

STORIES OF HOPE: A COMMUNITY ENDEAVOR TO PROMOTE COLLEGE ACCESS
WITH RURAL YOUTHS IN BENUE STATE OF NIGERIA

by

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Abstract

This study is about understanding the experiences of some of the youths who participated in the NeboReach Youth Empowerment Project (NYEP) and their parents, and how their experiences inform the understanding of the researcher, of her own experiences with regards to educational access, and the interpretations of those experiences retrospectively.

The NYEP was initiated by the researcher in 2005 in Katsina-Ala, a rural town in Benue State of Nigeria with the goal to promote access to tertiary education for out of school secondary school leavers who aspire to further their education. The motivation for initiating the project was enhanced by the fact that the researcher had experienced some difficulties with educational access as a girl-child in a Nigerian rural town of Kwajafa, in the 1960's. Eighteen youths participated in the NYEP in a span of 10 years (2005-2014). After six years of operation, there was an evidence of a positive appraisal for the project, as the researcher continued to receive texts while in Vancouver from youths in Katsina-Ala who wanted to enrol in the project for the first time. This suggested that there was a need for the project to continue, and to expand. Hence feedback from NYEP youth participants and their parents, regarding the relevance of the project became crucial. The auto-ethnography method was used in this study, and data was collected through reflexive dyadic interviews with six youths and five parents. The community leader also participated in the study.

Other sources of data were used—such as journal entries, informal conversations, photographs and videos. The researcher's experience, with regards to accessing tertiary education was also considered as part of the data. Research participants' informal

conversations with the researcher were regarded as valuable sources of data as the formal interviews. The findings revealed that the greatest hurdles the NYEP youths faced, and are still facing in terms of accessing tertiary education are associated with poverty (both of financial resources and money generating ideas), corruption and rural living. All youths said that NYEP helped them—some to access tertiary education and others to establish their businesses—and for some, both.

Preface

This dissertation is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, M. Orkar. This dissertation is covered by UBC Ethics Certificate number H13-01382.

Table of Contents

Abstract-----	ii
Preface-----	iv
Table of Contents-----	v
List of Tables-----	vii
Acknowledgements-----	viii
Dedication-----	ix
Chapter 1 Introduction-----	1
1.1 Initial Contact with NYEP Participants-----	1
1.2 My Personal Story-----	7
1.3 The Research Questions-----	10
1.4 Terms Used in the Study-----	11
1.5 Theoretical Perspectives-----	14
1.6 Justification for the Study-----	30
1.7 Conceptual Framework-----	35
1.8 What is Auto-ethnography?-----	37
1.8.1 Critics of Narrative Inquiry and Auto-ethnography-----	41
1.9 Summary and Conclusion-----	54
Chapter 2 Background and Literature-----	55
2.1 Youth Identity, Culture, Gender and Class-----	55
2.2 Studies on Youth Identity, Gender and Class Inform My Study-----	57
2.3 Corruption and Economic Conditions-----	63
2.4 Promotional Examinations and the Role of NYEP-----	66
Chapter 3 Methodology-----	74
3.1 Participants of the Study-----	74

	3.2 Selection Criteria-----	77
	3.3 The Community leader as a Study Participant-----	85
	3.4 My Community Member/Researcher Dual Position-----	90
	3.5 Validity Issues in Narrative Research-----	92
	3.6 The Interviews: Participants as Narrators-----	94
	3.7 Data Collection, Data management and Timeline-----	96
Chapter 4	Methods-----	97
Chapter 5	Portraits of Youth Participants-----	109
	5.1 Summary of Findings-----	158
Chapter 6	Discussion-----	169
	6.1 Poverty in Nigeria: Rich Country, Poor people-----	169
	6.2 Reflections-----	194
	6.3 Gender Influence on the Study-----	199
	6.4 I believe in Destiny Fulfilling Miracles-----	223
Chapter 7	Conclusion-----	238
	BIBLIOGRAPHY-----	248
	APPENDIX A1 Interview Questions for Youths-----	262
	APPENDIX A2 Results (Youths)-----	265
	APPENDIX B1 Interview Questions for Parents-----	278
	APPENDIX B2 Results (Parents)-----	280
	APPENDIX C1 Interview Questions for Community Leader-----	290
	APPENDIX C2 Results (Community Leader)-----	291
	APPENDIX D Consent Form for Youth-----	294
	APPENDIX E Consent Form for Parents of Youth Participants -----	298
	APPENDIX F Consent Form for Community Leader-----	302

List of Tables

Table A2.1	Youths' Engagement with NYEP-----	265
Table A2.2	Demographics for Youths-----	267
Table A2.3	Perceived Self-Concept, Abilities and Aspirations for Youths-----	268
Table A2.4	Positional and Social Identity for Youths-----	270
Table A2.5	Gender and Class for Youths-----	271
Table A2.6	Importance of College Education for Youths-----	272
Table A2.7	How NYEP has Helped Youths-----	274
Table A2.8	Farming as an Occupation for Youths-----	276
Table B2.1	Demographics for Parents-----	281
Table B2.2	Importance of College Education for Parents-----	285
Table B2.3	Importance of the NYEP for Parents-----	287
Table C2.1	Importance of the College Neighborhood Association (CL) -----	291
Table C2.2	About out of School Youths and Crime (CL)-----	292
Table C2.3	Importance of NYEP for Community (CL)-----	293

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my children, and my grandchildren.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

We are important and our lives are important, magnificent really, and their details are worthy to be recorded. We are here; we are human beings; this is how we lived. Let it be known, the earth passed. Our details are important. Otherwise, if they are not, we can drop a bomb and it doesn't matter (Goldberg, 1986, P. 43).

1.1 My Initial Contact with NYEP Participants

Our family lived in the Government Residential Area (GRA) of Katsina-Ala for 10 years while both my husband and I taught at the College of Education Katsina-Ala in the 1990s. We had little to do with the “locals” as some of the “elite” refer to the largely uneducated peasant communities in the Katsina-Ala metropolis. The house in the GRA was allocated to my husband, Benjamin who was a Principal Lecturer with the College of Education Katsina-Ala at the time. However, after his death in 2002, I returned to Katsina-Ala, having received a letter of re-engagement from the College of Education Katsina-Ala.

I had realized that it would take a while for me to obtain a study permit to return to Vancouver for the purpose of completing my PhD program in the University of British Columbia so I applied to return to my teaching job in the College of Education Katsina-Ala which seemed to be the only employment option I had at the time. During this period of time, my family moved to a property we had procured within the college community in the 1980's. It was then that we lived in close proximity with families who engaged in farming for their livelihood

Having been raised from a rural community in Borno State of Nigeria, the college community in Katsina-Ala reminded me of my own rural community living experience as I

grew up in the 1960's. Most of the youths I grew up with were from families who engaged in subsistence farming for their livelihood. As such it was easy for me to adjust to living in this farming community, unlike my children who had been used to living in the GRA most of their lives. Within a short period of time I started talking with the youths of my new community about their experience with schooling. From my interaction with them I realized that some of them were not in school. I asked one of them—one who had just completed his primary school, why he was not in school. He told me that his parents could not pay his secondary school tuition. I tried to help him and his friend (who he later brought to meet with me for similar assistance) to get into a near-by secondary school by paying their fees in exchange for work on my garden.

Later, more youths came to request for similar assistance—most were secondary school leavers. It was at this point that I worked with the youths in my neighborhood to initiate the NeboReach Youth Empowerment Project (NYEP) which has spanned a period of 10 years at the time I commenced my fieldwork in 2014. This research study started out as an investigation of the experiences of the NYEP participants and their parents about their perception of the relevance of the NYEP. I had also sought to understand how their experiences inform my understanding of my own experiences of accessing education as a girl-child in Nigeria in the 1960's and as such this research is an investigation of the researcher as well as the researched. It makes sense to me, therefore, to use a narrative approach as the research tool in this study (narratives of my own experience as well as the experiences of my study participants) to access the benefits of co-creating our stories based on our personal experiences, as well as to bring to our common understanding some of the obstacles of progress we encountered which may or may not be peculiar to our circumstances

as rural dwellers in Nigeria. I hope that sharing our stories will prove therapeutic to my study participants, and to myself, and hopefully ease the process of our rapport building. I have a trust, a faith in a story that sustains me in my relationships with self and others (my study participants) in such a way that their stories inform my interpretation of my own experiences and hopefully vice versa. It is through story that we may come to know, through the story of the other (Lewis, 2011).

One of the driving forces in narrative research has been that narrative “provided a way to add stories that had traditionally been excluded from educational research” (Hendry, 2007, p. 491). Giving voice to those who have tended to be silenced through narrative research was/is seen as “providing a method for telling stories, giving voice to those traditionally marginalized, and providing a less exploitative research method. . . and held out the promise of providing a more complex and complete picture of social life” (Ibid. p. 490). In the same way that I seek to describe the experiences of my study participants, I retrospectively imagine myself as part of the marginalized population, except for a letter I received that turned things around for me in the summer of 1964. This is further discussed in this dissertation (see Section 1.2).

This is an auto-ethnography study of some of the participants of the NeboReach Youth Empowerment Project (NYEP), their parents and the researcher. The NYEP was initiated in a rural town called Katsina-Ala in Benue State of Nigeria in 2005. The main goal of the NYEP was to promote college access for youths who wished to attain college/university level education but were unable to do so for socio-economic reasons. College here means a post-secondary education which is not a university. These include Colleges of Arts and Science, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Colleges of

Agriculture. A candidate who successfully completes secondary school would spend three years to complete his or her college education. If a student gains admission into a university after successfully completing her college education, she would commence her university program of studies on the 200 level and as such would complete her university education one year earlier than her counterparts who got an entry into the university from secondary school. Moreover, a secondary school student who gets an admission into the university is usually admitted at the preliminary studies level which serves as a qualifying year for actual university entry. The underlying assumption for promoting college access came from the observed reality of the socio-economic conditions of this community—the obvious unbroken cycle of poverty which seemed to prevail from one generation to the next. One can argue that the low socio-economic status of this community is related to the fact that most heads of households are not educated to college level, and only people with at least college education are considered qualified for office employment. Having access to a college education should address poverty issues for some families in this community in the long-term since college education will open the door to the job market for them, at least so I thought. Although one's success in actually getting a job after completing college depends entirely on many other different factors, I believe that many people in the community would argue that if college education is made available to every youth in the community—those who wish to take advantage of it, the cycle of poverty should eventually be broken. It must be stated that although university access was not the main goal, it was realized by some of the participants as well.

Another important goal was to provide a long-term solution for the large number of unemployed, out-of-school youths who tend to revert to the “hire” business and subsequently

develop certain lifestyle habits that are beyond their means, resulting in increased cases of petty thefts and burglaries in the community. What is referred to as “hire” in this study is an arrangement in which the owner of a motorcycle engages the service of a “hire boy” (usually a youth) to use his motorcycle commercially. The hire boy pays the motorcycle owner a certain amount of money (agreed upon by both parties) weekly. In other words, the youth is hired by the motorcycle owner to use his motorcycle for the purpose of making money.

Having evolved from what was a simple conversation between me and two primary school leavers in my neighborhood in Katsina-Ala, Benue State of Nigeria, the NYEP has enlarged its scope to include secondary school leavers. A total of 18 youths from farming and working class families participated in the project over a period of five years 2005-2010. The youth participants and I endeavored to meet the main goal of the project through a self-help scheme which involved the manual production and sales of consumable items of foods, beverages and ice blocks, as well as recharging mobile phones, sales of recharge cards for mobile phone owners, and making paid phone calls for those who did not have personal phones. Monthly stipends were paid to participants from the sales profits with the understanding that a good part of this money would be saved towards college education.

This research is therefore an action research and employs an iterative process—research and practice are inextricably linked and continuously evolving through the examination of two major factors: (a) the extent to which youth participants are helped in realizing their educational goals practically and (b), how their imagination of some future positive changes in their current educational status was affecting their motivation to move forward in their educational pursuits. Through this auto-ethnographic exploration, my own

practice, my beliefs, my worldview and my personal experiences will continue to be examined “through the refracted medium of narrators’ voices” (Chase, 2005, p. 666).

Although the NYEP was still in its initial stages, when I conceived the possibility of this investigation, knowing whether or not it would sustain the interest of youths and their parents was critical. Already, the demand had been growing: There was an increase in the number of those wanting to join the project, or simply wanting school-related financial assistance as prospective participants of the project. There were also those who went through the project in the past and gained college entrance but still felt the need to be connected with the project for occasional financial support through the Youth Educational Empowerment Fund (YEEF). As one of the key administrators, I continue to receive messages from some of the participants requesting some school-related financial assistance as well as requests from non-participants to enroll in the project despite the fact that I had enrolled in my PhD program in the University of British Columbia, and was no longer physically engaged with the NYEP. Hence there was a need for the project not only to continue, but also to expand. However, there was no empirical study that had elicited the views or perceptions of the participants and their parents regarding their experience with the project—a basis on which decisions regarding the continuation and enlargement of the project can be made. Without such empirical evidence, any effort to continue or expand the project is based on mere assumption. People generally have a good assessment of their situation and are self-interpreting (Pickering, 2008). On the other hand, if propositions are generated exclusively by a researcher who is not involved in the experience being researched . . . we have findings that directly reflect neither the experience of the researcher nor that of the subjects” (Reason,

1994, P. 326). The findings of this study comprised the interface of my personal story and the stories of the participants of my study.

1.2 My Personal Story

It was a bright summer day in 1964, but it was dark, very dark—a wave of fear, a looming hopelessness began to creep over me as I conversed with my classmate and best friend Naomi Musa. She informed me that she was among those who had gained admission to the Provincial Secondary School Maiduguri, and asked if I had received my own letter of admission. I responded “no—I—did—not!” lifting my head up, as if to check my memory if I had received any letter at all that month. “How did you get your letter of admission?” I asked. “Mallam Usuman, our class-teacher brought it to our house”, she responded. I was speechless, and in shock, at a sudden realization that this news might well spell the end of my glorious experience with schooling. Naomi Musa knew I performed better than she did in class, so she also expressed her surprise, “I can’t believe you are not taken!” Naomi, I and a handful of others who sat the Primary Seven Common Entrance Examination that year, had passed it, and had been interviewed for admission into the Provincial Secondary School Maiduguri about a month before our conversation with Naomi. The names of those who passed the interviews were out, and I was not one of them.

My father had no plans to financially support the secondary education of any of his girls—a fact which he had made clear to his four wives. He did not say much about his inability to do so, rather, he only mentioned that it was wasteful to educate a woman. His rationale was that a woman does not do much to contribute to the progress of her family name; a woman would always end up in her husband’s house raising children. That was not a

debatable issue in my village in 1964 so I had no plea to make, nor arguments to put forth with regards to my father's decision in this matter. However, I sought for ways to defy this limitation. The only hope for me, as far as I knew then, was to get a free secondary school education by getting into the Borno State Provincial Secondary School Maiduguri. The other alternative was Craft School Maiduguri, but I knew that only boys were admitted into Craft School at the time, and most Craft School students did not go far enough in their education, as far as I was concerned. Therefore this news—the news of possible non-admission into Borno State Provincial Secondary School—spelled the end of my schooling career, or so I thought. This was very devastating both for me and my mother.

