my bad handwriting or if the recorder was out of battery.

Another important aspect of the role of the researcher is how the guidelines for the questions are framed. This was also reflected upon when making the focus group guide, and the questions were framed after a neutral /emotionally loaded/ neutral curve. I think this made the end of the focus group easier for the respondents, and it gave a soft transition to the debriefing at the end. The same point was also emphasized when I made the individual interview guides.

3.7 Ethics

Ethical issues are something that should be appreciated throughout the study, from the time the research questions are decided upon until the final written report is submitted (58, 190). First, it is important that the problem identified is one that will benefit and give meaning to others than the researcher.

Before I left for Botswana, I sent applications for research permit to Norsk Samfunnsvitenskapelig Datatjeneste (NSD) in Norway (Appendix 7) and Ministry of Local Government (MLG) in Botswana (Appendix 8), and both were easily obtained. With help from gatekeepers from Ark n'Mark and Lothlakane East, I was also able to get a meeting with the *Kgosi*¹⁴, and in cooperation with him, a *Kgotla*-meeting was set up. A *Kgotla*-meeting is open to all adults in the village where questions regarding community are addressed. Everybody is allowed to speak their opinion, which makes it a very democratic way to decide on issues that concern the local community. I attended this meeting and presented my study. What I said was translated into Setswana by one of the social workers from Ark n'Mark, so that everybody knew why I was in the village. A few questions regarding the length of my stay and how I would recruit participants (if I would go from door to door and ask if any

¹⁴ See p. x, Clarification of Terminology

young orphans lived there that I could interview) from the crowd was addressed. In this way one can say that I had community informed consent to carry through with my study.

For all the focus groups and some of the individual interviews, informed consent (Appendix 9) was obtained in written form. The form was prepared before the data collection started, and was approved by both NSD and MLG. In one individual interview the consent was obtained verbally, as this was deemed more appropriate in the specific situation. However, key information from the informed consent form was shared with all participants. This included no deception which refers to that measures were taken so that all participants knew what the study was about and why it was done. I also addressed the fact that all participants were anonymous¹⁵ and that no names or other revealing characteristics would be provided in the final thesis. Related to this was that after the recordings were transcribed, they were deleted. The participants were also told that they were free to withdraw at any time and that they could refuse to answer questions during the interview. Last, but not least, all participants were told that they would get no direct material benefits from participating in the study, except for refreshments and a small snack during the group-sessions/interviews. This was done for many reasons; the main one was that this might lead to expectations if other individuals or institutions came to do research in the village. If the participants got benefits from participating in my study, this might lead them to volunteer for other research projects, thinking that “If I participate, I might get some food or money for it”, ignoring prospective negative effects. However, regardless of how many times I emphasized this, some participants (and gatekeepers) asked for help with money, food or clothes, and time after time I had to decline.

¹⁵ Except for participants working in Ark. Because of their specific positions, this was not possible. I got permission to use their name and titles in this thesis.

One of my informants started discussing this with me, and he said that when he was younger, many orphaned children were called to the *Kgotla* to talk to representatives from the government or other institutional bodies. They didn't feel like they had a choice and that they had to go, but saw it unfair to have to spend their time there when they didn't get anything for it. This made me think that maybe some of my participants felt the same way. However, I did say that they were free to leave at any time during the interview or not answer questions if they didn't want to. Thus, I hope that my participants felt they had a real choice.

Ethical issues are also very current during the data analysis and interpretation, where one of the most important objects is to protect the anonymity of the individuals in the study. All names were replaced with pseudonyms during the transcribing of the interviews, and all transcribed records and files will be discarded after the thesis has been handed in. Every interpretation done from the data will be supported with accurate citations of what the participants actually said. I will also strive to keep a transparent research process during the whole study, so that readers can assess the credibility of the study.

This study will partially fulfill the degree Master of Philosophy in Health Promotion at the University of Bergen, Norway. An executive summary (without quotes) will be sent back to Ark n'Mark in Botswana. Ark n'Mark is working in many villages across Botswana, their program Ark for Children is also duplicated by the government, and my research will be valuable for their work. Copies of the thesis will be sent to MLG, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, National Archives and Record Services, the National Library Service and University of Botswana Library, as requested in the research permit from MLG (see Appendix 8).

4 Results

4.1 Life Course Stress Exposures

A stressor can be either acute or chronic, and is something we encounter and have to deal with every day across the life-span. A stressor in life can lead to a pathogenic breakdown if it is not overcome. However, if one has the resources to cope available, the individual will be able to move towards health (See section 2.1.2-2.1.5 for a more thorough explanation).

The following topics will be presented: Living arrangements, abuse, challenges related to finishing school, education=success? and relationships. All of these stressors are to a smaller or higher degree interlinked, and thus affect each other in different ways. This will be discussed further in section 4.6.2.

4.1.1 Living arrangements

As mentioned in section 2.2.2, most orphaned children are cared for by their extended family. This is the traditional model of care, even as the epidemic has grown in magnitude and therefore also the strain on the community increases; it gives the orphan a chance to grow up in familiar surroundings while preserving cultural norms and family-ties. Less common alternatives include child-headed households or institutional care.

A large portion of the orphans I interviewed reported that they stayed with their extended family (e.g. uncles, aunts, grandparents) or other caregivers, even after finishing school. One of them explained that

“Sometimes you can get your own place, but you have to apply to get your plot, yeah. It often takes some time before you get it, which means you have to stay with your parents” Boitumelo, 18

It seemed like this was the most common idea, and for many of the participants this was an okay way to live. A non-orphan in one of the focus groups saw it more as a duty than as an opportunity:

“It is expected that we have to stay with our parents before we move out. Since they were taking care of you when you were still young, so you have to work for them first, before moving out to your own home” Mogorosi, 26

However, this was not the case for everybody. One of the boys said that

“No it is not okay to live with the parents. (...) It is better if you go anywhere to look for a job” Fenyang, 18

One of the female orphans who hadn't been through Ark was staying with her uncle and his family. She stated that

“It is not okay. I want to get my own place, but because I'm not working I'm staying there” Goitsmedime, 22

Another of the female orphans who hadn't been through Ark disclosed serious issues regarding her living arrangements, where she was head of the household. She didn't have any contact with, nor get any support from, her father, who was staying in another village.

“Now I live in my father's home, and it's very difficult and boring 'cause it's close to my aunts (...) They abuse us” Kagiso, 21

She later said that her aunts were beating her siblings and making them do work for them. She didn't find it easy to intervene in this, as she had a small baby of her own to take care of. One of the key informants discussed the implications of being head of a household:

“Sometimes they are left alone in a home. So if they are alone there is no-one to advise them. They have all the freedom to themselves, they can do whatever they want” Jocasta

To live alone can be seen as both positive and negative. When residing alone, one has the opportunity to decide over one’s own life, which can help build a person’s feeling of empowerment and self-worth. However, as was the case for one of my participants, one can also become easier prey for abuse and exploitation. This might happen because there is no adult in the household to stop abuse or to advise against risk taking.

4.1.2 Abuse

When I asked one of my key informants what she understood by the word abuse, she answered that

“The word abuse just means being trampled upon. It means that. Whether verbally physically, sexually or otherwise. It’s just being trampled upon and not being cared for” Director of Ark n’Mark.

So thinking about this, abuse can happen in many ways. Children can become an easy prey for abuse by caregivers or from the extended community, whether it concerns free labour, lack of care, malnutrition, discrimination, and physical or sexual abuse.

This topic was a little bit touched upon in the section above, and is also linked to many of the sections to come. Almost all of the young people interviewed found this a common thing in their society, especially when it came to orphans.

“You can be abused by, maybe your aunties, your uncles, for example for an orphan (...) because you don’t have someone who can stand up for you” Mpho, 19

“I think the reason is that they don't have someone to stand beside them, to talk for them and to speak for them. So they are just being beaten anyhow, by uncles, aunts. Yeah” Donald, 20

“Girls who are vulnerable, like orphans, would normally be abused, even by their brothers, their uncles, their relatives. Because they are available. Nobody is there to say 'Stop it'. They can just access them anyhow” Director of Ark n’Mark

Even though orphans are most emphasized in the narratives above, the Director of Ark n’Mark in addition uses the phrase ‘girls who are vulnerable’. Also, I want to point out that all of them report on abuse that is performed by relatives. So, one can also see how non-orphans might be vulnerable towards this kind of abuse. However, when it comes to verbal abuse in schools, especially done by peers, orphans were seen as more vulnerable. One of my key informants expressed that orphaned children, who might not be as privileged as their classmates who still have their parents, could be troubled by this at school and in their homes.

“If they just think that, Ah, if I go to school today, they will just say 'Look at her feet, look at her feet', because she don't have shoes. Then they will just stay home” Jocasta

“They are scolded, you know (...) And maybe if they want something, 'Oh, we have been asked to bring 25 thebe to class', they will be like 'You should go to the graves and ask for 25 thebe from your parent'!” Jocasta

The focus groups also yielded information about how teachers added to the burden of the orphaned children.

“Some teachers insult our parents (...) they use our parents when they are talking to us” Fenyang, 18

However, abuse can also happen outside school. One of the non-orphaned girls told me about how abuse in a relationship might interfere with their schooling.

“If youngsters or the youth find themselves in relationships with elder people, you find that this child does not have time to study, because the older man is going to tell her to go to his house, and then he's going to lock her in the house” Neo, 20

A boy from the same focus group also elaborated on this issue.

“If a child lives with a married man who's got a big belly, that child will start to make that man her husband. And then she will start going to sleep over at this man's house. It is not good. And then, when this child is in class, she will not concentrate, because she will be having thoughts about this man. And it is easier for this child to be infected, because this man is going to just use her anyhow and abuse her in the long run” Pono, 20

Here we can see that young people are aware of the danger of HIV, and that they also are able to see the connection between this and having a relationship with an older man (with a big belly¹⁶). Almost all of the participants saw abuse in relationships as a common thing, even though it was said that nobody talked about it.

“People don't discuss these things (...) Even if we talked about it, if you tell me as a friend, I couldn't do anything about it, even if you told your father he would say 'Why are you having relationships with this guy?'. You have to keep it to yourself” Mary, 21

The notion of masculinity and patriarchal societies was also touched upon. It was mostly the young men who brought up this issue.

¹⁶ That this man has 'a big belly' might imply that he is an older man, maybe rich, or maybe a beer-drinker, which, if true, also coincides with the literature on the topic of (transactional) relationships and sexual behaviours.

“From our culture here in Botswana, like boys are expected to lead in everything, the budgeting, the relationship, the money, the finances, the ideas. Everything, they are in control. So when he says this, the girl has to accept that” Donald, 20

“The girl can't say no to sex. If the man wants sex, he can have it, he's the man”
Macau, 21

From this we can see that abuse was a part of everyday life in this village, and it was also evident that it happens in many spheres of the society. Mostly the abuse reported here was done by adults to children, or by men to women and girls.

4.1.3 Challenges related to finishing school

Many reasons can lead a young person to drop out of school, for example lack of financial means, bullying, abuse by teachers or lack of academic skills. Many of the young people I interviewed had finished school quite early, from form 2 to form 5. Many challenges are connected to this issue, and one of the most acute relates to how both orphans and non-orphans can take care of themselves.

“Sometimes you have to face some situations like living a own life, supporting yourself. Because when you finish the school, and you don't pass to the senior school, parents start to ignore you (...) you are increasing problems” Macau, 21

“When you finished form 3, and then you failed, and then you reach the age of eighteen, the Government then erases you from its books. So you start to face challenges from there. Those people who used to live with them as guardians, they also start to see you as a poor person. Because now you are not getting any rations from the government that they can eat” Macau, 21

This clearly shows how orphans can be marginalized by their caregivers, maybe because they don't get the food basket anymore and can't contribute to the household with that. Such transitions in a young person's life, especially when they happen so close in time, can place a large strain on the person it happens to. Not only has he lost his 'educational value' because he failed in school, he has also lost the economic status he had in his household due to receiving the food basket from the government. The challenges faced from there, as Macau mentioned, can be economic, social and emotional, and difficult to find a way out of.

In two of the focus groups it was discussed how non-orphans still would be better off than orphans. Two of the participants expressed it like this:

"Their mothers are there to take care of them. Even if they're not working they are better [better off] than us" Kagiso, 21

"The parent can take him or her for the private schools, the social worker can't take you there. As an orphan, I can't go anywhere" Boitumelo, 18

Contrary to this, one of the participants didn't think it necessarily made a difference whether your parents were alive or not.

"(...) sometimes they just lead the same lives. Sometimes you can see a girl who have both parents and think she is an orphan, because she is so poor" Mpho, 19

Two of my respondents made a connection between the lack of education or finishing school and alcohol-abuse.

"Most, but especially those who are not educated, are drinking a lot of alcohol"

Donald 20

"They tend to turn into things like alcohol-abuse [after finishing school]" Jocasta

I asked one of my participants whether this could be seen as a coping mechanism, and he confirmed this:

“Because if you ask someone why they are into drinking, they will say that's it because of stress” Mogorosi, 26

One of the boys connected poverty, relationships and pregnancy when talking about challenges for girls:

“(...)if you are a girl, it's a bit different suddenly, cause you go and hang around looking for a better life, looking for guys who are able to get money. So what you are going to do is that you act as a normal person. Every guy that passes around you say that 'I can marry you, I can support you', and they are always not saying the truth, they want to play games with you and then pass away. That's why they, most of them they end up bearing children with no fathers, they start drinking alcohol and then increases the poverty at home” Macau, 21

This quote clearly shows how girls are more vulnerable than boys. In addition, it also reflects the inconsistency that is often found in relationships in Botswana, and how boys just ‘want to have fun’. When asked what the biggest challenge young people faced when they finished school was, one of my key informants answered that

“The biggest one is unemployment (...) because at that age, 17-18, you have completed form five” Jocasta

Two of the participants in one of the focus group confirmed this. They expressed how many young people had difficulties finding a job.

“Most of people are just staying home without working” Boitumelo, 18

“They’re looking for jobs, but they cannot get it” Mpho, 19

This can have many negative effects on the lives of the affected, and the most common one of these was lack of money. One of the participants, whose father was still alive, but who didn’t give her or her siblings any help, expressed it like this:

“It’s difficult for me to find money to buy stuff like clothes and food. My father, I don’t know whether to call him irresponsible or not” Kagiso, 21

The government’s economic drought relief program *Ipelegeng*, explained under section 1.2.2, came up when discussing jobs and money. However, almost none of the participants who discussed this wanted to engage in the program, even though it was a good means for a small income. This is also consistent with my observations, as every time I saw drought relief groups along the roads or in villages, they were dominated by adults. One of the orphaned boys explained it like this:

“They would laugh at me” Baruti, 16

A boy from an individual interview explained that they might think that that job was beneath them:

“[m]ost young people don’t like to do that. Mostly it is done by the older people because they don’t care. (...) If you were like a teenager, then you get into that, they would say that you are not successful somehow” Donald, 20

As shown in this section, unemployment is one of the biggest challenges facing youth in Botswana today, and there are slimmer chances of getting employment if you don’t have any education. What is surprising is that the *Ipelegeng* program is so unpopular with the youth,

and it might mean that for them it is more important to keep up a 'cool' façade than to earn money through that program.

4.1.4 Education= Success?

A common notion a large portion of the participants held was that if you wanted to be successful, you needed to be educated. This, I observed, was a view held by many Batswana, and is closely related to issues reported in section 4.3. How can a person ever feel successful if they are not able to finish their education?

When I asked the participants what it means to be successful, the answers were almost unison:

“You need to be educated!” Boitumelo, 18

“You can't go nowhere without education” Mpho, 19

“If you are not successful, you cannot live a good life (...) Most of the time, if you are educated you are considered as successful” Macau, 21

One of my key informants explained it like this:

“Let me say that it's kind of the standard that the Government has set or something (...) that for you to be successful in life you have to go to school and get your degrees and start working” Jocasta

The other key informant explained the notions about how people look at traditional jobs and modern professions:

“The mind, the current mind is that if you are a scientist, if you are a doctor (...) then you are brilliant, it is the way intelligence has been defined maybe. (...) They [the young people] want to look clean and smart and in suits and talking on TV, and you

know, like that, civilisation. (...) It is not that they are not aware that technical jobs like welding and carpentry and agriculture can bring money. But it is physically taxing for them, it doesn't leave them clean and smart, so they'd rather not" Director of Ark n'Mark

In addition to this, the teachers play a part in keeping these notions alive. One of the boys talked about how teachers reinforce the idea about the importance of schooling and fail to recognize special skills a student might have outside traditional academics:

"Even if the person is successful and gifted, they don't use that gift to be successful, because they were told that they were chopheads" Macau, 21

I asked one of my key informants how non-academic skills could be ignored like this.

"Because in school there are no other lessons that concern small businesses. They are just starting now, I think the government is starting to realize now that this condition is not okay (...) It will take time for people to kind of shift it from that mentality of getting the master and degrees to be successful" Jocasta

For those still attending JSS, the quality of the education was a concern. The public strike that had been on-going from March to May 2011 in Botswana meant that the students had missed out on school in three months. Some of the participants talked about how this might affect their exams in form 3, exams that would determine if they could continue to SSS (Field notes, July 5th, 2011). The reasons for how little emphasis is put on vocational and technical training, and why pursuing an academic education is so valued can be many and intertwined, and will be discussed in detail under section 4.2.1.

4.1.5 Relationships

I also wanted to find out about how romantic relationships (hereafter referred to as relationships) affected young people's lives in Botswana. Relationships and sexual debut often start during adolescence, and are more common for youth without the protecting factor of having parents. It can also be seen as a solution to problems, especially for young girls (see section 2.2.3). After informal chatting with some of my participants, it seemed clear that relationships between young boys and girls was seen as immoral by many adults in the village. The common notion was that people should get married instead of carrying out casual relationships, as it could interfere with their schooling.

When I asked why people engaged in relationships, both boys and girls mentioned love and money as important factors. However, one of the boys from the individual interviews had a different viewpoint:

"I think that young people are like, are they bored in life? They don't know what to do. Yeah, I think that's why they get involved in relationships" Donald, 20

In addition to this, peer influence was a common answer.

"Sometimes they get to see other students in school with money, buying stuff for themselves, and not buying for her. So they will tell her that this money I got from my boyfriend. And then it will influence this girl to be involved" Pono, 20

"If my friend has a boyfriend, and I start to feel 'Am I ugly?' or that that. And if a guy appreciates me, then I start having a relationship with him" Mary, 21

This last quote is very interesting, as it implies that a girl doesn't have any value (either from her own point or from the point of her peers) if she's not given any attention from boys. Thus

one might argue that to feel valued and to be seen as socially accepted depends on one's relationship status. In addition, the quote also shows that there is a thin line between peer support and peer pressure. One of my key informants also mentioned peer influence when reflecting on why young people started up relationships.

“Especially at the age of 17-18 they are still wavering in in-decision, so they can easily be influenced by peers, thinking that that is a better world” Director of Ark n'Mark

She also mentioned that young girls might see it as a solution to many of their problems, and hence

“(...) thinking the only way is to get connected to a man, who may promise them money, or promise to marry them or promise anything that may entice them” Director of Ark n'Mark

A few of the female respondents actually talked about how their boyfriend could supply some of their needs, but when asked why they were in a relationship with these guys, they all reported love as the main reason. One of them, Kagiso (see quote in section 4.1.3) shared the issue of how her father didn't support her or her siblings in any way, and this might have made her rely more on her boyfriend for economic assistance. This leads to another issue that also came up during many of the interviews and focus groups, namely what expectations boys and girls had of a relationship. Money and material support were common answers, especially from boys:

“If you have a girlfriend, you are expected to buy anything for her, expensive stuff, so at the end of the day when you feel cheated you realise that you have wasted your money” Donald, 20

This can lead to the assumption that the boy is in power over the girl, also expressed by Donald in section 4.1.2. One of the key informants drew a clear link between relationships, exploitation and pregnancy.

*“They get in (...) sexual relationships with people who are working, sometimes it’s older people, you know. Because they will know that ‘Oh, if I have a sexual relationship with this person, they can support me with money and buy food and...’.
(...) So sometimes these people want unprotected sex (...) There are a lot of condoms available. But if (...) you know that someone is giving you money, and there’s no way you can get money, and they want unprotected sex, can you say no to them?”* Jocasta

A few of the respondents saw relationships as something that would interfere with their schooling, and therefore they didn’t want to get engaged in them. One of the male respondents saw a causal relationship between ‘going steady’ and pregnancy. He said that

“Because, if you brought in that girl, you would be in trouble (...) because I would have no money to support the baby” Fenyang, 18

A girl in the last focus group, when talking about what boys expect from a relationship, gave the following statement:

*“The boy wants to sleep together with their girlfriend. And then have a baby.
However, after having a baby, if this girl goes to the parents to say ‘I’m pregnant’ the boyfriend will deny everything”* Neo, 20

After she said this I asked the group why young people didn’t use condoms, which are widely available in Botswana. One of the boys answered this:

“The main issue is that men are always fearful to use protection. Sometimes the protection they use are like, small. And then some are saying that after using this protection they have some, like burning sensations, and then they may develop some rash” Mogorosi, 26

One of the key informants also related pregnancy with increased poverty:

“Like I was saying, these ones have babies, they start having sex and having children. You know... So it increases poverty. If you don't have what you can support yourself with, then you have a kid, what are you going to give to that kid?” Jocasta

Both peer pressure and a strained economy, in addition to love, were reported as reasons for starting up a relationship. An interesting finding was that many saw a causal connection between relationships and pregnancy. Condom use was mainly decided (and often opposed) by the man, and the results of this would ultimately worsen the girl’s situation.

4.2 Discussion of stressors

In this section, I will discuss the findings presented above. The first part focuses on how education is seen as the only way to success, which was the most general and the most surprising finding during my research. The second part will focus on the other stressors, how these links up with each other, and how that might affect youth in Botswana today.

4.2.1 The importance of education

One of the most general and also unexpected finding was that without education you can’t be successful. According to Meyer, “education is unchallenged as both the remedy for the present and the recipe for the future” (38, p. 455) in Botswana. However, it is also argued that educational reforms cannot be seen as a cure to social problems, even though they are often

given such objectives (129). None the less, education was seen as the key to a good life for almost everybody I interviewed and met during my field visit, and my data also reflect this. Jocasta (section 4.1.4) mentioned that this was the standard set by the Government. In a study from 2009 looking into female dropouts from schools in Botswana, students report that education was a step on the way towards a better life, and one actually state that “[w]ithout it I can’t succeed in life” (41, p. 455). This coheres strongly with my data on the topic, and also my impressions from informal chatting with young people. But if the youth in Botswana today feel this way, what happens to those who don’t manage to stay in school for different reasons?

According to Crossley and Weeks, values and curriculum from the West have been imposed upon indigenous cultures, and in many African countries today one can see the educational heritage from the former colonial powers (129). They further argue that individuals saw the importance of having a formal education, giving them skills, knowledge, and maybe the highest value of them all; status in colonial society. This increased demand for education, which was now seen as an international commodity (129).

If we look more closely at Botswana’s history, there is a distinct change happening right after independence in 1966. The country’s new found mineral wealth led to a sharp increase in the gross national product (GNP), and together with a stable government this made possible a steady growth in the educational system (128). The report of the First National Commission on Education (NCE), also known as Education for *Kagisano* from 1977, and the following Government Paper No.1, The National Policy on Education (NPE) emphasizes that education must reinforce the aim of national unity (124, p. 3). Scanlon writes that the significance of education has been promoted to reach the goal of *Kagisano*, which can be translated to ‘social

justice', and that *Kagisano* is built on the principles of democracy, development, self-reliance, and unity (124). Implicit in this lies that building the nation and nationalism in Botswana was to be done through education (125), and national unity was promoted by for example to use Setswana as the first language in schools (128).

According to Meyer, "international involvement in Botswana's educational system is widespread and pervasive, involving many American, European, and international agencies" (38, p. 466). He further argues that educational truths are identified at a level higher than the local one, and hence valuable for exactly that reason, and "[e]verything of value, such as student life chances, depends on national exams and world standards" (38, p. 469). So even though there is no doubt that the vast expansion of the education system in Botswana to some extent is donor driven (see pp. 473-475 in 38), these external forces are seen as agents of Botswana's interest and a tool for social change. It can be argued that by assimilating what is seen as successful processes in the wider world, one can acquire and incorporate oneself with their powers (38). This can also be seen as a reason for the strong emphasis put on formal education in Botswana. By adopting ideologies, systems, and curriculum from western countries, one might think that this is the first step in obtaining their living standard, their culture, and their life opportunities.