For me, I did not want to end up like my two older sisters —with no education and no income, except from their farm produce, and having not even completed their primary school education, all opportunities seemed to be closed to them. Besides, I loved school and my teachers knew it, I performed well at school and no one doubted it. For my mother, my passion for school made it clear to her that nothing but schooling could really make me happy. She could not imagine how I would feel if all her efforts to secure a chance for me to go to school should fail.

It became clear to both of us that this problem was beyond her financial capabilities when we estimated that the Naira value of all her cash crops (crops like ground nuts, sesame seeds, cotton and the like which were cultivated mainly for their economic value) was not enough to pay a term's school fees in the highly rated Missionary Secondary School in Waka, about 20 kilometers from my home. It took about a month of agonizing time—sometimes my mother and I talked about it, other times we refrained from talking; yet even when we were not talking to each other, each one of us was brainstorming about the problem

of how I would get a chance to go to secondary school. We resorted to prayer—sometimes together, and at other times on our own. I had been made aware of a God who answered prayers when as a very young child I had big sores on my legs that prevented me from having a good night sleep. I had then learnt to take literally the Biblical viewpoint that nothing is impossible with God, the creator of heaven and earth. I remember a number of occasions when I prayed to God in the name of Jesus and got my miracles of goodnight sleep. However, it was hard to believe that God could tackle the issue my mother and I were faced with then, but I remember that when we prayed together, we asked God to help us find a solution to the problem, and if there is no solution, his peace and serenity to accept the fact before us with gratitude to him.

About two weeks into this agonizing time, my cousin, Naomi Wakil, told me that God told her to tell me that my interview result was yet to come so I should not worry. This cousin of mine was not moral according to my perspective of what morality constituted, hence I thought God could not possibly use her to convey a message to me, especially that she liked bullying me on our way to school. However, to my surprise, I felt more at peace about the situation after receiving her message. One day, one of my teachers went through our community on his way to the market and gave a letter to one of our neighboring women to give to me. When I opened the letter, I found that it was an admission letter to Federal Government Girls' College Kano. I had scored substantially higher marks than were required to get into the Provincial Secondary School so I was selected for a Federal Government College. This sort of thing had never happened in the primary school I was attending, so my teachers did not anticipate it either. We were only familiar with candidates selected for Provincial Secondary School, or Craft School Maiduguri. The Federal Government Colleges

in Nigeria offered free tuition, feeding and lodging for their students, and those benefits became available to me by the virtue of this admission letter. I could not contain my joy, and to this day I still believe that this was a miraculous work of God. Needless to say, this letter of admission made a great difference in my life—it opened the first door to free education for me. There is no doubt that this letter is the reason why I am here at present, enrolled in a PhD program at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

As a mother, I have also watched two of my children, fully qualified for university education, staying out of college/university due to my inability to pay their tuition fees. I am not sure which is more depressing—the lack of educational opportunity for oneself, or for one’s children. It is difficult to say, however, it seems to me that it would be better for a parent to get some education so that the parent would be in the position to provide educational opportunity for her children. This research study provided an avenue through which I was able seek or evoke stories from the participants of NYEP and their parents by sharing my personal experience as I reflected on a momentary hopelessness at the realization that my experience with schooling would end at the primary school level. Even though my hope for schooling was rescued with a letter of admission from the Federal Government Girls’ College Kano, I still remember that moment of uncertainty and the fears that accompanied it.

1.3 The Research Questions

The main goal of the NeboReach Youth Empowerment Project (NYEP) is to promote college access among its youth participants. Bearing in mind my month-long agony after knowing about the possibility that my education would terminate at the primary school level,

and the concomitant effect this had on my view of self, my culture and the world, I investigated the NYEP youth participants' experiences with two overarching research questions:

- (1) What are the experiences of NYEP youth participants and their families?
- (2) How are their experiences informing my understanding of my own experiences and interpretations of those experiences retrospectively?

1.4 Terms Used in the Study

In addition to the general or dictionary meanings of the terms used in the study, there are other meanings of the words which are specific to the context of the study. The context-specific meanings of the words are meant to enhance the readers' understanding of the context of this study and may not be applicable to other contexts in which these words are used.

Experience

Dictionary.com defines "experience" as "a particular instance of personally encountering or undergoing something." In this study I draw from Dewey's (1997[1939]) view of experience. Dewey stated: "I have taken for granted the soundness of the principle that education in order to accomplish its ends both for the individual learner and for society must be based on experience—which is always the actual experience of an individual" (Dewey (1997[1939])). He held the notion that experience is both personal and social. Both the personal and the social are always present. People are individuals and need to be understood as such, but they cannot be understood only as individuals. They are always in

relationships, always in social context. In Dewey's opinion, one criterion of experience is *continuity*—namely “the notion that experiences grow out of other experiences, and experiences lead to further experiences” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, P. 4). Putting Dewey's viewpoint in the context of the present study, one can argue that the experience of being from a low socio-economic environment has the power to impact the NYEP participants' view of the importance of college education. Also, the idea of being from a low socio-economic class comes from the knowledge of other people in society who experience a relatively higher level of economic status. Hence, we are not talking about an experience which has an absolute value, but rather, a relative one.

Narrative

The term “narrative” carries many meanings and is used in a variety of ways by different disciplines, often simultaneously with “story.” Reissman describe “narrative’ in the following words:

Briefly, in everyday storytelling, a speaker connects events into a sequence that is consequential for later action and for the meanings that the speaker wants the listeners to take away from the story. Events perceived by the speaker as important are selected, organized, connected and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience (Reissman, 2008, p. 3).

Clandinin & Connelly (2000) wrote about the notion of “knowledge as embodied, embedded in a culture based on narrative unity,” (p. 18) and that *narrative unity* provides a way to think in a more detailed and informative way about the general construct of continuity in an individual's life. Narrative, then, is viewed both as a phenomenon under study and as a

method of study, and it is the best way of representing and understanding experience.

“Experience is what we study, and we study it narratively because narrative thinking is a key form of experience and a key way of writing and thinking about it” (Ibid. p. 18).

Hire

Dictionary.com defines “hire” as “to engage the services of (a person or persons for wages or other payments).” The dictionary definition of “hire” applies in the context of the present study. In this particular case, the owner of a motorcycle engages the service of a “hire boy” to use his motorcycle commercially. The hire boy pays the motorcycle owner a certain amount of money (agreed upon by both parties) weekly. The implication of ‘hire’ in this context is enormous on the hire boys, the general youth culture as well as the entire community. One known disadvantage of the hire business is that the youth overworks and overuse the machine to make his own fortune—by increasing his speed, and/or carrying more than one person at a time. He makes a lot of money in this way, yet he turns in some minimum amount agreed upon in the contract to the owner of the motorcycle. This creates other problems—the youth, now having some good money at his disposal with no burden of accountability, squanders every penny just as fast as he makes it—indulging in a lifestyle which had never been in the repertoire of his imagination before engaging in the hire business. As he continues the hire business, he grows more used to the lifestyle of reckless spending. On the other hand, the owner of the motorcycle faces problems of constant repairs of the motorcycle because of its improper use. In many cases, the motorcycle owner cancels the contract, and the youth goes without a motorcycle. He might then convince one of his hire friends to allow him borrow a motorcycle just to make a small amount of spending money, but his new lifestyle cannot be sustained with small amounts of money. In some

cases, the youth have turned to petty thefts, burglary or armed robbery in response to the drive to maintain his new lifestyle.

Subculture

The term “subculture” was originally used to depict marginal or underground groups who were seen to be different (often ‘deviant’) from a ‘mainstream’ normative culture (Nayak, 2003). In response to a series of critiques, more recently, writers have favoured postmodernist analyses referring to lifestyle identities, tribes, and club cultures (Bennett, 1999a). In the present study, the term subculture is used to describe the “hire” youths as a subset of the general Katsina Ala youth population. Most of the NYEP participants come from the hire subculture. Being without the opportunity to engage themselves with schooling, or productive employment, the youths often engaged themselves in the hire business—either as having an actual hire contract or as being a close associate of someone who does—so that when the youth who has the contract needs some rest, his close associate can take over the motorcycle for an hour or more to make a small income for himself.

1.5 Theoretical Perspectives

The motivation for initiating and maintaining the NeboReach Youth Empowerment Project (NYEP) is supported by three theoretical perspectives—gleaned from courses and other academic, as well as non-academic experiences in my years of study at the University of British Columbia. These theoretical perspectives include pre- and postcolonial African philosophy, Western moral philosophy and critical social theory. I will start with pre-and postcolonial African philosophy.

Pre and postcolonial African philosophy

Nobles (1972) opines, and I concur, that a key to understanding the African's way of thinking is to look at a kind of African psychology whose unique status is derived not from the negative aspects of being Black in White America, but rather from the positive features of basic African philosophy. I also believe that a basic understanding of pre and postcolonial African philosophy is indispensable to the understanding of the disposition, attitude and behavior of the African person, especially those on the African continent. I can think of three ways in which African philosophy is important to the present investigation:

First, the ethos of African philosophy cannot be scientifically (i.e., empirically) examined with current methodology, however it is generally believed that one way to understand the essential and the pervasive nature of the African ethos is to explore and understand African philosophy. Second, a concern with African thought is an indispensable preparation for the evaluation of the project in this study insofar as the African ethos is distinct from the prevailing Western ethos (upon which traditional psychology is founded), there is bound to be a misguided interpretation of the African person's perceptions, if it is cast only in terms of Western cultural framework. Third, African philosophy has an important position in the post-colonial world, as a challenge to the neglect and disparagement of African thought and traditions by Europeans. As Wiredu (1980) observed, Europe has been able to posit and represent itself and its contingent history as the ideal culture, the ideal humanity, the ideal history, by dialectically negating Africa. Following his argument, I assume that an engagement with African philosophy is axiological to understanding the cultural framework that underlies the world view of the participants of the NYEP and their parents generally and their perception of the NYEP in particular.

What is African philosophy?

Mbiti (1970) defines African philosophy as “the understanding, attitude of mind, logic and perception behind the manner in which African people think, act or speak in different situations of life” (p. 5). I do not believe that by this definition Mbiti means to suggest an entity or entirety of reasoning by which ‘African people’ can be represented; rather, I think that he is emphasizing the ‘collective consciousness’, the frame of reference that under girds the shared understanding and vital attitude of the African people. Whereas some foreign students of Africa have maintained that the ‘tribes’ in West Africa have little shared experience because each has a distinct language and customs, a closer look reveals that for West Africa, in general, philosophy was the essence of the people’s existence, and that the tribes shared one over-riding philosophical system (Nobles, 1972). Generally, it can be said that tribal differences in Africa were minor compared to the binding quality of their communality. The over-emphasis given to tribal differences by White investigators is thought by some social scientists to represent the anthropological or scientific version of the imperialist strategy of ‘divide and conquer’ (Herskovits, 1958; Mbiti, 1970).

The African’s self-concept

Following from the aforementioned it can be argued that unlike the Western philosophical systems, the African philosophical tradition does not place heavy emphasis on the ‘individual.’ Indeed, one might say that, in a sense, it does not allow for individuality. It recognizes that only in terms of other people does the individual become conscious of his own being. Only through others does one learn of his duties and responsibilities towards oneself and the community. In my opinion, and maybe other Africans on the African continent who believe in the extended family system, one of the most obvious responsibilities is to care for one’s family. The one important acid test of maturity for men is the ability to

provide adequately for their family, including extended family members such as parents, uncles, cousins and so forth.

There are some ethnic groups in Nigeria, for example, who still ‘welcome’ their young men into the ‘world of the adult’ by initiation rites. The Fulani man in northern Nigeria must endure an initiation ritual of heavy beatings by the elders of the community to prove he is mature enough to fend for, and protect a family, before a woman is given to him in marriage. This is done not out of cruelty, but rather, it is a version of ‘tough love’ that ensures bravery, accountability, as well as a demonstration of responsibility to the men of the community. Implicit in this ceremonial rite is the understanding that it is the community itself, not the individual person’s age, or physical characteristics that determine when a person has become a mature adult member of the community. Whatever happened to the individual happened to the corporate body, the ethnic group; and whatever happened to the ethnic group happened to the individual. Thus, when one member of the ethnic group suffered, the entire group suffered; when one member of the ethnic group rejoiced, all his kinsmen—living, dead and still unborn—rejoiced with him. When one man got married, he was not alone, nor did his wife ‘belong’ to him alone. The children from all unions belong to the collective body. The Ashanti of Ghana believed, for example, that the dead, the living, and those still to be born in a particular ethnic group are all members of one family. A cardinal point in understanding the African’s view of self, his self-concept, is that he believes: ‘I am because we are; and because we are therefore, I am’ (Nobles, 1972, p. 25).

Metz and Gaie (2010) developed the concept of ‘I am because we are; and because we are therefore, I am’ further in their discourse on what they referred to as ‘Afro-communitarianism’, a sub-Saharan morality which has its major strand in the phrase, ‘A

person is a person through other persons, or 'I am because we are' (Metz and Gaie, 2010, p. 274). They argued that this sub-Saharan ethics popularly known in the southern African cultures as *Ubuntu* is a strong competitor to typical Western approaches to morality.

According to Waghid & Smeyers (2012) the term *Ubuntu* is an expression of human interdependence which is not some form of essentialist notion that unfolds in exactly the same way. Rather, it is a philosophical position that (re) considers the situation of the self in relation to others. *Ubuntu* (in Swahili) speaks to the general African understanding of Human connectedness and dignity one has towards others, and by the same token expect from others, firstly to the cultural group to which one belongs, and secondly to all other human beings. Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1999) has this to say:

Ubuntu is very difficult to render into a Western language. It speaks to the very essence of being human. When you want to give high praise to someone we say, '*Yuu Nobuntu*'; he or she has *Ubuntu*. This means that they are generous, hospitable, friendly, caring and compassionate. They share what they have. It also means that my humanity is inextricably bound up, in theirs. We belong in a bundle of life. We say, 'a person is a person through other people' (in Xhosa *Ubuntu ungantu ngabanye abantu* and in Zulu *Umntu ngumuntu ngabanye*). I am a human being because I belong, I participate, and I share. A person with *Ubuntu* is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good; for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes with knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they are less than who they are (pp. 34-5).

Some African moral theorists concede Ubuntu as a way of living harmoniously with others or honoring communal relationships and should therefore provide a model for citizenship for African democracy (Metz & Gaie, 2010; Letseka, 2012, 2013), others question the idea that Ubuntu can provide a model of citizenship in African democracies (Enslin & Horsthemke, 2004, 2009). Enslin & Horsthemke, (2004) stated: “While democracy and democratic citizenship necessarily involve sensitivity to local context, their fundamental principles and tenets are universal. Failure to acknowledge this comes at a substantial price.” P. 546).

My general comment on the recent revival of interest by African scholars on the African traditional practices and African moral theories is refreshing, whether or not these African traditional practices and African moral theories can be compared with the Western moral theories as Metz and Gaie (2010) had suggested. What is refreshing, in my opinion, is that these African traditional practices would no longer be only classified under the list of the subjects of anthropological interest only. Rather, they may be accepted as part of the curriculum in the study of history and philosophy of education. As Okrah (2003) opined:

Because scholars have tended to equate education with formal school building and have consistently focused on the role of literacy and literary tradition, many important and interesting traditions (especially African traditions) have been seen as falling outside the parameters of “legitimate” study in the history and philosophy of education. This is unfortunate, for the schools have overlooked the inherent value of formal traditional education (Okrah, 2003, P. ix).