In section 4.1.4, Jocasta commented upon how there is a lack of courses addressing skills-attainment that can give young people opportunities for an income independent of education-level. In a female dropout-study in Botswana from 2009, one of the teachers said that "maybe they are good in something else; we can come up with other programs that can accommodate those children" (41, p. 459). Adams (196) argues that where there exists thorough education in vocational and academic skills for youth (often in special programs), the socially

disadvantaged are likely to benefit from this. He writes, as a precaution, that jobs need to be created for this, but in a country like Botswana, where the job market proves difficult to enter, having special skills can empower a person to use these outside formal employment to make a living. Life skills can also be obtained in such programs and can "help youth make more informed decisions about education, health, personal finances, and conflict resolution" (196, p. 6). On the other hand, Crossley and Weeks contend that "[n]ew indigenous elites can be seen promoting agriculturally and practically relevant curricula for rural youth, while securing more prestigious academic studies for their own children" (129, p. 45). Thus, as different educational opportunities often seem to create different life chances. "those already underprivileged rightly fear they will be the recipients of the raw end of the deal" (129, p. 45).

The Brigades in Botswana (see section 2.2.4) were initially developed as a solution to the primary-school leaver problem, giving these adolescents "further training that would enable them to lead productive lives and enjoy a tolerable income and standard of living" (126, p. 5). It meant to give incentive to maximise utilisation of all resources in rural development, so as to enhance the local production covering daily needs (127). The Brigades can be defined as "an institution offering primary school leavers a worthwhile technical or vocational training in such a way as to cover the recurrent costs of that training" (126, p. 8), and the different schools offer training in different disciplines (e.g. building, carpentry, farming and textiles). The limitations on current jobs after finishing the Brigades means that most of their graduates have to work on their own, outside formal employment¹⁷, and it can be argued that this is an obstacle for young people to go to the Brigades in the first place. Also, as written above, it is not certain that the rural youth will accept inequality in educational opportunities, as this evidently might lead to different life chances and a lower placement on the social ladder

¹⁷ Personal communication with Jocasta Bobeng, Dec 6th, 2011.

(129). In addition to all this, what the Director of Ark n'Mark says about young people's negative attitudes to physical work and agriculture in section 4.1.4, also adds to the notion that this is not a popular alternative to traditional academic education.

UNESCO is now working on 'The 2012 Education for All Global Monitoring Report', which will look deeper into "how skills development programmes can improve young people's opportunities for decent jobs and better lives" (197, p. 1). This is an important supplement to the knowledge on this area, as my data also show. It can be argued that there is a need for more vocational training reaching youth in Botswana; this can help alleviate the feeling of not being successful if one does not fit in the academic sphere. In addition, one might argue that it will help towards reducing alcoholism and 'street-roaming', as obtaining skills can enhance one's self esteem and sense of power over one's life. This can help a person take more rational life decisions and focus on making the best of life. An example of a vocational course in JSS could be food-production or growing crops. Food is, as we all know, essential for survival, but in addition to this, surplus in the production can be sold for money, giving an income to buy basic necessities. However, one can also argue that this might not work out well. As the Director of Ark n'Mark remarks (section 4.1.4) agriculture won't leave a person looking clean and smart, and in addition it is physically taxing, so this type of work is not too popular with the young people of Botswana today.

Going back to the academic type of education, the literature suggests that this is especially important for orphans, as it can give them some stability in their lives (121). In addition, a school environment can help to develop social and emotional skills in a young person, which can enable them to thrive towards adulthood (121). Those of my participants who still were attending school seemed to really enjoy this part of their life, and for them school can be seen

as a stable factor in life. Nevertheless, some of the younger participants complained about the quality of schooling during informal chatting after one of the focus groups. They mentioned how the strike made their graduating exams from JSS difficult, as they had lost almost three months of schooling, and now they had no chance to make up for that.

4.2.2 Stressors interlinked

It is obvious that the challenges these young people have in their life are many and intertwined, whether it is economic, educational or psychosocial. For example living arrangements, relationships and alcohol were related to abuse, and abuse (e.g. bullying in school) could lead to youngsters leaving school prematurely. This again is connected to the challenges young people face when they finish school, like unemployment, alcohol and supporting self. For many girls, a means to get material benefits would be to engage in relationships with (often) older men. Such relationships were frequently associated with abuse, secrecy, lack of condom-use and ultimately pregnancy. The latter might immediately worsen the situation the girl found herself in.

If we look back at Macau's quote in section 4.1.3, we see that the transitions he talks about can have extreme effects on the one's it happens to. As shown in both section 4.1.4 and 4.2.1, education is seen as the only way of being successful. One can therefore argue that this is a very important value in Botswana, and that a young person who is still attending school has a purpose in life. In addition to this, an orphan who brings in the food basket is economically valued by the household this person lives in, and can be seen as making an important economic contribution. This is also reported on by Boitumelo in section 4.3.4, where she explained how she can help her caregivers with the coupons she gets from the Government. These type of values can be seen as meaningful participation (participation in socially valued activities), which gives added meaning both to the person himself and to the persons who

benefit from these values (for example sharing the food basket within the household), and thus will be discussed in deeper detail under section 6.1.3 of this thesis. For now, the most important point is how these transitions develop into for example economic challenges (e.g. unemployment, lack of basic needs) or emotional challenges (not feeling useful, loved or as a person of significance), and how this might affect a person's life.

After finishing school, whether the person has finished form three, form five or a degree at the university, the chances of getting a job are rather slim. There is an overload of evidence which points to the fact that unemployment can lead to mental distress and poor mental health (see for example 198, 199). Considering the great importance the Setswana society puts into having an education, and how you in few settings can be seen as successful if you don't have this, also adds to the burden. The Botswana Government has set up the drought scheme *Ipelegeng*, described in detail under section 1.2.2. The employment-period is one month at the time, which earns 400 pula (approximately US \$80). Surprisingly, only one of the participants reported interest in this program.

As a lot of importance is put into having an education if you want to go 'somewhere' in life, not succeeding in academics can make a person feel worthless and useless. In addition, it also might have effects on the economic situation of the young people and those who are dependent on them (e.g. younger siblings or own children). Many of the participants, like Donald (section 4.1.3), reported that it was normal to use destructive coping mechanisms to deal with these challenges, for example alcohol and having relationships motivated by money or material goods. In an article from 1986, Guldbrandsen asserts that an informal union

usually “entails a ‘flow’ of gifts from the man to reciprocate his *nyatsi*’s hospitality”¹⁸ (200, p. 11), and it is a common notion that the male has power over women when it comes to relationships and sexual matters (35, 72, 201, 202). This power can be strengthened by the fact that the man buys gifts for the woman, and thus feels he has a right to exercise power over her (72). This notion of patriarchy is a cultural heritage throughout Botswana which gravely affects the women’s position in society (201). However, in a study on school girls and inter-generational sex in Botswana, a certain proportion of the participants had relationships based on mutual decision-making (72). Accordingly, those in my study were not willing to label their relationship as one where the male made all the decisions, but they said that being in a relationship meant that their partner could help them in different ways. Other reasons for starting up a relationship can be to achieve self-esteem, a notion of success, and respect from peers (203). In a study from 1998 in South Africa, the authors find that the identities of young people were constructed on the basis of success in sexual relationships (204). This confirms what Mary reported in section 4.1.5, that relationships can be started up to gain respect from peers and also to increase a person’s sense of value.

In a report from UNICEF in 2002 (205), it is stated that 20% of adolescent out-of-school girls finds it difficult to refuse sex when offered gifts or money for it. In addition, poor young women may see this as an only option for continuing school and/or supporting their family (205). Unfortunately, such relationships often lead to pregnancy, as condom-use with few exceptions is decided by the man. It came up in my study that men would avoid using condoms, being afraid of getting a rash. In a study looking into adolescent condom procurement in Botswana, both boys and girls show hesitancy towards obtaining and using

¹⁸ *Nyatsi* means sweetheart or concubine. Personal communication with M. Daniel, Dec 13th, 2011.

condoms. Reported reasons are the quality of the condom, the possibility of getting a rash and fear of being labelled as promiscuous (206).

Some of my participants, like Macau (section 4.1.3) suggested that alcohol-abuse was inter-related with relationships, transactional relationships and pregnancy. This is consistent with the literature on the topic. A study from 2004 concludes that there is a linear relationship between alcohol consumption and sexual behaviour among young people (45). Weiser and colleagues find the same relationship between alcohol and what they call high-risk sexual behaviour (73). According to this study, heavy alcohol consumption is strongly correlated with “unprotected sexual intercourse with a non-monogamous partner, having multiple partners, and paying for or exchanging sex for money or other resources” (73, p. 1945). In a study from 2005, Phorano et. al conclude that Botswana women are subordinated to men, and this makes them more “vulnerable and unable to negotiate safe sex” (107, p. 201). To illustrate this, in an article from 2000, the authors write that

“[a]ccording to the customary laws and customs of Botswana, a woman is a child for life. First, she is her parent’s child. Then she is her husband’s child. Should she not be married, she is her brother and her uncle’s child” (207, p. 329).

This reinforces what my participants said, that the men were in power over the women.

Abuse was reported as a common thing in the society, even though nobody talked about it. I found the silence around this topic very interesting. This can happen for many reasons. A respondent in a study from 2010 indicates that “usually young female students felt that whoever was violated asked for it, was loose and enjoyed the attention she received” (113, p. 70). In other words, she only has herself to thank. According to Seloilwe and Thupayagale-Tshweneagae, cultural norms regarding child sexual abuse are put in the private sphere and

should not be talked about. They further state that sometimes when the issue is reported, not much can be done about it (114). So why go through the psychological strain of examinations and interrogation, making the matter well-known (and maybe be labelled as loose), if it's not going to contribute to punish the perpetrator? This silence around sensitive issues can be seen as avoidance of (additional) stressors and hence a GRR, and will be discussed further in section 4.4.

All female respondents in a study from 2009 report that they were sexually harassed during physical education lessons (208). This is consistent with my data, which suggested that it was mainly girls who became victims for sexual harassment, whether physical or verbal. This is linked to the cultural norms in the Tswana society. According to Preece, "women are traditionally subject to male decision making in the home and this is perpetuated throughout all private or consensual relationships" (34, p. 224).

When it comes to living arrangements, my data suggest that it is most common to stay with either parents or extended family after finishing school, both for orphans and non-orphans. This implies some degree of consistency in most of the young people's lives, which is positive in a life characterized by transition. The available research on this topic shows that it is advantageous for orphans to stay with extended family, to the degree which it is possible (98, 209). In addition, contrary to what many believe, "existing evidence suggests considerable resilience among extended families in absorbing orphaned children" (97, p. 4). This is supported by my interaction with the participants in the study. Of them, only one headed a household, three had moved to Gaborone for further education, while the rest were residing with their families/caregivers. Some of the participants were not happy with their living arrangements and wanted to get a place on their own, but this was not the general

finding. Over all, the young people seemed content with how, where and with whom they lived. Only Kagiso, who was head of her household, reported abuse by her extended family (who was her neighbours) as an issue when it came to living arrangements.

As discussed above, the young people I interviewed identified a number of stressors in their lives, and I have discussed how these stressors create challenges for youth in a transitional time. However, important as it is to have identified these stressors, it is even more important to see how these challenges are coped with. Therefore, the following sections will focus on the generalised resistance resources, and how these can buffer stress and increase well-being in youth in Botswana.

4.3 Generalised Resistance Resources

The GRRs make up the resources available that make it possible to move towards health, despite the stressors that occur in one's life. These resources not only help people cope with stressors, but also avoid them. GRRs can be found within people as distinct resources, but can also be in their immediate and distant environment. However, the most important feature is not only to have these resources, but also to be able to use them for the intended purpose.

4.3.1 Support

The term support can refer to many things, including social support, emotional support, task-oriented assistance and so on. One can find a division between support from adults and peer support. Adult support can be sharing different types of knowledge, serving basic needs (e.g. food, shelter, other necessities), and a focus on controlled behaviour and conventional values. Peer support on the other hand often facilitates social activities, impulsiveness, and liberal values.

Ark for Children intends to create peer-groups during the retreats that will support each other after they return to their home village. This kind of belonging to a group will help enhance a person's well-being during a difficult time. It is also useful to know that you have your peer-group to go to if something ill should happen. However, one of the male participants reported that he had no contact with his peer-group from the Ark-retreat, even though he said that the program had changed his life. This can be due to the fact that he was one of the first graduates from Ark for Children, and many changes have been done with the program in later years. Another reason might simply be the fact that he is a boy, and boys might not be too engaged in drawing on social support (see section 4.4 for discussion).

When in the field, I observed that all the girls who participated in my study had good friends who they laughed with, danced with and sang with. My data also suggest this. When I asked the question whether any of the participants had anyone they could turn to with problems, a person who would be there for them no matter what happened, the girls answered female relatives, friends, Mmabana and social workers. However, only one of the boys said that he had someone special who supported him; his grandmother. Two of the orphaned participants shared their views on support from adults:

“Sometimes we as orphans we don't respect our caregivers, so sometimes they try to guide us and treat us in a good way (...) If they love us, they say do that do this. That's the way to show love and care that you need, you need guidance and support”

Boitumelo, 18

A boy showed how caregivers can be both supportive and a source of stress:

“So for you to succeed as an orphan, it can be someone who is not relative who starts to support you. That's how you can feel the love of a parent and start to be serious. (...) [or] you can tell yourself in your mind that 'I don't care if they make me suffer', that's how you can go on living” Macau 21

When I asked the participants what they liked to do in their spare time that made them feel good about themselves, almost all of the participants answered hanging out with friends.

“If I'm with my friends, this is my friends [points to Kagiso and Lerato], then I'm happy” Goitsmedime, 22

“Go out looking for relatives to talk with, cousins, friends. Dance.” Mpho, 19

Some (especially the boys) connected this to an activity like playing football or dance and drama.

“We spend most of our time in drama and traditional dance because that is (...) what we do best” Mogorosi, 26

One of the orphaned girls mentioned her boyfriend as a great source of support for her, in different ways:

“My boyfriend can help me, and other times he can give me some money to buy stuff I need. Because I don't have a mum that can do that” Goitsmedime, 22

One of the non-orphaned participants argued that the individuals also had some responsibility when it came to getting support, in this case support from organisations:

“The main issue is to be involved in society. Societies that would advocate for youth not to be wandering about in the streets” Mogorosi, 26

One of the Ark-graduates mentioned Ark n'Mark as his greatest source of support:

“I have faith in myself. And that faith is built by the Ark (...) group. That's true.

Because the moment I came back from the program I saw things different” Macau, 21

When asking *Mmabana* if she saw any difference between those who had been through Ark for Children and those who hadn't, she said that there was a big difference. For example, the Ark-graduates were well-informed on where they could get help and support in the community if they had some issues that needed handling. She further explained this:

“Those that have gone through Ark, they are able to stand for themselves, they are able to initiate things for themselves, so that even if they don't pass in schools, they can still manage to survive, unlike those who have not been through the Ark-program. In the sense that these ones, the Ark-graduates, they can be able to come and seek for assistance, or for intervention on their challenges from the Social Welfare Office. Or they can even go and meet with the counsellor, and then, for more assistance, maybe through Mmabana. And unlike the ones who have not gone through the Ark-program, they just sit, they don't know where they can get assistance from... Because no one has given them such information that they can use, compared to those that have gone through the Ark-program” Mmabana

Interestingly, none of the Ark-graduates touched upon this during the focus groups or interviews. However, during informal chatting, one of my informants (who was an Ark-graduate) expressed how he thought that Ark should make use of the extensive resource that he and his fellow Ark-graduates actually were. He suggested that they could attend the retreats and talk to the younger participants about their experience in life in general, and

especially with Ark for Children. When I mentioned this to the director of Ark n'Mark, she said this was something they really should consider in the future.

4.3.2 Lentswe la Thlolego

This program is described in detail under section 3.2. To sum up, it is a follow-up program for Ark-graduates who have finished school, where they learn how to take good care of nature and teach other community-members about this. It keeps the youth busy, and also gives them a small income. During my first visit to Lothlakane East, I was invited to attend a session held by *Lentswe la Thlolego* at one of the primary schools in the village. They educated the attentive children on nature preservation with beautiful singing and drama. It was obvious that *Lentswe la Thlolego* played a positive role for its activists. One of the activists explained what they did:

“They just take us for some workshops, teaching us some good things (...) Yeah, we are taught, after that we just go to some little wards in the village, teaching our grandparents” Boitumelo, 18

The Ark-worker who is responsible for the program explained how the program could empower the activists:

“It makes them feel useful. Instead of just staying at home. If they see themselves sitting with the chiefs, you know, and wearing that uniform. They feel like they are in charge. Like that time when we were giving out the trees, you know, they 'owned' that thing” Jocasta

She also talked about a small stipend that the activists get for their work and how it can help them in their day-to-day life.

“It is helping them, you know. Akiri, at the beginning they were just sitting at home with no job, with no money. Some of them have kids, you know, so at least now, the little money that they get, they can buy some stuff for themselves and for their kids (...) Because it keeps them busy, they don't have to do some other things” Jocasta

According to what the respondents says here, *Lentswe la Thlolego* is an important asset for these young people. It makes them feel useful, and as resources for the community they also achieve meaningful participation in addition to earning money and benefiting from the peer-group social support.

4.3.3 Feeling Successful

As reported under section 4.1.4, the notion of being successful is for many the same as having an education. Implicit in this lies the view that without education, one could not be successful. One of my respondents, who was a student at the University of Botswana, actually saw himself as successful through an educational lens, because he loved to study:

“I love to study, I love to read. So I take books and read a lot, spend most of my time in the library, so even when our school has closed, I go to the library in the night. Even if it's not part of my course, if at all I can enjoy to read something, I will. I do that a lot” Donald, 20

Initially, the possibility of being successful by doing something good, regardless of the level of education one has obtained, was not even considered by the respondents. After probing about the notion of ‘being successful’, some of the participants in the study also explained how you could be successful without necessarily having a higher degree. One of the orphaned girls said it as simply as this:

“To be successful, you need to be somewhere and something in your life. Being successful, that's the time you achieved what you want” Boitumelo, 18

One of the Ark-workers also explained her notion of being successful:

“Being valuable for others. It doesn't mean that you have to have a lot of money to help others, you know” Jocasta

“For me being successful means having an opportunity to do something that you do with passion, that you love. (...) if you do something that you love, and you are fulfilled, then you are successful” Jocasta

An orphaned girl backed this up in one of the individual interviews. When asked if she thought that taking care of others (e.g. sick family members) could make a person successful, she answered:

“That can be successful. It can make somebody to be successful, because God likes that. ‘Cause you're doing a good thing” Boitumelo, 18

Here Boitumelo connects the notion of being successful with religion and ‘God’s approval’. This implies that her faith makes it natural to act good, and ‘good’ is what the religion approves of. Two of the male respondents saw success as being acknowledged by the society around them, whether it regarded regular life in general or their passion:

“All I can say is that, for the student or the person to be successful, he or she needs encouragement. If they are able to speak up at a Kgotla-meeting, you are something. If you are able to cook and people appreciate that (...) that is also a way to be successful. You are able to speak, some are not able. You are able to cook, some are not able” Macau, 21

“For us, for those of us who are in the traditional dance and drama, we are looking for people to sponsor us, and people to show interest in what we do. To us that would mean success” Mogorosi, 26

When asking *Mmabana* what was regarded as successful in her village, she (not surprisingly) said that it was when a child had passed school. But after probing, she added that a child could be successful even if he/she hadn't passed school:

“Yes. Like, say for example that this child has not done well, and if they're taken to Brigades, they can learn other things like electricity and building that can help them be sustained in life” Mmabana

A woman in the VDC-committee in the village explained how they as adults regarded a young person as being successful:

“(...) such a child is one who even when they're walking about in the village or streets, they can be respectful enough to the elder and even greet them. They can't just pass an elderly person without greeting them. And even the way that they dress, they will dress appropriately. And even when they are with their age-mates, they are choosy of the words that they use to their age-mates. They don't just use any word that comes to their lips. They have to choose the words to address their peers” VDC1

She continued with giving an example from the village:

“A neighbour here, a child, has made like a garden. That garden there [pointing], it's for one of the children. And you realise that this child is trying to sustain themselves. And also sustain their parent, in a way that, it shows that they are not just living for themselves, they are not just going astray, they are on the right path that they have

been taught by their parents. All the time we find them in the garden, we never find them in the community just going about” VDC1

So this child’s actions and efforts in the garden are regarded as successful by the surrounding community. This child helps his family put food on the table, and a prospective surplus in production could be sold to get money for other necessities. But in addition to this, one can also say that the gardening can help this child avoid potential temptations (e.g. alcohol, relationships or negative peer pressure), by keeping himself busy with his garden instead of roaming the streets. This can therefore also be seen as a GRR used to avoid difficulties, and hence could fit under the next section.

4.3.4 Coping

When it came to coping with the challenges that these young people meet in their life many of the answers were closely connected to support and having someone to talk to. However, one of the non-orphaned respondents explained that using their talent could be an important property for a young person:

“You find that a person can be able to survive using the talent that they got. For instance using drama and traditional dance (...) These are things that can mould up a young person” Mogorosi, 26

Here Mogorosi demonstrates how group-belonging and the use of a talent, alone or combined, can be used as a coping strategy. VDC1, who talks about the gardener in the example above (section 4.3.3), also refers to how the use of a talent can be seen as a way of coping. One of the key informants explained that she often saw cases of youth who were thriving in the face of adversity:

“(...) there are a lot of exceptional cases, where actually orphans used these problems as opportunities to grow. (...) they just find that there is no other way than education. So they concentrate on that and they excel” Director of Ark n’Mark

Here we once again see the enormous importance which is put on education in Botswana.

However, I would like to mention that I confronted the Director of Ark n’Mark with whether she thought that a person could be successful without education, and she did.

An orphaned girl also reported on how she would cope with economic stress in her household, using the food basket:

“Ahh, you're just given a coupon, a card, go to the shop and get whatever you want (...) It was really helpful. [When my uncle] didn't have money in the end of the month, I just go with him, just go [get] everything, toiletries, food and this and this and this”
Boitumelo, 18

Another way of coping with stressors is to actually avoid them. This was especially the case when it came to abuse in the society, either in relationships, in school, or within the family. Some of the participants argued that nobody talked about this (see Mary’s quote in section 4.1.2), even though everybody knew what was going on. Two of the girls, when talking about abuse, said that:

“It happens, but it’s not talked about” Goistmedime, 22

“Most people just keep those things for secret” Boitumelo, 18

One of the non-orphaned boys also mentioned this when talking about abuse:

“It is not very common that you could hear of relationship abuse being reported (...) Because this person will be saying ‘because I love my partner’” Mogorosi, 26

Apparently, occurrence of abuse is something that should not be shared with others; it could be of fear of the perpetrator or maybe just to keep up a façade. Even though it might not seem very constructive, it can help a person avoid additional stress from his or her environment.

In addition to this, those who reported being in a relationship and getting help (e.g. support; emotional, economic or material) from their boyfriend might use this as a resource of coping with difficult life circumstances. As reported by Goitsmedime in section 4.3.1, her boyfriend could help her in different ways, thus enabling her to manage her own household.

4.4 Discussion of positive resources

Social support can be defined as the existence or availability of one or more persons who let an individual know that he/she is cared about, valued, and loved (136, 210). It is argued that “social support (a) contributes to positive adjustment and personal development and (b) provides a buffer against the effects of stress” (136, p. 127). Evidence from research has shown that perceived availability of social support is directly linked with fewer symptoms of trauma (211). From this we can develop a (maybe redundant) argument on the enormous importance of social support for young people grieving losses, and for young people in general for that matter.

In my study all the girls, but only one boy, reported to have someone special they could share anything with. I found the gender-differences when it came to this question interesting, and the wider literature gives some explanations. One reason could be that men in patriarchal societies are socialized into being self-reliant, to not show emotions and not seek help in times of need or stress (142, 143). This can be difficult for boys, as WHO states that “they may, in fact, desire greater connection with their parents or other adults but find themselves unable to express this desire because of social sanction against boys’ expression of emotional need and

vulnerability” (143, p. 16). In contrast, girls are often more engaged in using their social network, and the literature suggests that women are more likely than men to both provide and receive social support (67).

One of the girls mentioned her boyfriend as a great source of support for her, even though she wouldn't call him 'her special person' who she could turn to with any problem. Instead she mentioned her friends. From this one might conclude that the help she gets from her boyfriend is mainly economic. The research in this area points in the same direction, that economic benefits are of significance for girls in SSA when entering a relationship (see 212 for an excellent review). Luke states that “[g]ifts have become a symbol of the girl's worth and a man's interest, and girls feel offended if they do not receive something in return for sex” (212, p. 73).

One of the non-orphaned boys was strongly advocating for how organisations could play an important role in supporting young people. It is argued that “alcohol abuse among youth in Botswana is attributed to the lack of recreational and sporting activities” (107, p. 189), and this supports my finding. Also, there is literature suggesting that leisure activities can benefit health through buffering personal stress which is created by life circumstances (213).