I see this state of affairs changing in the future of education because of the revival of interest in the indigenous educational practices and traditional ways of understanding and solving societal issues.

Returning to the sense of interconnectedness of persons in the African community, I would argue that it varies by degree depending on if one lives in urban cities or rural towns. People who live in rural towns are more connected to one another than those who live in the bigger cities which are highly influenced by globalization and western commodification. Some visible signs of how African people are interdependent in the rural areas include the way they build their houses, where in many cases there is no concrete demarcation of where one person's property ends and another person's property begins—round huts are built randomly, howbeit, everyone knows which hut belongs to each family. In that way, a parent may not have to get a care-giver when she needs to be absent from home, provided other adults are in the vicinity; all she needs to do is to alert another adult of her intention to be away from the compound giving a rough idea of when she intends to be back. Neighbors are so interdependent that it does not matter what one's station in life is—rich or poor, the conditions of the neighboring community would affect one positively or negatively as the case may be. Hence acting with care towards other members of the community is to enhance one's well-being.

Western moral philosophy

The sense of justice is a necessary part of the dignity of a person, and . . . it is this dignity which puts a value upon the person distinct from and logically prior to his

capacity for enjoyment and his ability to contribute to the enjoyment of others (Rawls, 1967, p. 139).

Utilitarianism and Kantianism are generally viewed as the most prominent forms of impartialist theories (Mendus, 2008). There are criticisms among philosophers that utilitarianism is too demanding. It requires us to sacrifice projects and ideals which are of central importance to our lives, but ‘there can come a point at which it is quite unreasonable for a man, to give up in the name of the impartial good ordering of the world of moral agents, something which is a condition of his having any interest in being around in the world at all’ (Williams, 1981, p. 14). By insisting on the impartial perspective, utilitarianism drives out the infinite scale of things which people care about and which invest their lives with meaning, and it does this by emphasizing the quantity of happiness, or satisfaction; hence the accusation that utilitarianism abstracts from separateness of persons. Kantianism is also too demanding, though in a somewhat different way. It makes rationality the locus of morality, and requires that projects and ideals which are not grounded in reason should be abandoned when they conflict with dictates of reason. From Kantian perspective the moral agent is essentially a rational being and ideals or projects are legitimate only to the extent that they are legitimized by reason. Unlike utilitarianism however, ‘the Kantian outlook emphasizes something like the separateness of agents’ (Williams, 1981, p. 4). However, by insisting on the supremacy of reason, and urging that reason delivers the same answer to all, it ignores differences between agents, and renders people indistinguishable one from another. Utilitarianism is indifferent as to who maximizes happiness for others, Kantianism is indifferent to the extra-moral character of the agent. In both its utilitarian and Kantian forms, impartiality requires that personal loyalties and commitments be sacrificed when they

conflict with requirements of morality (Mendus, 2008, p. 2). What intrigues me here is Mendus' (2008) following statement:

Although personal loyalties and commitments conflicts with the requirements of impartial morality at the level of individual examples, there is a deeper level at which these loyalties and commitments are the preconditions of impartial morality. If this is correct, then the implication for education will be considerable. They will include not only the possibility that moral education must be preceded by the education of the emotions, but also, the possibility that our partial concern for particular others should be nurtured as the indispensable components of a life that is genuinely meaningful and genuinely moral (Mendus, 2008, p. 4).

My claim is that although Kantian morality is impartial and has its emphasis on rationality it seems to uphold the supreme principle of morality that in some ways includes the importance of the emotions. At the core of Kant's ethics lies the claim that if there is a supreme principle of morality, then it is not utilitarian or Aristotelian perfectionist principle, or even a principle resembling the Ten Commandments. The only viable candidate for the supreme principle of morality is the Categorical Imperative (Kerstein, 2002). I here refer to some of Kant's expressions to support my claim.

Kant's principle of respect for persons

The notion of respect for persons has been and can be used to justify a wide range of ethical and political positions[(such as laissez-faire and welfare state economics, the right to life and to abortion, patient autonomy and informed consent, the right to rebel and denial of such right) (Porto, 1986], and finds its roots in a certain historical context (namely the rise of

bourgeois capitalism and the French revolution) and receives its most crystallized expression in the writings of Kant (Massey, 1980). His second categorical imperative is most succinct: ‘Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of any other, always as an end and never as a means only’ (Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, 1959, p. 47). This principle of respect for persons is conspicuous in recent moral philosophy, and some of his adherents believe it to be the regulative principle of all morality. ‘The attitude of respect for persons is the paramount moral attitude, and all other moral principles are to be explained in terms of it’ (Downey and Telfer, 1969, p. 33). “Right and wrong are the expressions of respect for persons—respect for others and self-respect” (Fried, 1978, p. 9) which is tantamount to Brody’s (1982) argument that there are actions which are the wrong things to do precisely because doing them show a lack of respect for persons.

As Kant’s work demonstrates, the original generation and the subsequent evolution of the notion of respect is parasitic upon a historically developing understanding of the nature of persons, that is, the need to answer the practical/ political question of how do autonomous, sovereign individuals, each a law unto themselves act together in a community—how could each monarch treat another monarch (Porto, 1986). Most philosophical theorist interested in the subject of respect for persons maintain that they are relying on, and developing a central feature of Kant’s moral philosophy (Brody, 1982; Downey and Telfer, 1969).

In *Doctrine of Virtue* (1964), Kant states:

I cannot deny all respect to even the immoral man as a man; I cannot withdraw at the least, the respect that belongs to him in his quality as a man, even though by his deeds he makes himself unworthy of that quality (p. 463).

To illustrate that this kind of regarding a person goes beyond the rational requirement of being just, I will give a hypothetical scenario between a rich neighbor and a poor neighbor (originally developed by Brody). Suppose a rich neighbor lends some money to his poor neighbor, and the poor neighbor is not able to pay back. First, on the account of the ethic of justice, the debtor could be considered immoral by failing to pay her debts as promised. It might also be considered 'just' for the lender to demand the payment of his money even if the debtor has to sell off the only pair of shoes she owns to pay the debt. One could further argue that the lender, by demanding the debtor to pay him back is treating the debtor as an equal. However, if the lender *cares* about the debtors emotional well-being the lender needs only to examine the situation to ascertain that the debtor is not able to pay the debt. Then if the lender truly respects the debtor in the sense that is expressed by Kant (1964) above, she will be more inclined to write off the debt to save the debtor from going without shoes.

The above example demonstrates that there are cases in which 'rights' are not relevant, but in which we are not to behave in certain ways simply because behaving in those ways show a lack of respect for person(s) involved. Also, it shows that the respect for persons principle as a basic moral consideration stands for more far-reaching implications than what is usually understood by the moral requirements of 'rights', 'equality' and 'justice.' It is possible to observe a person's rights, treat her as an equal, and be just in our dealings with her, and yet fail to respect her as a person. Hence Kantianism would require that we go beyond our commitment to social justice in dealing with every member of the moral community. This is not to downplay the importance of regarding the rights of persons in the principle of respect for persons. Indeed, it is generally agreed that respecting persons involves, at least, not violating their rights. However, if it is held that persons are to be

respected just because they have rights, or that respecting persons is simply having a proper regard for their rights, the notion of respect for persons tend to lose independent interest (Landesman, 1982; Cranor, 1982).

It can be argued that the ethic of justice is necessary, but it is not sufficient as a requirement to establish the need for the principle of respect for persons. Although Kantian morality is impartial and do not regard the particularity of persons, it seems to regard the particularity of the situation of a person, which in my view, involves not only rationality, but also the emotions. Moreover, an aspiration to act in accordance with the impartial principle alone, not only denies us of the contact orientation, which is a central requirement of the respect for persons principle, but also alienates us from ourselves, that is from those projects that are centrally definitive of ourselves, and which tends to enhance our own sense of self-respect. On the level of our basic human instinct, we are not principally motivated to do things for our friends and loved ones out of a sense of duty or justice. I do things for my friend, for example, not as an instance of a type to whom I have certain obligations, but in direct response to the particular person that she is. The demands of justice or impartial principle are not so restricted in scope, and there is no place in an ethic of justice for respecting the particularity of intimate relations. However, as Gilligan (1987) points out, we need both *justice and care* ethical perspectives in our private and public dealings with others:

All human relationships, public and private can be characterized both in terms of equality and in terms of attachment, and . . . both inequality and detachment constitute grounds for moral concern. Since everyone is vulnerable both to oppression and to abandonment, two moral visions—one of justice and one of care—recur in

human experience. The moral injunctions, do not act unfairly towards others, and do not turn away from someone in need, captures these different concerns (P. 20).

The ethic of care

When we are admonished to ‘take care’, we are being urged to be careful. Being careful or taking care in this sense often involves adopting a caring motivation towards the project at hand. This involves a motivational displacement. It involves concentrating on what I am doing and I am most likely to do this when I care about it. The admonition assumes that there is a motivational reality lying beneath the descriptive notion of caring (Van Hooft, 1995). Mayeroff (1971) places great emphasis on the attitudinal aspect of caring. He defines caring as helping the other to grow. He sees this not only as encompassing a set of activities directed towards the other, but also as involving a number of characteristic virtues. These include patience, honesty, humility, hope and courage. But an important new point arises when Mayeroff (1971) says that “the other for whom I care is a completion of my own personal identity” (p. 48). In Mayeroff’s view, caring for another involves some concern for the status for one’s own being as well. This point is reinforced when we notice that if one describes caring for the other as involving some characteristic set of virtues in the way that Mayeroff does, then one’s own ethical status is implicated in one’s caring and becomes a matter of concern to the one who cares. It seems that caring for the other is an orientation which is not directed exclusively outwardly, but also involves turning inwards.

Noddings (1984) stresses this point even more. Her discussion of caring refers to both professional caring and parenting. Although she also places emphasis on the inner attitudinal and motivational aspect of caring, she offers a model of caring which is dyadic. It

involves active contributions not only from the person who cares, but also from the person cared for. On the part of the one caring, there is an engrossment in the other. This engrossment involves a displacement of motivation away from the self towards the other, but one which is not elicited by a reasoned assessment of the situation or of the responsibilities which are inherent in it. Rather, it is the very dynamic of the dyadic relationship of which it is a part that elicits the motivation. On the part of the one caring, the engrossment is motivated not only by a concern for the one cared for, but also by a concern for the agent's ethical self. The person cared for contributes to the dyad by acknowledging the caring and by showing the one caring the growth and the benefit to which the caring gives rise.

Noddings (1984) above succinctly describes the relationship we had with the participants of my project in the aforementioned. Although my sense of responsibility towards them was not that of a professional care taker or a parent, there is an identity dynamics which engenders a reflexive sense of responsibility towards them, on my own part, in their situation as victims of poverty-related disenfranchisement from educational opportunities; I too could have been in the situation of the participants of my study, if it depended solely on my parents to meet up with the financial costs involved in college education. Through a combination of history and politics, I completed my education free—without personal or parental financial involvement because in my own university days there were some states in Nigeria where a complete package of free university education was available for all those who aimed high and persevered enough to secure university admission. Not many did so then, especially females, and it was relatively easy for my state government to provide us with free university education. Barely five years after my graduation from the university the situation started changing slowly, and at present, there are no government

financial assistance from any state in Nigeria for university education within the country. There may be some scholarships which run privately, and for a few privileged ones by virtue of their relationship to someone in the government. Usually, these privileged few are the only ones who know about such scholarships. The sense of reflexive responsibility described above sustained my efforts on the project when the most obvious feeling was to quit. The motivational orientation of caring sustained my involvement in a project which I knew has a capacity of ‘helping the other to grow’ (Mayeroff, 1971, p. 48). On the other hand, there had been reciprocations on the part of the cared for (the project participants), that completes Nodding’s (1984) dyadic model of caring.

Critical social theory

Although I consider it fair to claim that the sense of care had provided the motivation to sustain the project through the years, a compelling sense of justice, or the lack of it, had propelled the initiation of the project. As Wallis (2006) contended that “. . . a more appropriate way forward in lifelong education lies in developing a critical consciousness—a feature of education for the disposed in all contexts” (p. 1). He cites the United Kingdom as a case to explore the degree to which approaches based on human-capital strategies can contribute to resolving inequalities. Although he criticizes the United Kingdom for displaying wide disparities of both wealth and opportunity, he acclaims that the central plank of the British government’s strategy to equip the nation for the new world order has been a stress on education in general and lifelong education in particular, and assert that education is the only policy area that can hope to improve the situation of the nation in the future. In the case of the United Kingdom, its current policies can be best summarized by the comment of the Prime Minister elected in 1997 that his dominant three policy issues were ‘education,

education, education, and since then the education sector has been given pre-eminence and has been moved to the center of political debate. The expressed outcome of these interventions in quantitative terms is the goal of having 50% of all young people in higher education by 2010 (Wallis, 2006). Wallis comments above on “developing a critical consciousness—a feature of education for the disposed in all contexts” (p. 1).” reminds us of Freire’s [2000/1970] notion of “problem-solving education where men and women develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they see the world not as a static reality by as a reality in the process of transformation” [Freire 2000/1970, p.12].

The African experience with higher education

Coming to the case of Africa, however, it seems that education is thrown to the back ally of all political debates. Aboagye (2007) drawing from a UNESCO, (1993) source, compared numerical figures for higher education student enrolment in developed and developing nation, with United States reporting highest enrolment of 5,591 students per 100,000 inhabitants, and Canada following closely with 5,102 students per 100,000 inhabitants. In developing countries the numbers are lower. Peru has 3,293; Cuba 2,285; Egypt 1,698 and Malaysia 679 students per 100,00 inhabitants. Nigeria doubled its enrolment from 191 per 100,000 inhabitants in 1980 to 320 in 1990; Zimbabwe doubled its students from 117 per 100,000 inhabitants in 1980 to 496 students in 1990. However, according to him, during that period, Nigeria and other countries like Kenya and Ghana introduced cost-sharing measures in order to finance expansion.

Aboagye (2007) also reported her findings in her study of students financing in universities in Ghana in 1994, where she asked questions about the sources of income that students had and of the amount of financial support they received from sources other than the government in each academic year. The results of the studies indicated that 54 percent of the students relied solely on their parents for financial support. Responses to further questions inquiring how the parents were able to make the financial commitment revealed that only 7.8 percent of families took loan to support their children. She stated:

This is not surprising since my knowledge of Ghanaian communities is that distant and close relatives, such as aunts, uncles and siblings all play a major role in financing of the education of children. Instead of borrowing from financial institutions, households ask for contributions from other members of the extended families (Aboagye, 2007, p. 221).

Aboagye's (2007) findings are relevant to the Nigerian situation as I observed that every participant in the NeboReach project who got an admission and went to College managed to stay in College, even though their earning through the project was so meager and inadequate to meet the financial requirement of a university student for one year. They managed to stay in college with the help of some of their relations who are willing and able to support them financially.

1.6 Justification for the Study

As stated earlier, this study is an auto-ethnographic study of some of the families of the youth participants of the NYEP. It focused on the importance, and the concomitant benefits of college education and the significance of the NYEP to promote college education,

as perceived by the families of the participants who have been impacted by the NYEP. The community leader's opinion was sought with regards to the significance of the NYEP with the reduction of crime-rate within the community.