Some of the orphaned participants also reported that Ark for Children and the associated program *Lentswe la Thlolego* played a big supportive role in their lives. According to Thamuku and Daniel, Ark for Children seeks to create kinship-like relationships between those participating in the retreat (74), and it is argued that group therapy is especially effective for adolescents (Christner, Stewart, and Freeman, 2007; Kymissis and Halperin, 1996, cited in 74, p. 3). The Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPPSI) maintains that psychosocial

support, and not only a focus on for example economic support or education, is vital to promote sustainable well-being in children and young people who have experienced trauma (214). In a report from 2004, UNICEF argues that “[s]ome of the elements that have been identified as key to the success of psychosocial support interventions are community ownership, engaging children and young people in planning and implementation, and tailoring activities to local cultural practices and beliefs” (Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI), Resource CD on Psychosocial Support for Children Affected by HIV/AIDS, REPPSI, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 2003 in 215, p. 16).

The graduates from Ark for Children have gone through a two-week long retreat, which consists of intensive therapy, where bonds of created kinship between the children are built and reinforced. After the retreat is over, a 3 year long follow-up program strengthens these young people with psychosocial support (216). They are encouraged to support each other during and after the retreat (216), and according to Baumann and Germann, this “can help them feel needed, esteemed, valued, and important to the community, and it can provide services to others who need support” (15, p. 127). For those who are part of *Lentswe la Thlolego*, this also plays a supportive role in their daily lives. To feel part of and ownership for a program can be a health-enhancing factor, in addition to the stipend they get for the job. Gillies argues that an important factor of the success of health promotion initiatives is the extent to which they are able to assemble existing sources of social capital or inspire new sources of social capital (217). Therefore, one could argue that the knowledge these young people acquire during retreats, follow-up, and in *Lentswe la Thlolego* should be put to use in community development, benefiting the community (218).

Even though the youth, and others in the society, put emphasis on education in order to be regarded as successful, many of my participants reported feeling successful in other ways as well, for example when being praised by others for a task they did well. This can also be found in the wider literature on the topic. According to Gaines et. al, a person's sense of self is a social creation; we acquire a self-knowledge based on others appraisal of us (219). They further write that “[s]ocial comparisons are often used to define success in the first place” (219, p. 374), which means that emphasis is put on whether a person did well compared to others. So, to do something well, and getting acknowledged for that, can make a person feel better about one self.

Most of the research done on youth in caregiving roles focuses on their risks and vulnerabilities (220). According to Abebe and Skovdal, even though boys and girls in today's Africa more often than not contribute to the household they live in, they are still often regarded as vulnerable victims (221). However, in a study from 2009 on young carers in western Kenya, the authors find that “many young caregivers have the ability to actively construct effective coping strategies and to mobilise the social resources to them” (220, p. 594). This gives support to what VDC1 said under section 5.3, describing how a child in the village was able to sustain himself and his caregivers with the little land he had available. This is important, as the literature suggests that poverty and food insecurity are factors that might lead to sexual risk taking, especially among women (222).

5 Discussion of findings related to the Salutogenic Framework

5.1 Life experience

According to Antonovsky, “[t]he strength of one’s SOC is shaped by three kinds of life experiences: consistency, underload-overload balance, and participation in socially valued decision-making” (59, p. 15). These three components come under what is called life experiences in the model (see section 2.1), which is an outcome of the combination of stressors and GRRs. In this section I will use my data to discuss the three components in the life experiences box with regards to the participants in the study. The last section in this chapter will focus on SOC, and whether my data provide evidence on this in any of the participants.

5.1.1 Degrees of consistency

Consistency is experienced when certain behaviour leads to the same consequences whenever we exhibit it, and also when people around us respond to us in consistent ways. Accordingly, outcomes of different types of behaviour become foreseeable, and hence our lives will seem more predictable (223).

For many of the participants, their living arrangements provided them with consistency in their lives. Overall, most of them were content with where and with whom they lived. This is in line with the literature on the area, which states that family and community based sources of care are the best way to respond to the so-called orphan crisis (209). In a study from South Africa in 2008 exploring unemployment and household formation, the authors suggest that unemployed youth choose to delay leaving the home of parents or other caregivers in order to be able to access basic resources (224). Hence, in addition to consistent living arrangements,

staying with parents or caregivers might give these young people a more stable economic situation as well.

However, not all of the respondents had a positive view on their living arrangements, and wanted to change them. But if such negative experiences are consistent it may give a person a better chance of coping with them or develop appropriate strategies to deal with them, and hence strengthen that person's resources. This adheres to the concept of resilience which is "a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity" (81, p. 543). A good example of a girl with resilience is Kagiso (section 4.1.1). She was head of her household and taking care of her younger siblings in addition to her own baby. They were all physically abused by their neighbours, and since their father was still alive (without giving them any help whatsoever) they didn't get the food basket from the government. Still, she managed to get food on the table and take care of her younger siblings with help from her boyfriend.

Kelly argues that schooling is especially important for orphans, and that this can give them some stability in their lives (121). For some of the participants in my study, this is indeed true. For those who were able to finish form five and go on to higher education, schooling definitively added to the consistency in their life. In addition, the notion that education=success can lead to consistency for those who manage to finish school at a high level, and also be a motivation throughout the study. Donald (section 5.3) is a very good example of this in that he thrives through his education.

However, considering the general opinion that one cannot be successful without education, the time one spends in school can for some be very stressful. If we in addition put in the

factors of bullying (from peers) and abuse (peers/teachers), going to school might be a task well over one's ability to deal with and can lead a person to drop out of school. According to one of my informants, Macau, this would make your caregivers start to ignore you, meaning that you should take care of yourself. Combining this with losing the food basket (at the age of 18) increases the inconsistency in a young person's life, who now has to start making money to make ends meet.

The fast economic growth Botswana experienced during the 70s and 80s has now slowed down, and unemployment is one of the most severe problems the country faces on the economic arena (75). The most affected age-group are those between 15-24 years of age (75), the employment possibilities are very low, and a university degree is not an insurance against this (225). Literature suggests that unemployment is prolonged for many of the Batswana (75). In one way, one can say that this situation increases consistency in a person's life, and there are possibilities of learning to cope with this challenge. However, alternatives to make a little money like piece work are characterized by in-consistency when it comes to duration, predictability, and earnings. For example *Ipelegeng* will take a person in for only one month at a time, and then many months will go by before it is his or her 'turn' again.

It is prudent to believe that non-orphans, and maybe especially girls, experience more consistency in life since they still have their mothers. As I wrote in section 4.4, girls have a tendency to relate more closely to their mother than boys, and they are also better at both giving and receiving support from their social network (67). In a study looking into orphan care in Kenya, it is reported that mothers are more concerned with their children than the fathers (101). However, orphans who are closely connected to their extended family can also experience some of the same consistency as non-orphans. In a study from South Africa on psychosocial challenges and protective influences for HIV positive adolescents, they found

that “[a]dolescents who had strong family social support appeared to cope better” (226, p. 974). Thus, losing a mother or father should not be seen as immediately leading to prolonged inconsistency, as the extended family often is able to give the support needed by the youth.

“Moving towards adulthood (...) involves challenging rules, testing cultural norms (...) and navigating risky behaviors” (16, p. 4), which makes this time in a young person’s life inconsistent. Romantic relationships and sexual behaviour are closely related to this, and in Botswana, as in large parts of the rest of SSA, ideology about sexual intercourse is based on mythology and symbolic manifestations. Some scholars emphasize that polygamy used to be widespread across Botswana, and that multiple concurrent partnerships today is a part of the country’s legacy (227). Carter and colleagues assert that “[m]en and women may be using concurrent and other multiple partnerships to assert power, gain status and overcome economic barriers in gendered ways” (116, p. 829). In earlier times it was looked at as shameful if someone were having a relationship without being married, but these days no one seems to care that much, as emphasis is put on protected sex¹⁹. As early as in 1986, Gulbrandsen writes that experimentation with “sexual intercourse is highly appreciated” (200, p. 9), and even though young people’s opportunity to meet potential partners to some extent is under the parent’s control there are many ways to meet (e.g. in the outskirts of the village) without the parents knowing (200). In addition, a general fluidity of sexual relationships, extensive internal and external labour migration, and other social, cultural, and economic reasons, all lead to a delay or discouragement of marriage in Botswana today (116).

It was only two of the participants in the study, both girls, who reported having a boyfriend, and for these two this may add to the consistency in their life. Besides the direct benefits from social support as discussed in the next paragraph, having someone in your life that you love

¹⁹ Personal communication with Jocasta Bobeng, Dec 6th, 2011.

and want to share the rest of your life with definitively can lead to consistency if believed to be long lasting. However, relationships can also lead to in-consistency. Drawing on what was reported during my research, both boys and girls saw relationships as not beneficial, as it would interfere with schooling. In addition, both the girls and the boys had different expectations from a relationship, and many reported that chances were high the relationship would end with pregnancy, leaving the girl to take care of the child alone.

When it comes to gender differences in relationships, it is stated in the literature that “[w]omen are traditionally subject to male decision-making in the home and this is perpetuated throughout all private or consensual relationships” (34, p. 224). Preference is given to males in both family life and public spheres (207), and this can lead to consistency in the male person’s lives. Being ‘in control’ over girls and having a higher position in society, means that they might have a more predictable and stable life compared to girls. Even though efforts are made to change the traditional view on gender, it is argued that to change deeply rooted attitudes like these might take generations (207).

Support is important in a person’s life, and especially when coping with challenging life circumstances. According to Robinson and Garber, social support includes positive regard or approval, emotional support, social companionship, and instrumental aid (228). There exists extensive literature on how social support can act as a buffer towards stress (see for example 229, 230, 231). The literature also suggests that perceived emotional support usually would work as a buffer towards health impacts from a negative life event (231). It is stated that “the simplest and most powerful measure of social support appears to be whether a person has an intimate, confiding relationship or not” (231, p. 64). All the girls and one boy from my study reported to have such a relationship (the gender differences are discussed in more detail in section 4.4), but this doesn’t necessarily mean that they experience consistency. The *quality*

of support is important. If it is peer-support bordering on peer-pressure (e.g. towards substance abuse, alcohol, crime) a person might be better off without it. Instead, what is crucial is if the support is predictable, unconditional and constructive, meaning that you can trust the source of support to always be there for you, that the support will be given no matter what life situation you are in and that it is support that can help you move in a positive direction.

In the last focus group that I held, all the participants were members of a dancing and drama-group. Many of their answers on how to be successful and experience well-being were linked up to participating in such a group. They meant that this group and the work they did was what made them happy, and also what separated them from other young people who weren't leading 'good' lives (e.g. drinking, smoking, and roaming about the streets). I believe that this group could add to the consistency in these people's lives. To feel belonging to a group, to feel good at something, learning new things and challenging your skills can be seen as health enhancing (153). In a study from 2000 in Sweden, Mahoney and Stattin found that participation in highly structured leisure activities was closely linked to low anti-social behaviour (232). A range of other studies on the topic also shows similar results on how leisure activities can contribute to health, both for youth and young adults (see for example 213, 233, 234). Being member of such a group can be seen as a stable part of their life and hence contributes to a higher level of consistency. This supports my findings, and also suggests that young people from different countries, cultures and contexts can experience positive health on the background of being involved in leisure activities.

The same is also true for the Ark-activists in *Lentswe la Thlolego*. Having peer-support from others in the group, developing skills and being able to teach this to other people in the village, in addition to earning money, will enhance a person's consistency.

It can also be argued that many of those who have been through Ark for Children had a higher degree of consistency than those who hadn't²⁰. They seemed aware of where they could go for assistance if something happened, and they also seemed to be thriving in their daily lives characterised by school, household chores and hanging out with friends. Many of them (but not all) also seemed to have a close bond to the ones they went on retreat with when they first entered Ark for Children, hence knowing peers they could turn to with difficulties. In addition, during the retreat, these young people learned new skills that they can draw on in times of scarcity, knowing that they are not totally dependent on education to be successful (even though many of them stressed the importance of education).

As shown above, a number of factors link to consistency in the lives of my participants. However, to obtain SOC it is equally important that the stressors and GRRs in a person's life are balanced, and this will be discussed in the following section.

5.1.2 Underload- Overload balance

Underload-overload imbalance occurs if a person is not able to deal with stressors or doesn't experience enough stimuli to use the resources available. Balance is obtained if the GRRs available are appropriate to the life stressors (235). In this section I will go more deeply into the relationship between stressors and GRRs, to see if there is a balance between these.

The literature suggests that buffering of stress is more likely to occur if there is a reasonable match between coping requirements and types of available support (230), and this is also what I found during my research. E.g. *Lentswe la Thlolego*, which supports its activists with money, can help to buffer economic stress. Another example is Ark for Children. They give psychosocial support for psychosocial issues the participants might have, and increases their

²⁰ I choose to say *many*, as the second focus group I had with male Ark-graduates didn't go very well, and didn't yield very much information on this topic.

self-esteem/self-worth to enhance their chances of overcoming adverse life events through building peer group support (50). In addition they also connect the orphans with adults in their community who can contribute with help and encouragement if needed (50). These are all positive resources that can be useful for a young person struggling to overcome challenges in his or her life.

The strong correlation between social support and health was briefly discussed in section 4.4 of this thesis. Additional literature suggests that social support is important for health when unemployed (236). Also, leisure activity is correlated with lower rates of depression in unemployed (234). From this we can assume that the support the young people in this study get from close inter-personal relationships or peer-groups helps to balance the negative experiences with unemployment. For those who are participating in a structured leisure activity, that can also help buffer against stress, and thus contribute to balance.

When a child is challenged beyond his or her current capacity, or when their plan is interrupted, it can lead to a crisis (237). In a study from 1966, a group consisting of upper and lower class Anglo-Americans was deemed vulnerable towards stress in school. The stress was related to expectations to results in school, and beliefs about having a hard time to keep up with peers when it came to schoolwork (237, 238). The same experience was also reported by some of my participants. Social support from friends, family and other significant adults has showed to be important for how students deal with stress, and can help them adjust to their ever-changing environment (138, 239).

5.1.3 Meaningful Participation

Antonovsky writes that “if participation in decision-making is to lead to meaningfulness, it must be in an activity that is socially valued” (76, p. 93). Hence, ideally a person’s actions should benefit others in one way or another, and give added meaning to both parties’ lives. Baumeister gives a rough definition of meaning as “mental representations of possible relationships among things, events, and relationships. Thus, meaning connects things” (240, p. 15). It is argued that looking at young people as competent citizens being able to have meaningful participation in civic life is prevented by the emphasis on youth as victims or problem makers (241). Nonetheless, research has shown that when involved in decisions affecting them, youth have a greater sense of control, meaningfulness and connectedness (168, 169), and it is also argued that participation and commitment can lead to social well-being, benefitting both the individual and the community he or she lives in (148, 242). In a study from 2000, Sagy and Antonovsky found that the most relevant childhood experience for obtaining SOC in adult life was socially valued participation (77).

In the last focus group, one of the male participants argued that it was common to continue living with parents or caregivers because of the support they had given you while growing up. Now it was expected that this was to be ‘paid back’; that one should work for ones caregivers before moving out. This person saw it as a matter of course to contribute to the homestead for both one’s own and the family’s benefits. His actions carry purpose and value, and hence they are meaningful both to him and his caregivers. Boitumelo (section 4.3.4) explains how her food basket can benefit all of those living in the household, and describes how she is able to contribute with money to basic needs. Such an activity as she carries out here is definitively an advantage both to her and her caregivers, and therefore one can assume that it is socially valued. Thus, it brings greater meaning to both Boitumelo’s and her caregivers’ lives.

When looking at the nature-preservation program *Lentswe la Thlolego*, it seems clear that this gives its members opportunities for meaningful participation in the society. The program is responsible for tree-planting and preservation in the community, and also teaches both older and younger members from the community how to protect plants and trees and why this is important. These young people thus become resources for their community; they are gaining respect and are listened to by sub-chiefs. In addition, participatory evaluation of the program (as I observed during one of my visits to the village) gives the young people the opportunity to give feedback on what is, and what is not, working. Hancock states:

“Active participation of youth is essential to reenergizing and sustaining the civic spirit of communities. Through skill development in the areas of collaboration and leadership, and the application of these capacities to meaningful roles in community, youth can play a fundamental role in addressing the social issues that are destined to impact their lives and those of future generations” (243, p. 142).

Being actors in a program emphasizing forest conservation gives the activists meaningful roles in their environment. They have an agenda that can benefit the whole community, and are also responsible for passing on knowledge to young and old people, in addition to being seen as resources for the community by the sub-chiefs.

In section 4.3.3, VDC1 talks about a boy who devotes his leisure-time to his garden, where different crops are grown to help feed him and his family. Baumeister writes that

“Each person actively constructs the meaning of his or her life. You might devote your life to your children, to your work, to your religious faith, or to your garden. Such choices determine the meaning that your life will have” (240, p. 3).

Hence, the type of activity that this boy did clearly is meaningful participation, as his actions gives added meaning to his life in addition to his family, who reaps benefits from his achievements.

As discussed in section 4.4, women are more likely than men to both provide and receive social support. This is important when it comes to meaningful participation, because, as Baumeister argues, “[l]ife-meanings do not originate from some mysterious well deep inside the individual. Meaning itself is acquired socially, from other people and from the culture at large” (240, p. 6). So, to experience meaning you need to be socially active. In addition, to provide support to someone else will give added meaning to both the sender’s and the receiver’s life.

In section 4.3.3, Macau talked about how a person needs encouragement to be successful. This relates to support from significant others, which is discussed elsewhere. However, Macau continues to say that a person might have certain skills that others might not have, and to make use of such skills for one’s own and others benefit, is for me true meaningful participation. Having skills that can make a person feel competent and successful might increase that person’s self-esteem (244), and thus increase that person’s sense of well-being.

As we all know by now, education is seen as utterly important for every Motswana, and is the way in which (for most people) one can be seen as succeeding with one’s life. Donald (section 4.3.3) was one out of three participants who had continued education at a higher level, and it was clear the he really enjoyed going to school and learning. I also observed that he was a serious student, and that he was praised by the wider community for his effort in the educational field. When I asked the question if anybody knew somebody who was successful

from their village, his name was the one who came up most often. In addition, *Mmabana* saw this young man as a good example for other young people in the village. Thus, it is clear that Donald experienced meaningful participation through his academic engagement. In addition, Macau's statement in section 4.1.3 about the value placed on education, shows how this is seen as socially valued participation. Those who are able to pursue academic education can enjoy meaningfulness in their lives, which also can bring meaning to their closest family and their lives.

5.2 Sense of Coherence

Antonovsky maintains that people with a strong SOC will “wish to, be motivated to, cope (meaningfulness); believe that the challenge is understood (comprehensibility); believe that resources to cope are available (manageability)” (59, p. 15). This refers to how an individual understands the situation as a whole and uses resources available to handle the situation (61). The more comprehensively and understandably the person sees the world, the higher SOC they have. If a person manages to cope with a stressful situation with the use of GRRs, this will add to his or hers SOC. The more often a person successfully makes use of GRRs to deal with hardships, the stronger his or her SOC will be. According to Antonovsky, “people with a strong SOC, confronted with a potentially noxious situation, will be more able to define or redefine the situation as one to which they need not succumb, one that is not necessarily noxious” (235, p. 207).

5.2.1 Comprehensibility

To have consistency in one's life (see section 5.1.1) links with comprehensibility; to believe that the challenge is understood. This consistency enabled most of the participants to have a clear understanding of their situation and possibilities. Those who were still undertaking

education had clear goals for their future, and wanted to pursue education for as long as they needed to reach these goals. Even though none of the participants had permanent employment, many of them could take piece jobs to help them sustain their livelihood. The Ark-activists had a sort of steady, though small, income through the program *Lentswe la Thlolego*. Nonetheless, many of them saw their economic position as poor, and wanted to get a steady job and a reliable income.

Most of the participants were also content with their living arrangements, either with extended family, in school or own household. For some it was seen as a matter of fact to stay in the household after finishing school to reciprocate what their parents or caregivers had done for them when bringing them up. Others didn't have a choice, and even though their dream was to get a place for themselves, only one reported serious issues when it came to where they lived.

For those this applied to, many seemed to find joy, love and meaning in relationships, though it was discussed 'theoretically' by others with a more negative angle. The destructive effects of relationships often commented on in literature from SSA was not discussed during the interviews by those currently in a relationship, and the participants seemed content with their situation in this domain.

As all but one of the participants reported having 'a special person' in whom they could trust, it seems evident that they had sufficient support from their surroundings. This support was drawn upon to cope with difficult challenges that might come up, and could contribute to a better understanding of the situation they found themselves in

5.2.2 Manageability

Manageability is enabled by GRRs, and is linked with having a balance between GRRs and stressors (see section 5.1.2). When it comes to manageability, the social support network these young people have can play a definite role. Social support works as a buffer towards stress, and is an important factor when it comes to coping with challenging encounters during a life time. It can be argued that the girls have an advantage here, as it is claimed that they are better at drawing on supportive resources than boys.

To manage their life, different skills can also be important during the life span to deal with different challenges, whether they are economic, emotional or social. For example it can be argued that those who have been through Ark for Children (and also *Lentswe la Thlolego*) might have more skills than those who have not. Here they learn how to deal with psychosocial issues and they learn different practical skills like for example making jewellery out of things one can find in the nature. In addition to this, the kin-like support group they become a member of can be a great resource they can draw on in time of trouble.

For those who were still living with their caregivers, getting an own household can be a big step towards feeling that you are able to manage your life. This was a common dream for many of the participants, and even though the present outlook wasn't too good, it seemed like they all saw this as obtainable.

5.2.3 Meaningfulness

Participation in socially valued activities can lead to meaningfulness (see section 5.1.3).

Education was for some an undermining factor when it came to meaningfulness. However, one cannot ignore those who were thriving through their education and really enjoyed it.

Since meaning is acquired socially, through other people (240), and since education is one of

the most important traits in Botswana society, there is a high chance that these young people experience meaning in their lives.

Those who were providing for children or helping out their caregivers can also be seen as having meaningfulness. To work towards such a goal gives higher meaning to one's own life, but also for those around him/her who can benefit from this. Boitumelo is an example on this, as she was sharing the Government-given coupons with her caregivers. Kagiso could be another example, as she was able to take care of herself, her baby and her younger siblings, with help from her boyfriend. The best example, however, might be the young 'gardener' from section 4.3.3. He was not just living for himself, and this was what gave his life meaning. In a commentary from 2000, Stillmann and Baumeister argue that to enjoy meaning in one's life one needs a sense of purpose which means that on-going activities are seen as having an effect on future outcomes (245). They further argue that a sense of control over one's outcomes, a sense of pursuing valued activities, and a sense of positive self-worth all are needs for meaning in a person's life (245). Hence, it is obvious that Boitumelo, Kagiso, and 'the gardener' in the examples above all enjoy meaning in life, as they have a sense of purpose that gives control over outcomes, is seen as valuable and can give them positive self-worth.

Those in my study who were part of the drama and dancing group and *Lenstwe la Thlolego*, seemed to enjoy a large degree of meaning in life from their group participation. According to Correll and Park, this kind of group belonging can be seen as a psychological resource in an individual's life (157). Literature suggests there are three primary motivational principles for engaging in groups; a feeling of belonging with others, striving for mastery (fulfilling goals), and maintaining/enhancing self-feeling or self-esteem (246). Stillman and Baumeister suggests that feelings of uncertainty often are associated with a type of belongingness threat

(whether to a significant adult, friend or maybe even household), and also asserts that “the human strategy for survival depends on belonging” (245, p. 250). It is on this basis I would argue that participating in a group activity can enhance a person’s self-esteem, feeling of empowerment, and a feeling of belonging together with others. In addition leisure activities can buffer personal stress and thus enhance health (213).

To sum up this last section, it can be said that meaningfulness can be obtained through a value or activity that makes life meaningful, both for one or more persons. I don’t think the social aspect of this can be emphasized enough, and that the community might act as an inexhaustible resource for these young people.

5.2.4 Transitions and well-being

Derived from the analysis of the data and the discussion above, I conclude that the most important resource for the youth in my study to handle challenges in life was social support, both from individuals and groups. The participants in my study referred to having a friend or family-member that they could talk with about anything and get support no matter what. The different groups like Ark for Children, *Lentswe la Thlolego*, and the dancing and drama group often came up as important resources in the youths’ lives.

Such groups as those described above can equip its beneficiaries with important social, psychosocial, and crafting skills. Such resources can help enhance their ability to tackle challenges that may arise, and thus move them towards well-being.

5.2.5 Limitations

There are some limitations to this study that need to be discussed. First and foremost it is a fact that this was a rather small study, encompassing relatively few participants in a specific

location. However, this was a phenomenological study aimed at understanding the lived experiences of a small number of persons, and thus justifies the methods used.

Secondly, the different views my gatekeeper and I had on what it means to be successful can also be seen as a limitation. This might have led to a bias in the results, as many of the participants were undertaking education at the time of the study and saw this as very important for being successful. The same issue might also have laid the basis for recruiting participants, and when I had interviewed all those currently in school, there were ‘no more young people’ seen as eligible for my study by the gatekeeper.