The researcher had sought the opinions of the youth participants of NYEP on certain issues—what kinds of money-generating projects, which involved manual labour, what sorts of commodities should be included on our sales list, and what part of town was suitable for the sales of different products. Also, parent's consent had been sought on behalf of youths who had expressed interest in participating in the project. The consent of parents for their youths to participate in the NYEP could imply some informed understanding of the relevance of the project to the community. However, there is a need for the researcher to have a formal appraisal of the NYEP from the youths and their parents after the youths have actually participated in the project. It is after experiencing the project that participants may have a proper understanding of the economic, social and cultural implication of the project in the community. This understanding will also form the basis for continuation and expansion of the project. Evans, Matola, and Nyeko (2006) stated:

In designing programs to reach children and families, it is important to start with a specific and informed understanding of the political, economic, social, and cultural forces at work in a given setting. This principle may seem self-evident, yet too often program developers or funders select a program model that has worked successfully in some other place and set about trying to adapt it to local needs. Often the match between the model and the community is less than ideal. The assumptions about the community may turn out to be inaccurate and misleading. In addition, the process of program selection has most likely excluded the community, making community

ownership difficult to achieve. Therefore, it is important to do a localized and participatory strength and needs assessment that will lead to a better understanding of the supports available and the challenges faced by families who are most at risk within a given context (p. 273).

Evans, Matola, and Nyeko's (2006) observations have some implications to the present study. The first and most important issue is that of community ownership. A triad relationship, in my opinion, should be established in order to make community ownership viable—the program developer, the program, and the community. Does the community understand and support what the program aims to accomplish? Are the members of the community convinced about the importance of the program to the point where they are willing to run it on their own, if the necessary resources (financial capital, in this case) are provided? Often, trust is built within the medium of respect and inclusiveness within African communities. I find this to be true with the community I worked with as NYEP developer and worked with as a researcher. Hence, engaging the participant families in dialogues in the form of interviews about the NYEP and its effectiveness in promoting college access will indicate to the community that their opinions are important in the decision to continue and enlarge the NYEP. Secondly, my experience in working as the NYEP developer suggests to me that the community appreciates working with a program developer who is willing to be open to the opinions of the community about the program development, and also willing to be an ally or a friend to the community in so doing. The Tiv people (the predominant tribal group in Katsina-Ala) believe that their ally or friend is a person who feels comfortable to come into their homes and eat their meals with them. Even though I am known to this community, I would like to engage the community in a relaxed conversation about the

NYEP— with the intent to ensure that both myself (project developer), and the community have a common understanding about the NYEP (project) and its goals. In this way the community members should be in the position to run the project when I cannot be on the project site. This research study played a tremendous role in enhancing this common understanding.

Thirdly, I have observed generally that starting any project is not difficult with most Nigerian communities. The greater problem is associated with sustainability. Hence the program developer has to make the effort to ensure that the points of view of those who would benefit from the program become central in the program development. For example, responses I received from the interviews indicate that the community is in favor of enlarging the NYEP. However, there was also the need to find out from the parents if they would allow their youths to engage with the project even during the farming season— that is, if they want the NYEP to operate seasonally or all year round. The answer is not easy to find out just by asking them. One needs to see this in reality. I had observed that parents would agree for their children to participate in the project when the farming season is over, but would demand their children to leave the project activities and return to farming activities when the rains start to fall. Parents' responses seem to suggest that the extent to which they would release their youths during the farming season depends on the extent to which the NYEP can support the needs of the youths in the community. Adamu suggested that NYEP should provide something concrete which every member of the community can see and Adama added that this concrete thing could be a school where students can continue to learn when the public schools are closed due to teachers' strikes, which occur very often and for long periods of time. Chuku, on the other hand suggested that the NYEP could provide bore holes for the

community and students can sell the water and have money to support their school-related financial needs (see Appendix B2 in this dissertation).

Fourthly, this qualitative investigation will also throw some more light on the question of youth identity and how it is shaped by the material conditions prevalent in this particular context—culture, class and gender. Employing the auto-ethnographic method, the participants have the opportunity to express realities, sentiments and aspirations, the sense of hope for life success or the lack of it and how they perceive the NYEP’s potential to improve things for them. (For the interview questions and youths’ responses with regards to who they perceive to be their friends, their sense of positional and social identity within their own families and peers, how gender and class reflected on their educational opportunities as well as their aspirations and how they perceive the NYEP to have improved their lives, (see Appendix A2 in this dissertation).

Finally, Kearney (2002) has observed that, “Any consideration of the ways in which individuals engage in the process of recreating their identities, by continually reflecting upon their lived experience is largely missing from current research” (p. 42). This research study will hopefully contribute towards closing this gap. This study is a study of people’s experiences, their own sense of their social and economic identity, and how their effort to promote college access has changed the limitation of non-access to college for some of them. Their sense of how NYEP would eventually help to alter their life experiences and their identity can somehow be seen in the way they appraised the project (see Appendix A2 in this dissertation).

1.7 Conceptual Framework

Before I knew about auto-ethnography as a research method in the social sciences, I had intuitively known that I would write books—that is books of personal narratives, tales of my life experiences; not just because, as in Goldberg’s (1986) view we are important and so are our details. Rather, it is because certain private experiences are very intense and in my opinion, can only be justified if, putting it in utilitarian terms, these experiences have the potential to help someone else, who may be trailing the same paths or may trail the same paths later in life. As the proverbial saying in my dialect “when death strikes your age-mate, it is giving you a warning,” I believe most people are aware that what happens to one person can happen to another. Hence making my stories available to other human beings like me, who are going through similar or even different situations, but somehow have the interest to seek to understand my experiences sociologically, morally, spiritually, or however the material content of the story might lead them to respond, would be worthwhile for me. Secondly, I wanted to write *my* story—to provide a model, not for how readers in the same situation ought to be, but to give them the benefit of experiencing how I felt and acted in extreme situations. I wanted to provide a story to which they could compare their experiences (Ellis, 2004).

However, I thought I had to wait till I was finished with scholarly work before I could write books about my personal experiences. I started graduate work in the 1980s and was socialized into the legacy of empiricism. I developed an appetite for generalizable abstractions and unified knowledge. In this context, it hardly occurred to authors and

academics (professors and students alike) that writing in the first person was an option. Having been shaped by the prevailing notions of scholarly discourse within which I operated, I viewed “personal autographical story as a delinquent form of expression” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, P. 734). Autobiography allows for authenticity of personal knowledge claims, whereas empiricism espouses knowledge claims that have been tested against other existing knowledge claims. However, whether it had been due to chance, or maybe destiny, somehow I have kept working to earn a PhD degree for 25 years and have not gotten it yet. What makes it thrilling to be in the academy at this point in time is the fact that I have finally stumbled into a period when it is possible to get a degree writing “The Ethnographic I” (Ellis 2004). Scholars across a wide spectrum of disciplines have critically considered what social sciences would become if they were closer to literature than to physics, if they proffered stories than theories, and if they were self-consciously value-centered rather than pretending to be value free (Bochner, 1994). Consequently, many of these scholars turned to auto-ethnography because they were seeking a positive response to critics of canonical ideas about what research is and how research should be done. In particular, they wanted to concentrate on ways of producing meaningful, accessible, and evocative research grounded in personal experience, research that will sensitize readers to issues of identity politics, to experience shrouded in silence, and to forms of representation that deepen our capacity to empathize with people who are different from us (Ellis, & Bochner 2000). This way of conducting human sciences research in the “post-modern turn” (Lyotard 1984) and exemplified by the contemporary works of Caroline Ellis, and Arthur Bochner, and others, appeals to my sense of what the human sciences research paradigm should be. However, I needed to figure out which of my personal experiences I should write about—is it surviving breast cancer for 32

years or living with a bi-polar husband and schizophrenic son in the midst of four other “normal” children? Which was tougher? I am not sure—I just know that both experiences changed my life—maybe simultaneously. It was in 1981; my husband was diagnosed as a manic-depressive patient in Nigeria in March, and I found a lump in my left breast in April.

There are other experiences too—like chasing the PhD for 25 years—and still not having it in sight; then my summer immigration experience of 2002 which resulted in eight years “exile” in Nigeria (my birth country). I went to Nigeria for my husband’s burial ceremony, and was refused a study permit to return to Vancouver to complete my studies. Many Faculty of Education professors and student colleagues were made aware of this—some even wrote letters of petition, requesting the Canadian Deputy High Commission in Lagos to issue me a study permit to return to Vancouver to complete my graduate work. In response to a memo from my own department, UBC Vice President (Students) at the time, Brian Sullivan wrote an official plea to the Canadian Deputy High Commission in Lagos, Nigeria on behalf of the President, explaining the need for me to return to complete my PhD program. It took eight years before I was issued a visa to return to Vancouver. Would anyone be interested to know the whole story? What about my girl-child school experience—which should come first? After considering all these options, I chose the last to be the first because of its significance on the NYEP project, a work I am doing with youths from low income families in Katsina-Ala Benue State of Nigeria. Hence this study will take into account my schooling experience as I grew up—how my desire to excel in school was almost shattered due to my parent’s inability to pay my school expenses.

1.8 What is Auto-ethnography?

Auto-ethnography is defined as an:

Autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural. Back and forth auto-ethnographers gaze, first through an ethnographic wide angle-length lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of the personal experience; then they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract and resist cultural interpretations” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739).

In other words, auto-ethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno) (Ellis, 2004; Holman Jones, 2005). This approach challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others (Spry, 2001) and treats research as “political, socially-just and socially-conscious act” (Adams & Holman Jones, 2008 p. 375). A researcher uses tenets of autobiography and ethnography to do and write auto-ethnography. When writing an *autobiography*, the author retroactively and selectively writes about past experiences. Usually, the author does not live through these experiences solely to make them part of a published documents; rather these experience are assembled using hindsight (Brunner, 1993; Dezin, 1989; Freeman, 2004). On the other hand, ethnography means writing about or describing people or culture. Ethnography is first and foremost, a perspective, a framework for thinking about the world. This perspective reflects a way of viewing the world –holistically and naturalistically—and a way of being in the world as an involved participant.” Ellis, 2004).

Thus, as a method, auto-ethnography is both process and product (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). In writing, the auto- ethnographer also may interview others as well as consult with texts like photographs, journals and recordings to help with recall (Delany,

2004; Didon, 2005; Goodall, 2006). Most often, auto-ethnographers write about “epiphanies”—remembered moments perceived to have significantly impacted the trajectory of a person’s life (Bochner & Ellis, 1992; Couser, 1997), times of existential crisis that forces a person to attend to and analyze lived experience (Zaner, 2004). Usually, the author does not live through these experiences solely to make them part of a published document; rather these experiences are assembled using hindsight (Bruner, 1993; Dezin, 1989; Freeman, 2004). While epiphanies are self-acclaimed phenomena in which one person may consider an experience transformative while another may not, these “epiphanies reveal ways a person could negotiate ‘intense situations’ and effects that linger—recollections, memories, images, feelings—long after a crucial incidence is supposedly finished” (Bochner, 1984, p. 595). When researchers do auto-ethnography, they study a culture’s relational practices, common values and beliefs, and shared experiences for the purpose of helping insiders (cultural members) and outsiders (cultural strangers) better understand the culture (Maso 2001). Ethnographers do this by becoming participant observers in the culture—that is, by taking field notes and cultural happenings as well as their part in and others’ engagement with these happenings (Goodall, 2001). Usually, ethnographers interview cultural members (Berry, 2005), examine members’ ways of speaking and relating (Ellis, 1986), investigate uses of space and place (Makagon, 2004), and analyze artifacts such as clothing and architecture (Bochard, 1998), and texts such as books, movies and photographs (Goodall, 2006).

Moreover, when researchers do auto-ethnography, they retrospectively and selectively write about epiphanies that stem from, or are made possible by, being part of a culture and/or by possessing a particular cultural identity. However, in addition to telling about experiences, ethnographers are required by social science publishing conventions to

analyze these experiences. As Mitch Allen says (cited in Ellis, Adams & Bochner 2011, p. 4) an auto-ethnographer must:

Look at experience analytically. Otherwise [you're] telling [your] story—and that's nice—but people do that on Oprah [a U.S.-based television program] every day. Why is your story more valid than anyone else's? What makes your story more valid is that you are a researcher. You have a set of theoretical and methodological tools and a research literature to use. That's your advantage. If you can't frame it around these tools and literature and just frame it as 'my story' then why or how should I privilege your story over anyone else's I see 25 times a day on TV? (Personal Interview, May 4, 2006) (cited in Ellis, Adams & Bochner 2011, p. 4).

In the light of the requirements of auto-ethnographers by social science publishing conventions, I am proposing a defence of my research approach by pointing out the fact that I am looking at my participants' stories through the lenses of my own experience, and at the same time, allowing my worldview and knowledge claim to be examined through the new understanding I acquire as a result of understanding their experiences—their inability to access college education and how they feel remembering the hopelessness and fear that sought to creep over me as I watched the scenario of a possible closure to any possible opportunity to access secondary school education after completing my primary education in 1964. Moreover, it is through this process that my empathy for these youths prompted me to act in any way I could to change their circumstances, howbeit in small ways. This then is not only telling stories, it is telling stories that motivate us to change things in our world that we abhor to see, by replacing them with those things that we love to see.

The forms of ethnography differ in how much emphasis is placed on the study of others, the researcher's self and interaction with others, traditional analysis and interview context as well as on power relationships (Ellis Adams & Bochner 2011). *Indigenous/native ethnographies*, for example, develop from colonized or economically subordinated peoples, and are used to address and disrupt power in research, particularly a researcher's right and authority to study (exotic) others. Once at the service of the (White, masculine, heterosexual, middle/upper-classed Christian, able-bodied) ethnographer, indigenous/native ethnographers now work to construct their own personal and cultural stories; they no longer find (forced) subjugation excusable (see Dezin, Lincoln & Smith, 2008). *Narrative ethnographies* refer to texts presented in the form of stories that incorporate the ethnographer's experiences into the ethnographic descriptions and analysis of others. Here the emphasis is on the ethnographic study of others, which is accomplished partly by attending to encounters between the narrator and members of the group being studied (Tedlock, 1991). In *reflexive ethnographies* authors use their own experiences in the culture reflexively to focus on the self and look more deeply at self-other interactions. Hence the reflexive ethnographies method was employed in the present study to enhance my understanding of my personal experiences in the shared cultural context of my study participants' experiences. Moreover, it is hoped that my interactions with my study participants in this way would further deepen my understanding of how experience shape the repertoires of knowledge formation across time frames.

1.8.1 Critics of Narrative Inquiry and Auto-ethnography

Many would agree that personal narratives and auto-ethnography always have been about the other; they always have involved critical engagements, social problems, and social action though authors may not say so explicitly (Ellis, 2002). Take, for example, a few of the

social problem oriented narratives published in the last few years. Ronai's (1995) personal exploration of her own sexual abuse and how her experience relates to social policy; Gray and Sindings (2002) performative ethnography that employs the performance of personal stories by survivors of breast cancer to alter the community's (lay people and medical personnel) image of survivors and, Trahar's (2009) interrogation of the retroactive meaning of her childhood stories to understand how Cheng-Tsung (her student) may not have experienced the events that he described as racist initially, but it is in the retelling of them to an audience that this meaning was attributed. Similarly, Carolyn Ellis (2002a) shared her thoughts on the after math of September 11. In the after math of September 11, Carolyn Ellis wrote about her own experience of racial profiling of Moslems (Ellis, 2002a), as well as about the changing frames of interpreting on what was happening on the plane to Dulles that day. She stated:

Telling these stories helped me to work through this experience—making it meaningful for me. But just as importantly, these stories help others process their experiences of these tragic events and their shattered illusions. It's not that I think understanding resolves emotional pain, but engaging in the process of uncovering, going deeper inside yourself through auto-ethnographic writing, can stimulate the beginning of recovery. Expressing my feelings vulnerably on the page invites others to express how they feel comparing their experience to mine and to each other's (Ellis, 2002b p. 401).

These are only a few examples of how auto-ethnography and personal narrative contribute to social change—trying to make the world a better place.

It is also apparent that the “new social movements” of the last few decades—for example gay rights, women’s rights, and civil rights—emphasized identity and cultural change rather than concentrating merely on political action and gain, changing laws, resource mobilization, and macro-change (Ellis, 2002(b). Poletta (1997) Melucci (1995) and others argue that movement resources should encompass compelling narratives, and that success should be judged by transformations in culture, collective self-definitions and meaning that influence and shape everyday life. Increased self-understanding may provide a quicker and more successful route to social change than changing laws or other macro-political structures.

I personally believe that good auto-ethnography works to build a common ground where we might speak together of our experiences, find companionship in our joy or sorrow through our commonality of experience, always endeavoring to reach beyond ourselves—to others who want to tell their own stories and do not know how. A good personal story is one that others can take in and use for themselves. Good stories make others feel liberated, freer to speak without feeling that their stories are not worth telling (Coles 1989). This is particularly significant to the participants of NYEP and their parents who feel free to tell their stories only among very close friends, maybe because they fear that those they are unacquainted with may view their story-telling as complaining about the state of affairs in Nigeria. Some may also think that their personal stories of their lived experiences cannot possibly be of interest to any kind of audience

Seeking stories

Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience—a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, and in a place or series of places, and in social interaction in different milieus. An inquirer enters this “matrix in the midst and progresses in the same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that make up the people’s lives, both individual and social” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20). The definition of auto-ethnography above is congruent with the narrative inquiry principle of the researcher’s story being intrinsic to the study. Narrative enquirers engage in intense and transparent reflection and questioning of their own position, values, beliefs and cultural background (Trahar, 2009). And as if in agreement with Trahar’s position on this, I had found myself, on some occasions questioning the validity of my own cultural values. For example, when my father made it clear to me in 1964, that educating girls would not benefit the girl’s family, I accepted his position wholeheartedly, without out trying to convince him otherwise, because his arguments were cultural. Moreover, I had observed that all the girls I had known and was growing up with ended up with the well-respected career of bearing children and catering for the family. However, my situation changed (due to what I believe to be supernatural providential circumstance), and I found myself excelling in academia, despite my father’s preconceived ideas about girls’ education. With the passing of time, I had the desire and the opportunity to help my father financially. My father was pleased with me and even pronounced a blessing on me for the financial help I gave to him. The question I ask myself in retrospect is, if my father knew that having good education would place me in a position to give him some financial help, would he have changed his cultural views about educating his girls in the 1960’s? I would never have a chance to ask him this question since he is no more alive; nor

did it occur to me to ask him this question earlier, that is before conducting this research study.

Narrative inquiry is based firmly on the premise that as human beings we come to understand and give meaning to our lives through story. Story and storytelling are simultaneously cognitive processes and products of cognition. Story is both art and science, running deep and wide through the human psyche (Lewis, 2011). “There is an abiding recognition that existence is inherently storied. Life is pregnant with stories” (Kearney, 2002). Grounded in hermeneutics and phenomenology, narrative inquiry is a form of qualitative research that involves the gathering of narratives—written, oral, visual—focusing on meanings that people ascribe to their experience, seeking to provide “insight that befits the complexity of human lives” (Josselson 2006, p. 4). But, narrative inquiry is more than the uncritical gathering of stories. Narrative inquirers strive to attend to the ways in which a story is constructed, for whom and why, as well as the cultural discourses that it draws upon. In gathering and telling of “stories”, we are gathering “knowledge from the past and not necessarily knowledge about the past” (Bochner, 2007, p. 203). Thus:

Making stories from one’s lived history is a process by which ordinarily we revise the past retroactively, and when we do we are engaged in processes of languaging and describing that modify the past. What we see as true today may not have been true at the time the actions we are describing were performed. Thus we need to resist the temptation to attribute intentions and meanings to events that we did not have at the time they were experienced (ibid. p. 203).

As with many other paradigmatic positions, narrative inquiry and auto-ethnography have their critics. Starting with narrative inquiry, there are three main areas in which it is criticized: (1) If you are a story teller rather than a story analyst then your goal becomes therapeutic rather than analytic, (2) Researchers often re-present narratives as if they were “authentic” (3) In narrative inquirers concern to re-present the meanings that individuals ascribe to their lived experience, they resist a globalised, homogenised, impoverished system of meaning. Let us look at the criticisms one after the other:

Criticisms of narrative inquiry

The first criticism against narrative inquiry is that “if you are a story teller rather than a story analyst then your goal becomes therapeutic rather than analytic” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 745). In my mind, the notions of “analytic” and “therapeutic” have no rigid dichotomous applications in narrative inquiry. For as Josselson (2006) rightly observed:

It is not just the material ‘facts’ of a life that are of concern here but meaningful shape emerging from selected inner and outer experiences. ‘Facts’ in the naïve historical sense are understood as created rather than reproduced. This approach has allowed psychology to view and analyse people’s lives as lived, people whose life experience has been lost in the search for central tendencies, for statistically significant group differences on oversimplified measures or in contrived experimental conditions (p. 4).

This suggests to me that there is some form of analyses in narrative inquiry—with a different objective from the statistical mode of analysis in which every item must fall within the Bell curve of every existing related item. Here, every knowledge claim has the autonomy to stand on its own. Then comes the important question—“are we working together to put together a

joint multilayered jigsaw puzzle, each story contributing a piece—or are we instead creating a long gallery of finely wrought miniatures, inviting the onlooker to visit and make of it whatever they will?” (Josselson 2006, p. 4). I believe Josselson’s question provides an important consideration in the conduct of narrative research. However, the answer to this question may differ from one situation to another, depending on the problem being researched, the purpose of the study and the audience to whom the research findings are being presented. In auto-ethnography, Josselson’s (2006) first alternative is more desirable—thus the story of the researcher and the researched create a tapestry of individual stories, each contributing a piece to the jigsaw puzzle.

The second criticism against narrative inquiry is that researchers often re-present narratives as if they were “authentic” when:

Autobiographical accounts are no more authentic than other modes of representation a narrative of a personal experience is not a clear route into ‘the truth’, either about the reported events, or of the teller’s private experience. (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006, p. 166).

Such criticism is legitimate, in my opinion if narrative inquirers are seduced into a belief that in order to re-present faithfully another’s story, the story needs to be simply reproduced—whether textually or visually. This reproduction will only be as the researcher heard it, even if the text is given to the narrator for member-checking or even if the event is filmed. However, in narrative inquiry, we work with what we gather, but look for “the supporting evidence and arguments given by the researcher” (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 476).

The third criticism levelled at narrative inquirers is that, in their concern to re-present the meanings that individuals ascribe to their lived experience, they resist what Fox (2008) defines as “a globalised, homogenised, impoverished system of meaning” (P. 341), and oppose collective understanding being derived from their work. While understanding that each individual is unique, some call for the need to “build a knowledge base out of these proliferating studies, challenging that what we seek in narrative research is some understanding of the patterns that cohere among individuals and the aspects of the lived experience that differentiate them.” (Josselson, 2006. p. 5). In this case, either the individual voice is privileged or collective understandings are made, or both when possible. Andrews (2007) poses some provocative questions for those who consider that collective understanding is unwise:

How does this individual with whom I am speaking reflect wider social and historical changes that form the context of his or her life? I am convinced that if I can listen carefully enough, there is much to learn from every story that one might gather. For society really is comprised of human lives, and if we can begin to understand the framework that lends meaning to these lives, then we have taken the important first step to being able to access the wider framework of meaning that is the binding agent of a culture (Andrews, 2007, p. 491).

I concur with Andrews’s (2007) idea of accessing “the wider framework of meaning that is the binding agent of a culture.” However, I also believe that giving proper respect to the individual voice is important. Moreover, this is not an “either” or” situation, rather, I believe it can be both. For example, I watched “Pierce Morgan Tonight” in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings, which happened in December, 2012 in

Connecticut, and I heard him interview individuals about their view on “Banning assault weapons in America.” He takes each individual opinion as if that is what matters at the moment. However, in the end, he tried to pit one argument against another, and looked for a common thread running through the tapestry of all the arguments, and brainstorm about what should be the final decision, especially in the light of other factors in the United States constitution—such as every American’s rights to self-defence. I believe this is a good example of giving proper respect to individual voice, and still allow for collective understanding.

Criticisms of auto-ethnography

Critics of auto-ethnography argue that (1) as one form of ethnography social scientific standards in auto-ethnography are not rigorous, theoretical and analytical enough. Moreover, auto-ethnography is criticized for being too aesthetic, emotional and therapeutic (Ellis, 2009; Hooks, 1994). (2) Auto-ethnographers are criticized for doing too little field work, or observing too few cultural members, for not spending enough time with (different) others (Buzzard, 2003; Fine 2003; Delamont, 2009). (3) Furthermore, in using personal experience, auto-ethnographers are thought not only to use supposedly biased data (Anderson, 2006, Gans, 1999), but are also navel-gazers (Madison, 2006), self-absorbed narcissists who don’t fulfil scholarly obligations of hypothesizing, analyzing and theorizing.

These criticisms erroneously position art and science at odds with each other, a position that auto-ethnography seeks to correct. Auto-ethnography, as a method, attempts to disrupt the binary of science versus art. Auto-ethnographers believe research can be rigorous, theoretical, analytical and emotional, therapeutic and inclusive of personal and social

phenomena all at the same time. Auto-ethnographers also value the need to write and represent research in evocative, aesthetic ways (e.g., Ellis, 1995, 2004; Pelias, 2000). The questions most important to auto-ethnographers are who reads our work?; how are they affected by it?; and how does it keep a conversation going? (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011).

Furthermore, in a world where methodologies differ, auto-ethnographers find it futile to debate whether auto-ethnography is valid research process or product (Bochner 2000, Ellis 2009). Unless we agree on a goal, we cannot agree on the terms by which we can judge how to achieve it. Simply put, auto-ethnographers take a different point of view about the subject matter of social science. In Rorty's (1982) words, these different views are "not issue(s) to be resolved, only" instead they are difference(s) to be lived with" (p. 197). Auto-ethnographers view research and writing as socially-just acts; rather than a preoccupation with accuracy, the goal is to produce analytical, accessible texts that change us and the world we live in for the better (Holman Jones, 2005).

Why auto-ethnography?

Researchers identify their research topics via an assortment of approaches. First, researchers might consider the key problems identified by other researchers in a specific area of interest. Secondly, researchers come to an area of interest via personal experience. Third, qualitative researchers are informed by research purposes that are informed by specific theoretical perspectives towards social research. Fourth, research topics are frequently inspired by curiosity and observation concerning what is going on in the world around us (Rolston, 2010). The second approach fits the description of the purpose of my research. The motivation for the initiation of the NYEP came from the similarities between my personal

experiences and those of the participants of NYEP—the main similarity being the inability of parents to financially support the cost of our post-primary education. This created a certain level of empathy on my part which would later be translated into an organized action plan following several years of studying in the University of British Columbia. In this section, I intend to comment briefly on how my African up-bringing and my experience as a student of the University of British Columbia prepared me to launch NYEP in 2005. The prospective participants of my research come from the same ethnic group (Tiv) in Benue State of Nigeria. I hailed from a different ethnic group in Nigeria (Bura). However, I spent most of my adult life in Benue State, having married a Tiv man some thirty years ago. Moreover, we have a basic cultural understanding as Africans.

In section 1.5, I offered the theoretical perspectives of the African peoples' collective consciousness; however, in my contemporary experience, I have found that many Africans themselves prefer to maintain their differences, usually in order to point out that Africa is not one big nation—at least not now. The effects of globalization, technology and commodification tend to make the world itself feel like one village, and everyone in this village can choose who he or she wants to be connected with no matter the geographical distance color of their skin or cultural background.

However, although the consciousness of interdependence may have been lost due to globalization and commodification in African urban cities, it is still prevalent in my small town of Katsina-Ala, where it is considered normal for people to fetch water from a neighbor's well, cut some vegetables from a neighbor's garden, and pass through a neighbor's property any time in the day. It is clear that one's station in life, poor or rich, is inextricably affected by the welfare of those with whom one is tied up in this interdependent

relationship. This interdependent relationship, in addition to the empathy I felt towards the youths in my community motivated me to do something about the situation I observed in the community—a cycle of poverty caused by too many uneducated heads of households. However, it is my Canadian experience that gave me an idea for a systematic planned action towards to initiation of the NYEP.

Charity work is not commonplace in Nigeria, especially in rural communities, and so it is intriguing to the members of the community that I would spend my time and effort attempting to create an avenue of educational access for other people's children, especially in this difficult rural economy which echoes the proverbial Darwinian "Survival for the Fittest", and where every head of the family tries hard to provide educational opportunity for his own children. Moreover, I too know in the depths of my heart that if I had lived in Nigeria all my life, I may not have been inclined to take on the NYEP work—in addition to my own financial struggles to educate my own children. However, my experiences with UBC Peer Programs (students helping students) enhanced my understanding of how we ought to care for each other in a moral community regardless, of what our personal responsibilities may be. These experiences significantly helped me to develop my ethical beliefs into practical application to real life situations.

Summary of why this is an auto-ethnography study

In the theoretical perspectives (see Section 1.5 in this dissertation) the undergirding reasons for initiating and sustaining of the NYEP are offered, the most pertinent ideas found in the works of Kant (1969). For instance, Kant insists that for the sake of a higher interest "we must be prepared to make unlimited sacrifices of our own happiness." (Kant, 1969, p.

123). Moreover, it can be argued that working towards the happiness, satisfaction or the success of the greater number of the members of a moral community, as opposed to a few individuals having a greater happiness, satisfaction or success is an important objective within the rationalist utilitarian principle (James, 1981; Mendus, 2008).

Within the ethic of care, there is a sort of interdependence between the one who cares and the one cared for which involves a certain displacement of identity (Noddings, 1984; Mayeroff 1971). Mayeroff asserts: “. . . The other for whom I care is a completion of my own personal identity.” (P. 48). In Mayeroff’s view, caring for another involves some concern for the status for one’s own being as well. This point is reinforced when we notice that if one describes caring for the other as involving some characteristic set of virtues in the way that Mayeroff does, then one’s own ethical status is implicated in one’s caring and becomes a matter of concern to the one who cares. It seems that caring for the other is an orientation which is not directed exclusively outward, but involves a turning inwards as well.

Wallis (2006) argued for a feature of education for the disposed in all contexts. Intricate in this argument is the assumption that education will—and can—resolve current inequalities within any social stratum in developing economies. Hence a situation in which a certain class of people are perpetually and systematically disenfranchised and unable to access educational opportunities should be abhorred by any institution which believes in equality of citizens. Of course, the overarching problem in Nigeria is the non-existence of such an institution, thereby necessitating a community self-help effort to create this critical consciousness in the community, by the community.

1.9 Summary and Conclusion

Auto-ethnography is employed as the method of inquiry in this study because of the relationship between the researcher and the study participants in terms of the hurdles we encountered with regards to accessing the post-primary and college education. In this study both the experiences of the researcher and the research participants are considered as important parts of the study data. As the researcher do and write auto-ethnography, her experiences, her cultural perspective, and the lenses through which she views the world do inform her understanding of the experiences of her study participants. I have chosen “reflexive ethnographies” which is an aspect of auto-ethnography in which “authors use their own experience in the culture reflexively to bend back on self and look more deeply at the self-other interactions.” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 740). It also documents “the ways a researcher changes as a result of doing field work.” (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011, p. 278). The intended tool for data collection is “reflexive dyadic interviews,” which although centres on participant’s story allows for the documentation of the researcher’s memory of her past experience. Here, past experiences are naturally invoked by the empathy she feels towards participants as they express their subjective and emotional feelings about their own experiences. So it was that using the reflexive dyadic interviews empowered me to relate to the stories of my study participants with empathy which I hope comes through to my audience.

Every NYEP youth participant who participated in this study had worked with NYEP for at least three months where the main task was to collaborate on the production and sales of consumable items to generate money for the monthly stipends, part of which was expected to be saved towards college related expenses.

CHAPTER 2

Background and Literature

2.1 Youth Identity, culture, Gender and Class

Historically youth has been regarded as the stage of life when identity becomes more established and a more settled socio-psychic state. The work of psychoanalyst Erik Erickson (1964, 1968) demonstrates that adolescence is a critical period in the life course when identity has to be established in order for young people to become ready to assume adult sexuality and other responsibilities. Presently, there are new modes of conceptualizing identity which are inimical to the idea of 'core-self'--established relatively early by Erikson and his followers, and was construed as an essential organizer of the subject's relations with the social world. Instead, the emphasis is now on how the individual occupies multiple positions and has a range of identities with different ones acquiring salience in different contexts (Rantansi, 1994, Giroux, 1994). The differing positions are seen to derive from particular social positions--ethnicity or culture, gender and class (Rantansi & Phinney, 2005).

Holland et al (1998) synthesized and discussed different anthropological research findings about the different schools of thought and arguments about the universal self and the culturally specific self. For those who assign priority to the "natural self," the human self is, first and foremost, a complex of natural, species-given structures and processes. The selves found in certain cultures (giving specific examples of Nepal and Samoa), are simply refractions of an underlying natural self. The natural self "exists beneath the dazzling but always thin overlay of cultural expression, of the ways of enacting and talking about the

self—much as the species-given human body exists beneath naturally variable kinds of clothing”(p. 20).

Shweder and Bourne (cited in Holland et. al, 1998) suggested two ideal types of self: a Western concept that is autonomous, acontextual, abstract and independent self; and a non-Western notion that is context-dependent, concrete and socially defined self: “To the question ‘Does the concept of person vary cross-culturally?’ our answer is obviously ‘yes’; we have tried to identify two major alternative conceptualizations of the individual-social relationship, viz., the ‘egocentric contractual’ and the ‘sociocentric organic’ (Holland et. al, 1998. P. 20).

I agree, somewhat, with Shweder and Bourne especially with regards to some youths I learnt about or interacted with, both in the Western culture and the African cultures. I would argue, though, that their experiences do not necessarily fit exactly into the seemingly clear-cut dichotomous categories of a Western concept that is “autonomous”, “accontextual”, “abstract” and “independent”; and a non-Western notion that is “context-dependent”, “concrete” and “socially defined” as suggested by Shweder and Bourne. Rather, I agree more with Giroux’s (1994) argument that the cyber-age effect, which creates a global village, has made youth identity more complex. While the circumstances of youths vary across and within terrains marked by class and racial differences, the modernist world of certainty and order that has traditionally policed, contained, and insulated such differences has given way to shared postmodern culture in which representational borders collapse into new hybridized forms of cultural performance, identity, and political agency. Music, rap, fashion, style, talk, politics and cultural resistance are no longer confined to their original class and racial

locations. Within the “postmodern culture of youth, identities merge and shift rather than become more uniform and static.” (Giroux 1994, P. 288).

Having stated the above, I would still argue that there are some experiences of Nigerian youths generally, whether they live in rural or urban parts of the country, which Western youths may never experience—such as political and religious upheavals, murderous dictators, corrupt politicians, rudiments of the post-colonial legacy, domineering father syndrome, a culture of fear of the police and army, and economic dependence on parents.

2.2 How the Studies on Youth Identity, Gender, and Class Inform my Study

Research literature is replete with studies on youth identity (see Archer, S. (1982); Porter & Washington (1979); Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997; Hall, Cross, & Freedle, 1972; Jones, 1986; Hutnik, 1991). Most studies on youth identity are related to other variables such as ethnicity class and gender. The above studies correlated youth identity with ethnicity and are quantitative studies. Other studies (see Dei, Mazzuca, McIsaac, & Zine, 1997; Nayak, 2003; Dillabough, Wang and Kennelly, 2005; Pedrozo, 2010; Porter, Hampshire, Abane, Robson; Munthali, Mashiri and Tanle 2010) were qualitative studies in which youth identity was studied in relation to gender and class. Dei, Mazzuca McIsaac, & Zine (1997) examined how institutionalized structures and processes of schooling lead to premature school-leaving of Blacks, from the perspectives of Black school drop-outs, Black Students, Black parents, non-Black students, and school personnel. I had the same opinion with Dr. Dei and his team of researchers that at the time of their investigation—in the 1990s a major problem in conventional study of school drop-outs is methodology. The field had traditionally been dominated by quantitative research. We hope, however, that the situation has changed where

researchers considering constructs such as “school drop-out,” self-esteem” and “youth identity” are leaning move towards qualitative methodologies. This study is share some common themes with my study especially as it considered the importance of the place of the family, the community and the society in relation to Black children’s premature school-leaving. However, the dynamics that interplay in the life of the Black child in America differs significantly from that of a child on the African continent, where the word “Black” is hardly used to describe a person.

There are studies of Moslem Koranic school children in Nigeria called “Almajirai” which has some similarities with the present study. However, the “Almajirai” status is a sort of religious sacrifice in which a person (poor or rich) sends his son to a poorer settlement in the quest for hard, self-sacrificing training that would prepare the young person to suffer for “Allah” if need be. It is also becoming evident that some of these Koranic training have something to do with the emergence of the “Boko Haram” youths--a group which has been a threat to Nigeria’s peace and security in the last 3 years. “Boko Haram” literally means “secular education is forbidden” in the Hausa language, and they carried out their attacks around universities and colleges when they first emerged in Maiduguri the capital city of Borno State. Recently, they have also attacked churches, market places, and buses on lonely roads.

I believe the “Almajirai” have chosen to embrace their poor economic lifestyle because of religious beliefs, whereas my study participants’ socio-economic status was handed down to them by the virtue of their family’s socio-economic status, and they do not have any option to negotiate around it. Hence, I consider the study on Almajirai to be beyond the scope of the present study.

The studies considered to be closely related to the present study are the studies of Dillabough, Wang & Kennelly (2005); Nayak, 2003; Porter, H., Abane, R; Munthali, M. and Tanle, A. (2010). Dillabough, Wang and Kennelly (2005) explored ‘peer rivalries’ and accounts of social exclusion on the part of economically disadvantage male and female youths (aged 14-16) in one inner city urban concentration in Ontario, Canada. They stated: “We seek to access the ways in which economically disadvantaged male and female youths perceive and understand the influence of gender and urban schooling in shaping their conception of their social futures which are viewed here . . . as tied to the geography of urban cities and school life.” (p. 83.)

In this study they sought to establish a preliminary hermeneutic and a framework for understanding the formation of new youth subcultures which may function, to some degree, both as a response to, and a connection between macro and micro forces of social change. In their opinion, an account of this kind is important in exposing how young people negotiate, in the world of the everyday, the varying degrees of alienation they experience and what they do with the cultural commodity they encounter. The youths in their study use ‘peer rivalry’ as a “site for the official and unofficial classification struggle that young people undertook in their efforts to reclaim meaningful symbolic territories in their lives” (p. 91). The function of territoriality is quite simply to eliminate the problem at its source by providing a material basis for a system of positional rules which preserves the boundaries of the loose-knit peer group network in the street, and assigns the entire youth population, big and little, boy and girl to a place which cuts across these distinctions, a place which is marked by an unequivocal question: “Friend or foe.” (Cohen 1999, p. 66).

Nayak (2003) studied the “Real Geordies” subculture which constituted a group of young white males who were negotiating a transition to a post-industrial society in Northern England. He observed that their insular, subcultural practices are seen as complex, materially orchestrated responses to the new times of the changing local-global economy. He stated: “In the context of de-industrialization, I consider how a white, industrial masculinity could be recuperated in the field of consumption, notably through embodied rituals of football support, drinking and going out”. (p. 7).

Another study that has a direct implication for the present study is one done by Porter et al. (2010). They explored young peoples’ experiences and perceptions of mobility and mobility constraints in poorer parts of African countries (Ghana, Malawi, and South Africa). Drawing on qualitative research findings from a study involving adult and child researchers, their aim was to chart the diversities and commonalities of urban young people’s mobility experiences in the everyday—how they used and experienced the city. In particular, they considered how positive and negative images of young people’s mobility play out in the intergenerational frictions and negotiations generated by their mobility performances. They also reflected on the development opportunities in terms of young people’s access to services and income, and their participation in the social networks and peer culture which may shape their life trajectories. They explored three themes in detail: mobility as challenge, mobility as temptation and mobility control. One of their findings is the different views that older people hold about young men and young women’s movements. They reported that “young men on the streets are often viewed by older people as potentially dangerous” (Porter et al. 2010, p. 797). On the other hand, “. . . parents regulate the movements of young women, in particular, because of the fears of their daughters becoming pregnant” (Porter et al. 2010, p. 798). So

both young men and young women's movements are viewed to be causes for concern albeit, for different reasons.

The aforementioned studies have a number of variables in common with the present study. Like the present study, the above authors explored real life experiences of economically disadvantaged youths (male and female). The present study has an axiological connection to their study in that the studies draw upon an existentialist nature of volition the youth are confronted with, and the concomitant results of their choices. Whereas the youths in Dillabough, Wang and Kennelly's (2005) study used 'peer rivalry' to maintain their territoriality, the youths in my study maintain symbolic territory by forming allies with youth of like profession and identity ("Hire or "Agboro" boys to emphasize their rough and struggling lifestyles), and by disassociating with the soft and comparatively well-mannered college youths, who by their own choice, also exclude themselves from the daily fun and struggle of the hire sub-culture.

Similar to the ethnographic experience of Nayak (2003), through which he discovered the meaning of the "Geordie" identity as white, industrial young males recuperating in the field of consumption, notably through" embodied rituals of football support, drinking and going out". (p. 7), I also discovered that some of the NYEP participants had some experience with the "hire" identity which provides a way of negotiating their socio-economic realities characterized by poverty, and a constant reminder of their low class in a cultural formation that equates education with social prestige. The "hire" identity creates an avenue for youths to assume their autonomy from parental authority; something that is usually earned through what is called "academic freedom," which is typically associated with post-secondary education. So even though the hire youths were not entitled to autonomy that comes through

academic freedom, they enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy because of their “economic power,” which was sometimes demonstrated by supporting their parents financially. The implication was that unlike other youths of their age who were not in college, and were not in the hire business, the hire youths were more likely to make their own life choices—such as when to be away from home or whether to have girl friends or not. And just as the industrial masculinity was recuperated in the field of consumption through the embodied rituals of football drinking and going out (Nayak, 2003), so also the “hire” identity was related to certain masculine zones—football, drinking and womanizing (a common term used for promiscuous male behavior). For unlike the Geordie identity the hire identity was a two-edged sword—it is both a source of identity, and the means by which the identity is sustained. Whereas the Geordies promoted the values of the muscular puritan work ethics (honesty, loyalty, self-sufficiency), a fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay, the hire boys were more interested in getting the highest possible Naira value for a few hours of work. A hire youth could give the motorcycle to his friend to use it and make money for himself, such that the person with the initial hire contract can make money just by having the contract. The “Hire” identity is not really about production, but consumption.

The concern about young people’s mobility as reported by (Porter et al. 2010) was a salient motivational factor in initiating the NYEP and indirectly relates to the goal of NYEP. The goal of NYEP was to promote college access to youths. The roaming about of youths during school hours was a concern to me because of the fact that the youths were not productively engaged through schooling or employment. However, the roaming about of youths, especially male youths during the late hours of the night have been a concern to most people in the community because of the rate of criminal activities that were reported by the

vigilante. This got my attention when I moved to this community, especially after experiencing a burglary in my own home. I believe that was also why the College Neighborhood Association put the vigilante group in place. The work of the vigilante group was to catch and beat up any one roaming about between 12 midnight and 5 a.m. This was effective as a short term solution in terms of reducing the crime-rate in our community, but it was only punitive and fails to underlie the cause of the problem.

For me, it was clear that the youths lacked any kind of productive engagement, something which offered instant gratification in terms of economic resources, or something of potential advantage, such as educational opportunity. NYEP endeavored to provide both—by giving the youth participants the opportunity to engage in paid labor and use part of their pay to access college education. I also experienced some of the restrictions on girl's movements in my effort to enroll them in the NYEP as reported by Porter et. al.(2010). I had to go and talk with all parents of female participants interested to enroll in the project, because parents were reluctant to release their girls to join the project for fear that they may get pregnant working away from home and parents, and meeting all kinds of people in the sales environment. On the other hand, most of the male participants just joined the project, assuring me of their parent's approval to enroll. I usually confirm the youths' words with their parents, though.

2.3 Corruption and Economic Conditions

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA, 2011) online report on Nigeria which it titled: "Rich Country: Poor people" invoked some feelings of gratification and anger in me at the same time—gratification that other people are watching what is happening in Nigeria. Also,

this report offers a further justification for the initiation of NYEP and therefore the present study. Anger—because too many people—Nigerians and non-Nigerians alike, are aware of how much corruption has taken away the future from most of the Nigerian youth population, yet no one seems to offer any solution about how to fix it. I agree with the CIA’s report, and thought to myself—“how did the CIA know to give words to what I have been thinking for some years? The anger I felt for the plight of the disadvantaged (which of course outnumber the privileged) made me want to do something. NYEP was my way of saying “I am doing my limited quota in my community and keep hoping that other Nigerians are doing something similar in their own communities.

Corruption is so pervasive in the Nigerian social milieu that young people learn inappropriate financial behaviour as they interact with adult members of the community, including parents. Panam Percy Paul, a Nigerian Christian Musician expressed this succinctly in his song *Nigeria I Love You*:

Nigeria I love you but what of your bribes and corruption
Where children by watching their parents are learning to lie
We need more than schooling we all need the cleansing of Jesus
We are the people for whom Jesus offered to die.
(Paul, Panam. (1986).

Like Panam Percy Paul many Nigerians would rank corruption as the number one social ill in Nigeria. In NYEP we try to tackle this issue by providing educational propaganda (information) to participants on corruption in an indirect manner. We provide a sort of informal curriculum on how to develop responsible behaviour towards our families, our community and our country, which is usually featured in our annual “Nigeria

Independence Celebration” programs. In my opinion corruption is a symptom of irresponsible behavior which can be reversed if the people are committed to change the situation for the better. The fact that corruption is becoming more acceptable in the Nigerian social milieu is indicative of the lack of commitment to change the situation—on the part of people in leadership as well as the non-leaders.

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) reports that corruption is one of the most salient factors that have brought about the deplorable economic situation in Nigeria. CIA (2011) reported that despite being the third richest country in Africa, poverty in Nigeria affects more than half the population for at least the past 10 years. The causes are many—corruption and lack of infrastructure are prominent reasons for this enduring poverty. In 1980, less than 30 % of Nigerians lived below the poverty lines (CIA, 2011). Because of corrupt practices, and the lack of prudent handling of public funds and resources, there are more families living below the poverty lines presently than at any other time. I remember listening to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) News on February 13th, 2013 at 2.36 pm, and this is what it had to say about Nigeria:

- (1) The number of people living under a dollar a day income is increasing in Nigeria
- (2) There is a misplacement of values and multiple levels of corruption
- (3) If Nigeria does not take action to address the problem of poverty, it could drive the Nigerian people into civil unrest.

The domineering father syndrome

Another experience of youths in Nigeria which is different from the experiences of the youths in the Western nations is the “domineering father syndrome.”

Heather Hewitt (2005), commenting on “Purple Hibiscus”, a novel written by Chimamanda Adichie, a Nigerian young woman who studied in the United States, stated:

Adichie revises Achebe’s (1958) novel in several ways. She takes one of his themes, the breakdown of family and community under the pressures of colonialism and religion, and recast it in the post-independent Nigeria, at a time when colonialism heirs—corruption, political strife and religious dogmatism strain family and community. Like her predecessor, Adichie weaves her story around a figure of domineering father, and both novels explore how a father’s tragic flaw propels him to harm his family. Achebe’s proud protagonist, Okonkwo, rules his family with a heavy hand. . . . In Okonkwo’s judgement, his father is no better than *agbala*, a *woman*; and so he acts mercilessly towards those who demonstrate weakness in order to prove his own strength and manhood (Hewitt, 2005, p. 79).

In Nigeria, the man is the head of the home, and the only decision-maker about things that affect everyone in the family. The woman and the children are put in the same class—lower than the man, but higher than the servants.

2.4 Promotional Examinations and the Role of the NYEP

Education in Nigeria is overseen by the Ministry of Education (MoE). The local authorities take responsibility for implementing policy for state controlled public education and state schools at the regional level. The education system is divided into kindergarten, primary education, secondary education and tertiary education which include colleges, polytechnics and universities. The goal of the NYEP has been, and still is to promote access to tertiary education—by removing the “financial hurdles” associated with the promotional

examination which is a basic requirement for college entrance admission in Nigeria. The promotional examination fee is about N4000 (35 Canadian Dollars), depending on who is selling it and the demand for it. The participants of NYEP were expected to save a certain percentage of the money they received as stipends. This amount of money they were expected to have saved during the year (12 calendar months of being enrolled in the NYEP) was supposed to be adequate for the procurement of the form for the examinations. This is a fair expectation by the administration since the monthly stipends of NYEP participants range between N6000 (45 Canadian Dollars) and N10000 (55 Canadian Dollars). The lower part of the range is greater than the salary of a teacher with the National Certificate of Education (NCE) who teaches in a private secondary school, and the higher part of the range is equal to the salary of a teacher with the NCE who teaches in a state government secondary school.

At the inception of NYEP, it was not sufficiently clear how our meagre efforts through NYEP could actually assist youths to access college education. Retrospectively, I can now remember thinking “it is better to do something—no matter how small—than not doing anything at all.” However, after I embarked on the NYEP, I began to comprehend how the promotional examination fees presented a great hurdle for youths wishing to access college education. This meant that our efforts, as meagre as they were, were geared in the right direction, and could actually make a difference in the NYEP participants’ desperation to access college education. So we let participants of NYEP know that they are free to use the monthly stipends paid to them to procure their daily needs such as toiletries and sometimes clothing, but are also required to save some money to purchase the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board Examination (JAMBE) forms which entitles them to sit for the examinations. All examinations related to gaining admission to the next level of education

are referred to as “Promotional Examinations.” However, for college and university admission, the JAMBE is the only required promotional examination for all successful secondary school graduates.

The promotional examination fees constituted a big hurdle for youths because their parents are usually not able to finance the college or university education tuition and therefore saw it as a waste of resources to pay the promotional examination fees. However, I observed that every parent was willing to request financial assistance from relations to financially support their children’s tuition once the youth sits the promotional examinations, passed them, and obtained an admission to a specific university. Because relations—members of extended family were willing to assist financially when a student secured a university admission, all NYEP youth participants that were offered admission into a college or university were able to complete their education even though with some financial difficulty. Only small portions of student fees have been paid by the NYEP, in situations where a student was facing the risk of being sent home from school for financial reasons, which was usually the inability to register and pay tuition while in college or university. Generally speaking NYEP’s role had been to support the costs for promotional examinations for every participant by procuring the JAMBE forms using the portion of the stipends they had saved. The main goal of NYEP presently, is to get more students into college and hope that relations and well-wishers would take care of their college fees. We are hoping that NYEP will secure financial assistance to implement our proposed “Bore Hole Project” which is currently under study by a Canadian Non-Governmental Organization (Laurier Institution) based in UBC Robson Square. I wrote the Bore-Hole Project proposal in May 2012 in response to a call from the University of British Columbia International Development

Research Network (UBC/IDRN) for graduate students to write proposals for projects they wish to implement in a developing country. There were three prizes earmarked for the best proposals—\$3,000 (Three Thousand Canadian Dollars) for the best proposal, \$1,500 (One Thousand Canadian Dollars) for the second best and \$500 (Five Hundred Canadian Dollars) for the third best. Unfortunately our proposal was not selected in the UBC/IDRN competition and in retrospect I can see why—maybe the cost of my project was higher than the proposed prizes. In my proposal, I was requesting for \$14,000 (Fourteen Thousand Canadian Dollars) to dig a bore hole which should provide clean water to our community, as well as provide NYEP participants with a means of employment—selling the water to the community at a reasonable rate. Presently, the community use untreated water from the river Katsina-Ala, which is sold by whoever is strong enough to go to the river, fetch the water and bring into people’s homes and hotels. Even though our proposal was not selected during the UBC/IDRN competition, we have not given up hope with regards to funding NYEP. We continue to engage in communication with different donor organizations about the bore-hole project, hoping that some organization will be interested in assisting with the financial means to sustain the NYEP. The sales of water from the bore-holes would provide enough monthly stipends for NYEP participants to pay their college tuition fees. Hopefully, when this happens we would gain the attention of policy makers in Nigeria to the benefit of such community self-help projects. The ultimate hope was that more projects like NYEP would spring in every rural area in Nigeria.

With the introduction of the 9-3-4 system of education in Nigeria, the recipient of education would spend 6 years in primary school, 3 years in junior secondary school, 3 years in senior secondary school, and 4 years in tertiary institution. The 6 years spent in primary

school and 3 years spent in junior secondary school are merged to form the nine in the 9-3-4 system. The General Certificate of Education (GCE) was replaced by the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE). The SSCE is conducted at the end of the Secondary School studies, usually May/June of each year. The GCE is conducted in November/December as a supplement for those students who did not get the required credit from their SSCE results. The standards of the two examinations are basically the same, and they are both conducted by the same body called the West African Examination Council (WAEC). A maximum of 9 and a minimum of 7 subject areas are registered for the examination by each student; Mathematics and English language are compulsory for all students taking the exam.

The first year entry requirements into most Nigerian Universities include: Minimum of SSCE/GCE ordinary level credits at maximum of two sittings (ordinary level credits refer to credits earned on the secondary school level, as opposed to advanced level credits which are credits earned at the post-secondary school level). A student who has ordinary level credits is admitted into the university at a lower level of starting point than a student who is admitted with advanced level credits. However, the same minimum cut-off marks are required for all students sitting the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board Examination (JAMBE) which is 200 out of 400 marks. Candidates with a minimum of Merit Pass in National Certificate of Education (NCE), National Diploma (ND), and other Advanced Level Certificates minimum qualification, with minimum of 5 Ordinary Level (O/L) credits are given “Direct Entry” admission into the appropriate undergraduate degree programs without the requirement of the promotional examination (JAMBE).

Summary and conclusion

In this chapter I discussed the experiences of the youths in my community in general, and the youth participants of NYEP in particular. Generally speaking the experiences of youths in my Katsina-Ala rural community differ somewhat from other Nigerian youths in the urban areas such as Lagos (a port city) in Nigeria and Abuja the capital city of Nigeria where there are opportunities to “hustle” (a term used by some young people to describe their quest for productive employment) to make their financial ends meet.

Poverty in Nigeria was discussed, making reference to the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), authored by the Nigerian National Planning Commission (2004) in which it was suggested that people may move in and out of poverty as a result of natural disasters or health problems, lack of access to credit, or the lack of natural resources. However, the most pertinent statement that reflects the situation of NYEP participant is that “poor people are likely to live in rural areas, be less educated, and have larger families than the rest of the population” (P.20).

As with other rural communities, the lack of opportunities of other sources of income besides farming, coupled with the great number of out-of-school, unemployed youths there are usually petty thefts and burglaries in our community to the extent that a vigilante group had to be put in place by the College Neighbourhood Association to check unusual late night mobility—people’s movements during the early am hours of the night.

A literature review reveals that the present study is related to and informed by other studies involving youths. The studies of Dillabough, Wang & Kennelly (2005); Nayak, 2003; Porter, H., Abane, R; Munthali, M. and Tanle, A. (2010) have some commonalities with my study in that they all involved youths at risk and they sought to understand the ways in which

these youths occupy productively and sometimes dangerously, to protect their territorial spaces in case of any outside intrusion. In my study, the hire boys which the NYEP participants are a subset of, hold a tradition of solidarity with their members when anything happens with one of them—in case of accidents or when they feel their member had not been treated appropriately.

The study of Porter et.al (2010) involved African youths and reflects the same issues I had to deal with when recruiting the NYEP participants. This study reported about parents' unwillingness to allow their girls freedom of movement, especially at night, for fear that their girls might get pregnant, and for suspecting other people's boys' night mobility to constitute safety threat to the community.

A brief discussion was made about the place of the NYEP in the participants' access to tertiary education in Nigeria. The NYEP monthly stipends were thought to be insignificant compared to the youths' educational needs as we perceived it initially. However, once a clear understanding of the real financial "hurdle" the youths were facing—the money to procure the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board Examination (JAMBE) forms, it became clear that the NYEP monthly stipends, meagre as they were could significantly contribute towards the NYEP youth participants' educational needs. When a youth buys the JAMBE form and writes the examination and obtains an admission into a tertiary institution, his or her parents were willing to make requests for financial assistance from their relations to support their child's college/university education. The role of the NYEP then was mainly to provide the money to procure the JAMBE forms. The rest can be taken care of by parents once their child is admitted into a college or university.

Generally speaking, it can be said that the NYEP has been successful so far with regards to accessing tertiary education—with five youths getting admission into higher education-- two into university, two into colleges of education, and one into a school of health technology. One of the youths who was a primary school leaver, got an admission into secondary school.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

The research questions:

- (1) What are the experiences of NYEP youth participants and their families? And
- (2) How are their experiences informing my understanding of my own experiences and the interpretations of those experiences retrospectively?

This is an auto-ethnographic study of the NYEP. I am employing the form of auto-ethnography termed *reflexive ethnographies* in which the researcher's personal experience becomes important primarily in how it illuminates the culture under study. Reflexive ethnographies range along a continuum from starting research from one's own experience to ethnographies where the researcher's experience is actually studied along with other participants, to confessional tales where the researcher's experiences of doing the study becomes the focus of the investigation (Ellis and Bochner, 2000). In this research my personal experience will be studied alongside the experiences of the participants.

3.1 Participants of the Study

The participants of this study are selected from the population of the families of the NYEP participants according to the following criteria: First, the study considered the impact that the NYEP directly had on the youth and consequently his or her family. That is, either these participants moved from one level of education to another because of participating in the project, or have got the JAMBE form and sat the promotional examination, but had not passed it, and so remain enrolled in NYEP in order to sit another promotional examination in

the future. This is usually allowed by NYEP administration because this student is judged to have proven resilience in his/ her aspiration to access tertiary education. Every youth who procured the JAMBE form, sat the JAMBE and applied for admission and got admission into tertiary institutions were considered as having met the first criterion to be a study participant (see Section 3.2 of this dissertation). These are Adah—College of Education, Katsina-Ala; Chinyere—University of Agriculture, Makurdi; Jessi—Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi; Gabriel—College of Education, Katsina-Ala and Fanan—School of Health Technology, Katsina-Ala. Bukar, was a primary school graduate at the time he enrolled in the NYEP. He got an admission into Government Day Secondary School, Katsina-Ala. Dauda is the only one who had bought forms for the JAMBE and sat the examination but had not been successful in getting admission into a tertiary institution.

The College Neighborhood Association (CNA)

The sense of community had been further enhanced by the creation of the College Neighborhood Association (CNA), an endeavor to create an engine of solidarity against the increasing crime rate in the neighborhood, especially during the morning hours of the night. The CNA started early 2004, rather informally, with a couple of heads of households coming together in the compound of the oldest man in the community (Baba). By the end of 2004, the CNA had formally taken off with a Chairman, Secretary and the Vigilante Group (made up of younger men in the community) and lay members. I registered as a lay member with a token annual levy of N200 (\$1.5). We had our meetings the 4th Sunday in every month, where we ate and drank together. The responsibility of meal preparation revolved around households each month, and in some cases a goat was slaughtered. I did not understand much of what was said, except when the Chairman decided that what was being said was important

for everyone to hear, in which case he interpreted it into the English Language. There were a few non-Tiv members of the CNA beside me but they all understood the Tiv language enough to follow the conversation. I was considered a Tiv woman by virtue of my marriage to a Tiv person. However, I could not understand the Tiv language because I had no experience of living among the Tiv people consistently for a considerable length of time. The interpretation from Tiv to English was therefore, exclusively for my benefit.

There is so much interdependence in the community that one neighbor could assist another neighbor finding his or her strayed animal. I remember a neighbor bringing one of my male goats which had fallen in the well in 2009. The following is a prose I wrote, a way of expressing my innermost feelings as I embarked on NYEP:

The NYEP prose: love that never goes away

I know why I engage with the youths of my neighbourhood

They are in my front yard, they are in my backyard

The younger ones pull out the plants in my garden, the older ones eat up the smoked fish I place high up on the fence to dry

The mature ones pick up a pretend rifle attempting to rob me at night

I thought of a way to get rid of them—I found none—our lives are somehow intertwined; we are neighbours and neighbours in my locality are not independent—they are interdependent

And on a second thought I would not get rid of them if I could—they could have been my own children—ones that came out of my own loins.

The following is the list of the families who participated in research study:

Family 1: Adah, Adamu and Adama

Family 2: Bukar, Baba and Binta

- Family 3: Chinyere, Chuku and Chibuzu
- Family 4: Dauda alone (Father was deceased, Mother was sick)
- Family 5: Fanan, Faityo and Fater
- Family 6: Gabriel and Gbanan (Father was deceased)

3.2 Selection Criteria

I need to articulate the justification for this selection criterion. Every NYEP participant is expected to stay on the project for at least one year. However, a concession was made for the youths who joined the NYEP while they were already in college/university and joined the NYEP during their summer holiday to assist them with school related expenses. There were four of such youths and were considered temporary participants of the NYEP. These are Daniel, Nuhu, Pine, and Yohanne. More comment would be made about these four youths later in this section.

For the regular members of the NYEP one year was considered to be a reasonable period of time within which a participant can save the required money (N4000 Nigerian, about \$35 Canadian) to purchase the JAMBE form. If a participant is not prepared to engage in the activities of the NYEP (which is considered strenuous and sometimes ego diminishing by some youths) and quits before one year, then, such a youth, by his or her own choice has disqualified his or her own self by not being an enthusiastic project participant. I consider such a participant as one who chose to enroll and later chose to disengage from the NYEP. By the same token, a participant who fails to purchase the JAMBE form because he or she is unable to save money for this purpose—over a 12-months period, while receiving stipends from NYEP, then I think he or she does not understand the concept of our struggle to help

youths through the NYEP scheme. Therefore this participant was perceived as uninterested in the pursuit of education and did not consider college education as important as other things in his or her life for which he or she preferred to spend the NYEP monthly stipend on.

In this study, I am looking for reasons to enlarge the NYEP, and I think both categories of participants described above do not fall in the category of participant I need to heed their opinions about NYEP. I believe I need to study these categories of participants when I have different sets of research questions altogether. NYEP is not a mandate from the government, nor do we receive any financial benefits for engaging in the work of NYEP. Rather, my sense of benefit is associated with seeing lives changed, even though in small ways.

The second criterion for selecting participants has to do with how easy it is to access the family geographically. To be more specific, there is danger in travelling within Nigeria because of the senseless killings of Christians by a Moslem fundamentalist group called “Boko Haram.” Their head-quarter is in Maiduguri where Jessi, one of the NYEP participants resides. I thought it was too risky to travel to Maiduguri at the time for the purpose of interviewing Jessi.

The third criterion is the likelihood of the family to show interest and readiness to participate in the research study—that is on the part of both the participants and their parents.

Some demographic information about all the 18 participants of the NYEP

There were 18 youth who participated in the NYEP over a period of 10 years (2005-2014). Arranged alphabetically their names are: Adah (2007) *17 years, a secondary school leaver*; Aondona (2007) *18 years, a secondary school leaver*; Bemdoo (2005) *15 years, a*

*primary school leaver; Bukar (2005) 14 years, a primary school leaver; Chinyere (2006) 16 years, a secondary school leaver; Dauda (2011), 27 years, a secondary school leaver, Daniel (2008), 20 years, a **College of Education, Katsina-Ala student**; Fabian (2009) 21 years, a secondary school leaver; Fanan (2008) 17 years, a Government Day Secondary School student who wanted to change schools; Gabriel, 14 years, a secondary school leaver—no enrolment or disengagement dates with NYEP for him because he was not a committed participant—rather he was like a substitute participant; Ishimaya (2006) 20 years a secondary school leaver; Jessi (2005) 25 years, a secondary school leaver; John (2008) 24 years, a secondary school leaver; Nuhu (2006) **28 years, a University of Maiduguri student**; Pine (2008) **26 years, a Benue State University student**; Toryima (2006) 16 years, a secondary school leaver; Valentine (2010) 25 years, a secondary school leaver; Yohanne (2007) **22 years, a College of Education Katsina-Ala Student**.*

Some of the names are real and some are pseudonyms. Pseudonyms were used for those who were selected to participate in the research study in 2014. I did not think there was a need to use pseudonyms for those who did not qualify to be selected for the study because I did not collect any data from them through the interviews so there was no need to protect their privacy, nor was their participation in the NYEP a confidential matter.

Starting with the temporary members of the NYEP, these were:

1. Daniel (2008), 20 years, **a College of Education, Katsina-Ala student**.
2. Nuhu (2006) **28 years, a University of Maiduguri student**.
3. Pine (2008) **26 years, a Benue State University student**.
4. Yohanne (2007) **22 years, a College of Education Katsina-Ala Student**.

As stated earlier these youths were not considered regular members of the NYEP, although they were paid monthly stipends to assist them with their college/university related expenses. They were not expected to save money for anything except to help them prepare to return to their respective college/universities. The vacation period was about three months and most of them worked with NYEP for a minimum of two months, except Daniel who was required by his parents to return home to his parents in Gboko and that meant leaving Katsina-Ala. All the three other participants lived on the NYEP site for the two months they were engaged with the NYEP.

The fourteen regular NYEP participants were:

1. Adah (2007) *17 years, a secondary school leaver*
2. Aondona (2007) *18 years, a secondary school leaver*
3. Bemdoo (2005) *15 years, a primary school leaver*
4. Bukar (2005) *14 years, a primary school leaver*
5. Chinyere (2006) *16 years, a secondary school leaver*
6. Dauda (2011), *27 years, a secondary school leaver*
7. Fabian (2009) *21 years, a secondary school leaver*
8. Fanan (2008) *17 years, a Government Day Secondary School student who wanted to change schools*
9. Gabriel, 14 years, a secondary school leaver—*no enrolment or disengagement dates with NYEP for him because he was not a committed participant—rather he was like a substitute participant*
10. Ishimaya (2006) *20 years a secondary school leaver*
11. Jessi (2005) *25 years, a secondary school leaver*

12. John (2008) *24 years, a secondary school leaver*
13. Toryima (2006) *16 years, a secondary school leaver*
14. Valentine (2010) *25 years, a secondary school leaver*

Of the 14 youths above, eight of them did not qualify to participate in the study due to their inability to meet the criteria for participation in the 2014 research study, even though they were considered regular participants of the NYEP. These are:

1. Aondona (2007) *18 years, a secondary school leaver*—Aondona is a son of one of the my lecturer colleagues in the College of Education Katsina-Ala. However, he was unable to enroll into a college or university several years after completing his secondary school. He came to me and requested to enroll in NYEP and I sought his father's consent. He gave his consent initially. Later he asked Aondona to quit NYEP so he could enroll him in the College of Education Katsina-Ala. Aondona disengaged from NYEP without saving enough money to buy the JAMBE form I think partially because he squandered the money on Luxury good such as perfume and so on and so forth.
2. Bemdoo (2005) *15 years, a primary school leaver*—Bemdoo was the primary school leaver Bukar brought to me in 2005 as a friend who wanted to go to secondary school, but was not able to pay the school fees because his father had died and his mother lived in the interior (please see more details about Bemdoo in Chapter 5—Profiles of Youth participants “Bukar—Family Two”). At the time Bemdoo engaged in the NYEP he was living with his mother's twin sister. However, his mother got sick and he had to return to the interior to take care of her, so he had to disengage from the NYEP. I made efforts to have him return to Katsina-Ala after his mother's health got better, by sending messages and giving promises to send him transport money, but my efforts did not yield results. I was inclined to think he was

taken over by the village life and did not want the structured life of engagement with the NYEP, or schooling.

3. Fabian (2009) *21 years, a secondary school leaver*—Fabian asked to enroll with the NYEP and participated in the sales of the NYEP for a period of one week and I did not see him again. I took it that he disengaged with the NYEP without telling me about it.
4. Ishimaya (2006) *20 years a secondary school leaver*—Ishimaya enrolled with the NYEP and became the sales coordinator for as long as she was with the NYEP. I was appreciative of the fact that she was the sales coordinator because she understood something about accountability having been raised in Vancouver and completed her secondary school in Vancouver. Ishimaya was not selected to participate in the 2014 research study due to familial and ethical reasons (being my daughter). Besides, she was a Research Assistant for the study.
5. Jessi (2005) *25 years, a secondary school leaver school leaver*—Jessi became a participant of the NYEP, after having lived with me for a year. He was the brain behind the Ice blocks making machine. He learnt to construct the machine that could change water sachets into ice blocks when there was a constant flow of electricity (please see more details about the ice making machine in Chapter 8—Profiles of Youth participants “Gabriel—Family Six”). Jessi was not selected due to geographical and safety reasons—being in Borno state where the Boko Haram had started some terrorist activities. In addition to that he is my nephew so I thought it might not be ethical for him to participate in the study.
6. John (2008) *24 years, a secondary school leaver*—John enroll in the NYEP when he lost his job with as a medical assistant in 2008. He knew about the NYEP when I met him in Jos, Nigeria in 2007. He worked in a hospital facility in which one of my children was admitted

for treatment so I met him on one of my visits to my son. However, he lost his hospital job a few months later and he called to let me know. John had finished secondary school and was trying to save money to go to a college or university. I asked if he would consider joining the NYEP. John had a wife already at the time of enrollment, however, Katsina-Ala being so far from his home (Jos) he had to live with us on the project site to be a participant of the NYEP. His wife visited him often in Katsina-Ala, a distance of 400KM from Jos, their home. Later his wife became pregnant and she was still visiting him often, sometimes without informing John or me. We discussed about her visits with John and we both agreed that it was unsafe as a pregnant woman for her to travel this distance as often as she did. John therefore disengaged from the NYEP and returned home to Jos the same year to take care of his family.

7. Toryima (2006) *16 years, a secondary school leaver*—Toryima was one of the participants of NYEP who really felt proud of his looks. He was tall and slender and looks to me, by the way he walked that he was conscious of his good looks. Unfortunately we did not have good roads between the project site and where the NYEP sales venue in the College of Education Katsina-Ala, hence the only alternative to get to the sales venue was to push the wheelbarrow which was full of water and some beverages, and required some strenuous efforts. I later found out, in a hard way, that Toryima did not like this stress. On his first day of work, he came to the project site and took the wheelbarrow containing the sales items and conducted the sales successfully, as he reported his sales to the sales coordinator, Ishimaya. The following day Ishimaya filled the wheelbarrow with the sales items again, but Toryima did not show up, and he refused to answer my phone calls. I was very disappointed. No sales

were conducted in the College of Education Katsina-Ala venue that day neither did I receive any message from Toryima about why he quitted NYEP.

8. Valentine (2010) 25 years, a secondary school leaver—Valentine was from Cameroon, looking for a greener pasture in Nigeria. He was working as a driver with a company which prepared water sachets for sale called “Solace Water.” I first met him when I went to this company to request a delivery of water to the project site to fill up the water tanks for preparing our ice blocks. They had gigantic water tankers and so they sell water to people who can afford to pay the price of one of their tankers. I pay money for a tanker that filled both my tanks which were 2750 liter capacity. The day I met valentine, I was driving my little car and was having trouble maneuvering through the alleys of the company and Valentine offered to help me, which I agreed. He later got disenchanted with his job at Solace Water and came to join NYEP. Being far from home (Cameroon), we gave him a room to live on the project site. I spent some months in Nigeria after his engagement with the NYEP, after which I had to return to Vancouver to complete my program of studies in UBC. During the time I was in Nigeria, I observed that he did not care much about the prospects of schooling, although when I interviewed him for enrolment in the NYEP he said he really wanted to further his education. One thing I noticed was that he spent much time with girls who came to the site from the College of Education, Katsina-Ala, as if to charge their phones or buy sachet water from our kiosk. When I was in Vancouver, I received a reports that he allowed his friends (some girls and some boys) to conduct the sales on his behalf. Adamu my neighbor, one of the parents of my youth participants (Adah) told me that much money could have been realized through NYEP sales however, Valentine was not the only person conducting the sales so there were possibilities that NYEP might incur some financial losses.

I returned home to Katsina-Ala May, 2011 to address this situation, among other things. I talked with Valentine and I concluded that he did not have any intentions to further his education as such he did not qualify to be a participant of the NYEP. I called on some members of the community (about eight), including Abul Nege, the first prospective community leader, and others to discuss the issues about Valentine. I later explained to them why I could not allow Valentine to remain on the project site so he would have to return to Cameroon. The community members were in support of this action, so I raised money (N20,000- \$80 Canadian) for Valentine to return to Cameroon, and he did.

The participants who were impacted by the project and were qualified to participate in the research study were: Adah, Bukar, Chinyere, Dauda, Fanan, Gabriel.

3.3 The Community Leader as a Study Participant

The community leader (Mr. Simon Animiem) whom I interviewed volunteered to take the position of the first community leader (Mr. Abul Nege) because the first community leader declined to participate in the research study when I arrived in Katsina-Ala for the interviews. Mr. Abul Nege had verbally agreed to act in the capacity of a community leader in our conversation on the phone when I was in Vancouver. I here relate the “challenge” of losing a community leader, and the “opportunity” of gaining another one below:

The challenge

I had requested the permission of Mr. Abul Nege and Joseph God-Dey to have their names on my team for the UBC/IDRN Graduate Students’ competition for funds to develop a project of their choice in a developing country. I had given the names and contacts of the members of my team to the coordinator of the UBC/IDRN competition in May 2012. Most of

my team members did not have access to email so I gave their phone numbers only. My team comprised of:

Miriam Orkar Graduate Student and Team Leader

Mr Abul Nege Community Leader

Joseph God-Dey Project Youth Participant on Site

Pine Orkar Resource Person

Apparently, Mr. Abul Nege later (January, 2013) received a scam message on his phone which was suspicious to him, and he concluded it had to be through my contacts. He said this person who contacted him by phone had a plan to dupe him of some money. He sounded really angry when he made this known to me in August 2013 as I called him to confirm the official name of what I call the College Neighbourhood Association (CNA). He accused me of giving his phone number to untrustworthy person or persons, and charged me with untruthful conduct. I found this message disturbing, and therefore requested two “educated” members of the community to find out the details of what Mr. Nege briefly stated in our phone conversation. The word “educated” here mean the possession of some kind of Western type logistical reasoning skills, as well as the skills to interpret the Tiv cultural worldview. They met with Mr. Nege in March of 2014 and they gave me some reports on the phone about their meeting with him while I was still in Vancouver. At the end of all the deliberations on this matter, including the ones which took place when I was already in Nigeria, Mr. Nege’s conclusions were: “I have no interest to work with Mrs. Orkar as the Community Leader for her research and I will not allow her to interview any member of the community.” These statements scared me because I did not know the level of influence he

had on community members, and how many people would believe what he said and be obedient to act out his requests, instead of following their own convictions. To find these out was very crucial, especially, if he actually asked community members to refuse to participate in my research study. So I purported not to do anything about research until I find out if he had put his words into action or not. To my relief I did find out that he had not spoken to anyone in the community about my intended research work. However, having some unresolved issues with Mr. Abul Nege meant I could not attend the College Neighbourhood Association meetings (which took place at his house), where I intended to talk to potential participants about the research study in a community setting. This meant I had to visit each family several times before I could get the signed consent forms from all Family members.

On my second visit to Adamu's family home, I took the consent forms—three of them, for Adamu (father), Adama (mother) and Adah (youth participant). They all happened to be present during my visit. As I handed the consent forms to each of them, I told them that I was leaving the consent forms with them for two weeks according to the regulations agreed upon between myself and the University of