The location, language and translation also provided challenges. As commented upon in chapter 3, the location for three of the focus groups was close to the *Kgotla*, a place saturated with traditional power structures, in which the youth might not have felt very comfortable speaking openly. As the participants seemed most comfortable speaking in Setswana, a translator was engaged to translate during the group sessions. However, as it turned out during the translation of the transcripts (carried out by others), the translator was rude to some of the participants, saying they were lying, and answering the questions for them. In addition, as the translator was a student at the University of Botswana and *Mmabana*’s daughter, she might have been seen as superior to the participants, thus making the participants reluctant to speak openly in front of her.

In retrospect, I have discovered areas I wished I had time to look into more deeply during my data collection. I would like to investigate more closely how the Batswana see formal education, what it means to them and how a regular school-day plays out. I would also like to find out more about the Brigades, their infrastructure and the role they play in young people’s lives in Botswana today.

6 Conclusion and recommendations for future research

6.1 Conclusion

This study has investigated the lived experiences of youth going through transitions in Lothlakane East, Botswana. The study was framed by the Salutogenic model as presented by Mittelmark, based on the work of Antonovsky. Antonovsky argues that to be able to move towards health, a person must use the appropriate generalised resistance resources (GRR) to handle stress in one's life, which will give a person appropriate life experiences for experiencing sense of coherence (SOC).

The study involved the organization Ark n'Mark, who trains social workers for Ark for Children. This is an orphan-strengthening program run in 10 out of 16 districts in Botswana, including the village Lothlakane East. The research collected was qualitative, and the data were gathered in four focus groups with 19 participants; 4 individual interviews with orphaned youth; two semi-structured interviews with key informants from Ark n'Mark and through observation during the field trips. In addition, my supervisor Marguerite Daniel had interviews with VDC-members and the local representative for Ark n'Mark (*Mmabana*) during her own research, and included some questions designed by me for this study. This generated some of the data that were used in this thesis.

My overall aim for the study was to find out which factors facilitate thriving for youth in a time of transition. The following were my research questions: What are the challenges faced by youth in Botswana? What experience do youth have of gender based violence? In what settings do youth feel valued, successful or supported? Which GRRs are mostly used to deal with the challenges? Can SOC be identified in any of the participants? Accordingly, the following are my main findings.

The life situation these youths found themselves in carried with it many and intertwined challenges. Examples of these were living arrangements, finishing school, unemployment, lack of financial means and abuse, which all affected each other. It was reported that it was common to use destructive coping mechanisms to deal with these challenges, like for example alcohol or sexual relationships. These relationships were motivated by material gifts, or simply to increase personal value among peers.

Abuse was seen as a common thing in the society, especially in relationships. However, even though everybody knew it happened, nobody would talk openly about it in the society. This might be closely connected to the power men have over women in the patriarchal society that makes up Botswana. In addition, abuse was also seen as closely linked with unemployment, use of alcohol and leading to pregnancy, thus increasing poverty.

However, the most interesting and surprising finding was how education was seen as a compulsory requirement for being successful in life. Almost all the participants mentioned this when I asked what being successful meant for them.

As schooling is seen as important for shaping and promoting a good life for all young people in the world, one can ask what this means for a person when dropping out of, or being forced to quit, school. As skills that are not covered by the academic sphere are ignored, dropping out of school can make a person feel useless and unable to carry out a meaningful and productive life, thus turning to destructive coping mechanisms like alcohol or exploitative relationships.

Even though the stressors reported by the youth might seem severe, many of the participants showed to have useful resources to cope with the challenges and transitions that affected their lives. Both giving and receiving emotional, social and material support were the ones most

often mentioned, generated through caregivers, relatives, friends, the food basket and Ark for Children. Such support could enable the youth to stay in school, participate in income-generating activities and have a sense of meaning in life through group participation. Having extensive networks, for example through participating in leisure activities, gives a person a large base of people to draw support from, thus increasing the likelihood that the support is appropriate to handle stress that might come up. In addition, to feel valued by others in the community seemed to be an important positive resource for this group of young people.

The participants also referred to different coping mechanisms when experiencing stress, in addition to drawing on social support. To having a talent in one sphere or another was reported important for a young person to deal with challenges and make the best of life.

Economic stress specifically for orphans could be handled with help from the food basket, while at the same time being in a relationship could alleviate such stress. When discussing abuse and emotional stress, some of the participants argued that it was not to be talked about, that it would be better to keep it to one self. Thus, avoidance can also be seen as an important way of coping with specific stressors for youth.

What seems to be the most important factor or resource that facilitates thriving for these youth is social support, whether individual or in groups. Such support seemed to be the most important asset for buffering life stress in the economic, emotional or social spheres.

The orphaned youth who had been through Ark for Children and the follow-up program *Lentswe la Thlolego*, seemed to really benefit from this. It was suggested that those who graduated through these programs acquired skills and information, which could also benefit the non-orphaned youth in the community. For example does Ark for Children create kin-like groups from which the young people can draw support after the retreat is over. In addition,

they are taught who they can turn to in the community if they ever need help. Such skills can be important to facilitate well-being for youth in a time of transition.

A SOC, which incorporates the sense of meaningfulness, comprehensibility and manageability, was found in almost all the participants. Though they all had different preconditions and life situations, nobody saw their situation as hopeless. They were all motivated to work for a better life; they understood the challenges affecting their lives and seemed to have resources available to overcome these challenges.

Obviously, those who were successful in education, which is highly valued in the society, were found to thrive. Besides education, many of the youth in this study used support from groups to avoid what was seen as ‘problem behaviour’, like for example alcohol abuse.

Positive collective activities with even a small stipend can make a difference. Such activities were both valued by the community AND had an effect on preventing risk-taking behaviour.

Young people in Botswana experience many transitions in life that can be difficult to handle, and such transitions may have many negative effects on a person’s life. As much research on youth in sub-Saharan Africa takes a pathogenic viewpoint, this study is important as it uses a salutogenic lens on young people in transition and their lives. Exploring positive resources in a person’s life shows what can move people towards health in a health promoting manner.

Encouraging this is important! In addition, the study has covered how the extreme value put on education affects the lives of young people in Botswana, an area where little research has been done before.

6.2 Recommendations

My first and most general recommendation is that when working in HIV-affected areas or with orphans and other vulnerable youth, scholars should focus more on what is working well

and why, instead of approaching the theme with a pathogenic perspective. To use the first method will give findings indicating which resources move people towards health, and thus promote health in a true way.

The orphan-strengthening program Ark for Children should be extended to cover all orphaned children in Botswana, as the work they do is found to be of significant importance for the youth in this study. It should also be considered if it is possible to include vulnerable children in Ark for Children as well, as my research illustrates how not only orphans could benefit from this program.

As my study shows that support from friends and through groups are one of the most important resources for moving towards health, valued, alternative and community-generated activities for youth should be encouraged. This could be leisure activities that might also give possibilities for income-earning, thus engaging the youth in positive activities and preventing destructive behaviour like 'roaming' the streets or use of alcohol.

Since this was a qualitative study it is not generalizable to other places and settings. Thus, I argue that more studies should be done on the topic of thriving youth in transition in other places and settings, to find out if resources for thriving are the same, or if they differ widely between different groups.

The extreme importance put on education among Botswana is an interesting future for further research. Such research could include the quality of the education, reasons for why youth drop out of school and what alternatives exist for school drop-outs. It would also be interesting to learn more about the background for the notion on how education is regarded the only means for being successful.

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²¹ Concerning web-resources, EndNote shows the date the article or web-site was accessed with cited and then date.

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Appendices

Appendix 1- Focus group guide

Date:

Place:

Group:

Instructions for me

- Everybody introduces themselves, while beverages are handed out. Me and Vivian go last, and in addition tell a little bit about ourselves and where we are from. Answer any questions they might have.
 - Warm-up exercise, playing cards and chatting informally.
 - Introduction of the study, what it is about, and why it's being done. Hand out informed consent, and explain it in short after it is read by the participants. The signed written consents are collected; they keep the explanation of the study. Establishing group rules.
-
- What are the challenges faced by youth in Botswana?
 1. What do most young people do when they finish Junior Secondary School?
 2. Do you know anybody who has continued education? What are they doing now?
 3. What is expected of young people after finishing Junior Secondary school in terms of living arrangements?
 4. If you know anybody who moved to their own household, what do they do for a living?
 5. Do you know anyone who takes care of their younger siblings? Can you identify some challenges that are entailed because of this?
 6. What kind of challenges do young people meet after they finish school? How do they cope?
 7. Do you think it is different for orphans when it comes to coping or dealing with challenges in life?
How?

Why?

- What experience do youth have of GBV?
 1. What does it mean to be somebody's boyfriend or girlfriend?
 2. What does a person do with his or her girlfriend/boyfriend?
 3. Why do young people start romantic relationships or 'courting'?
 4. What do boys expect from a relationship?
 5. What do girls expect from a relationship?
 6. What happens when the boy and the girl want different things from a relationship?
 7. Do you know of anyone who has experienced being beaten or forced to have sex from her boyfriend?
 8. What do you understand by the word 'abuse'?
 9. Can you think of someone who has been abused by an adult from their family, from school or from the community? Is this, in your view, a common thing?
 10. In your opinion, are orphans more vulnerable to abuse and violence (in relationships or from other people) than other youth? Why (why not) is this?

- In what settings do youth feel:
 - Valued?
 - Successful?
 - Supported?
 1. What kind of activities makes you feel good about yourself?
 2. What do you do to have fun?
 3. What does it mean to be successful?
 4. Are there any situations you actively seek to feel successful?
 5. In your experience, can youth confide to friends/peers when it comes to emotional issues?
 6. Do any of you have a special person that you know accepts you no matter what?
 7. Do you know any orphans who seem to cope well in their lives?
 8. Do you know what makes them feel good about themselves?

Closing questions

1. I am so thankful that you have taken the time to tell me about your life in Lothlakane East, and something about your feelings about your life! Can you think of any questions I should have asked, in order to get a fair understanding of you and your situation?

2. Now we have come near to the end, and I wonder if you have any questions you would like to ask me?

Appendix 2- Interview guide, Key Informant LE

Interview guide key informant LE, 12 august.

1. When you lost you parent(s), what was the most extreme change in your life?
2. How is your current living arrangement?
3. How will you say being an orphan has affected your life as a teenager and youth?
4. Do you (or your siblings) get the food basket from the government? How does this food basket help you?
5. Who can you turn to when you have problems?
6. Can you think of anything else than education or school that makes a person successful?
7. In what way(s) has Ark for Children affected your life?

Appendix 3- Interview guide, Director of Ark n'Mark

Interview-guide, Director of Ark n'Mark

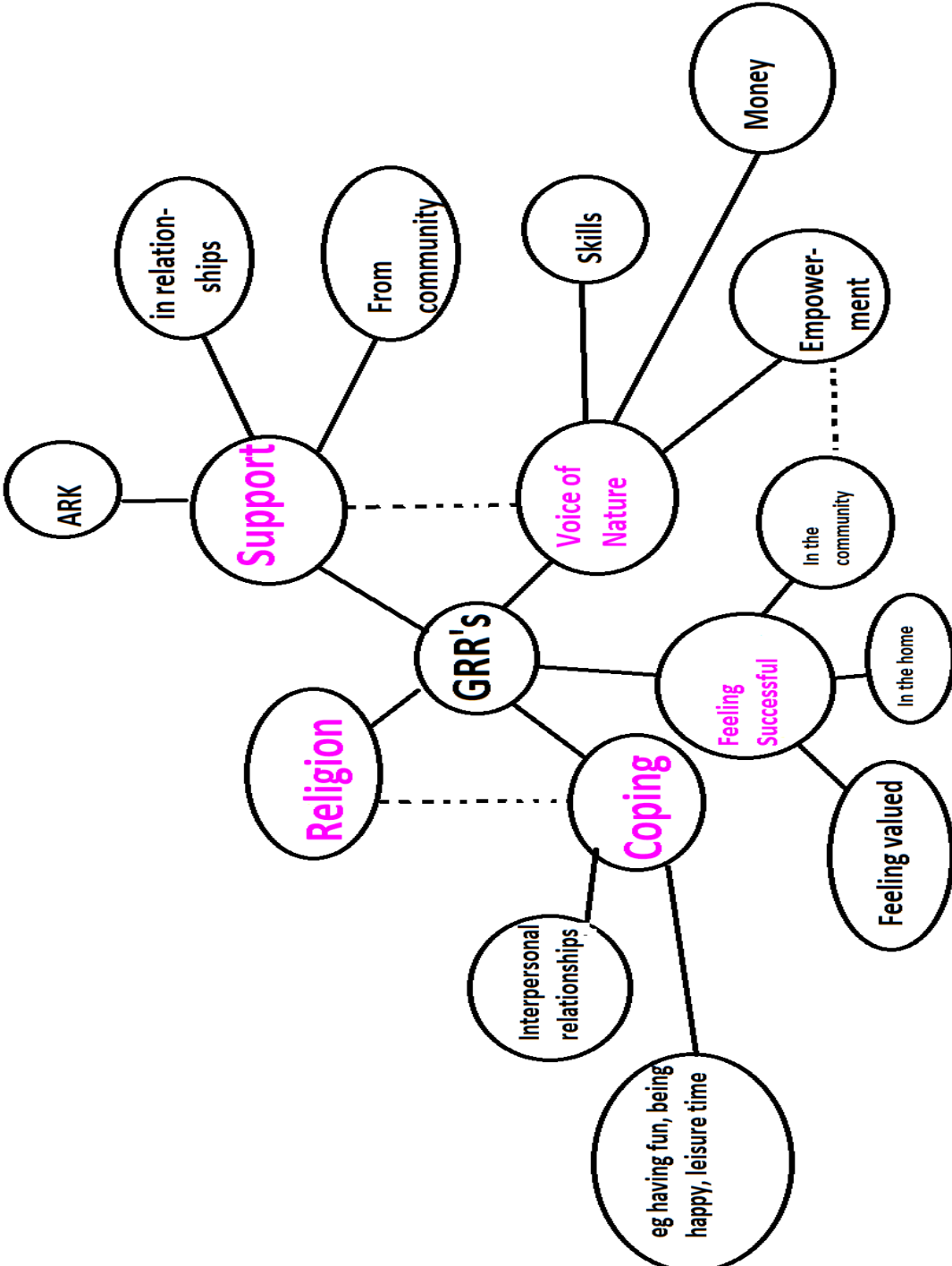
1. Can you describe for me what happens on an Ark-retreat?
2. Do you see any differences in the children after the retreat is over? What? Why do you think these changes occur?
3. What do you think is the difference between an orphan who is doing well and an orphan who is not?
4. Have you thought about using former Ark-graduates to share their experiences during retreats?
5. What do you think is the biggest challenge for young people after finishing school? How do they cope?
6. What does the word abuse mean to you?
7. Do you think this happens a lot in schools, home, or community?
8. Do you think education is important to be deemed successful? Why/ why not?
9. Can you think of a person who you think is successful, that doesn't have education?
10. How does the community appreciate these?
11. Do you think orphans have a more difficult time coping with challenges in life than non-orphans?

Appendix 4- Interview guide, Jocasta

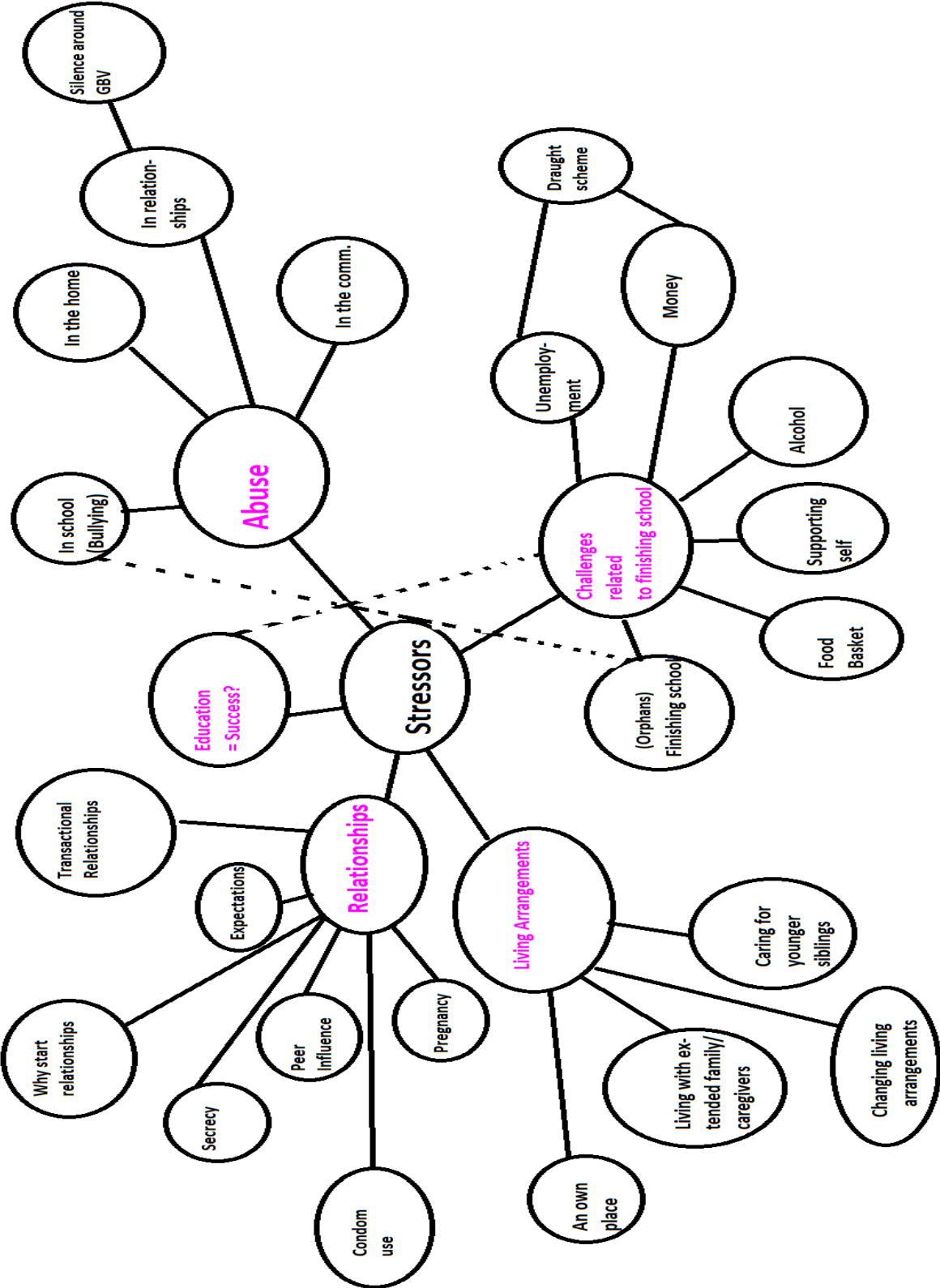
Interview guide- Key Informant from Ark n'Mark

1. What happen on an Ark-retreat? How are the orphans recruited?
2. What does your program entail? (Lentswe la Thlolego)
3. How are the activists recruited? Do they have to meet some specific criteria?
4. How do you think being an Ark-activist affects their lives?
5. How is the Mmabana selected?
6. What is her role in this project?
7. What challenges do you think young people of Botswana face today?
8. Do you think orphans have different/more/less challenges than other youth? Any examples?
9. How do you think Ark n'Mark affects these young people's lives?
10. Why do you think it is that every time I ask someone about what being successful is, they come up with education?
11. Can you think of any other means of being successful apart from education?
12. Do you think abuse is a common thing here in Botswana? Any examples?
13. Why do you think this happens?
14. Do you think orphans are more vulnerable to abuse than other young people? Why?
15. Can you think of anything that I haven't asked you, that I should have asked you, to get a good understanding about how it is to be young in Botswana today?

Appendix 5- Thematic network of GRRs



Appendix 6- Thematic network of Stressors



Appendix 7- Research permit NSD

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES



Marguerite Daniel
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www.nsd.uib.no
Org.nr. 985 321 884

Vår dato: 22.06.2011

Vår ref: 27149 / 3 / MSS

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

KVITTERING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 03.05.2011. All nødvendig informasjon om prosjektet forelå i sin helhet 20.06.2011. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

27149	<i>Thriving in a Time of Transition: Orphaned Youth in Lothlakane East, Botswana</i>
Behandlingsansvarlig	Universitetet i Bergen, ved institusjonens overste leder
Daglig ansvarlig	Marguerite Daniel
Student	Ingvild Marie Kvissellien

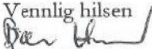
Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, eventuelle kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven/-helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/forsk_stud/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/prosjektoversikt.jsp>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 31.05.2012, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Bjørn Henrichsen


Marie Strand Schildmann

Kontaktperson: Marie Strand Schildmann tlf: 55 58 31 52
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering
Kopi: Ingvild Marie Kvissellien, Møllendalsveien 65 B, leil 302, 5009 BERGEN

Avdelingskontorer / District Offices:

OSLO: NSD, Universitetet i Oslo, Postboks 1055 Blindern, 0316 Oslo. Tel: +47-22 85 52 11. nsd@uio.no
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TROMSØ: NSD, HSL, Universitetet i Tromsø, 9037 Tromsø. Tel: +47-77 64 43 36. martin-arne.andersen@uit.no

Appendix 8- Research permit MLG

TELEPHONE:3658400
TELEGRAMS:
REFERENCE:CLG14/14/3/1/XX (55)
FAX:3952382/3952384



MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
PRIVATE BAG 006
GABORONE
BOTSWANA

REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

May 24, 2011.

Ms. Ingvild Marie Kvissellien
Mollendalsveien 65B, Leilighet 302
5009 Bergen
NORWAY

Dear Madam,

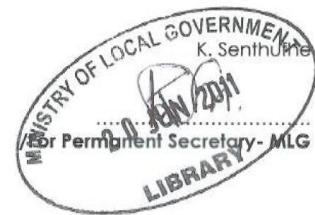
RE: RESEARCH PERMIT

This serves to acknowledge your application for a research permit in order to carry out a study entitled "**Thriving in a Time of Transition: Orphaned Youth in Lofihakane East, Botswana**".

The permit is valid for a period of four (4) months – commencing on May 24, 2011 to September 24, 2011 – and it is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. Copies of the final product of the study are to be directly deposited with the Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, National Archives and Record Services, National Library Service and University of Botswana Library.
2. The permit does not give you authority to enter any premises, private establishment or protected areas. Permission for such entry should be negotiated with those concerned.
3. You conduct your study according to particulars furnished in application you submitted taking into account the above conditions.
4. Failure to comply with any of the above stipulated conditions will result in the immediate cancellation of the permit.

Yours Faithfully,



cc: PS, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
PS, Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs
PS, Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture
Director, National Archives and Records Services
Director, National Library Service
Director, Research and Development, University of Botswana.

Appendix 9- Informed consent form

Explanation of the study for participants

My name is Ingvild Kvissellien, and I am a Masters student at the University of Bergen, Norway.

This study is about how young people in Botswana cope with challenges in their life. It looks directly into if there is any difference between orphans who has graduated through Ark for Children, orphans who haven't been through this program, and non-orphans in coping styles. Being a youth is difficult, and I want to discuss with you what you think is important for a youth to live a good life.

This research will involve your participation in a group discussion that will take about one and a half hour. It might happen that I will ask you to participate in a one-on-one interview after the group session has ended.

A summary of the findings (no direct quotes) will be given back to Ark n'Mark and to your village in June 2012.

Your experiences in life at your age can give important information to the study, but you do not have to share any information you are not comfortable giving. If you agree to participate, your name will not be used in the final report, and it will not be possible to trace who said what. I will keep all this information from the focus groups and interviews to myself, and I will not pass it on to anybody in the community. Recordings of the group sessions will be destroyed right after they have been transcribed (written down). My supervisor will read the transcripts. The documents where the recordings have been written down will be destroyed 31st of May 2014, as I might want to use the data for publishing articles.

There will be no direct benefit to you, but if you agree to participate it will help us understand what factors are important in coping with your challenges. This information might help youth in the same situation as you to a better life.

If you agree to participate in the study, you are free to withdraw at any time. You can also refuse to answer any of the questions asked of you.

If you agree to participate, please read and sign the statement below.

Thank you for your co-operation,

Ingvild Kvissellien

Written consent

The purpose of the study has been explained to me, and I understand what it is about. If I participate, this will involve one group session and possibly one individual interview.

It has also been made clear that if I participate in this study, my personal name will not be reported, and it will be impossible to trace who said what. Nothing that is discussed or said in the group-sessions will be passed on to others in the community. Recordings of the group sessions will be destroyed after they have been written down.

I am aware that I can withdraw at any time during the study, and also that I can refuse to answer any of the questions asked of me.

Name:

Signature:

Date: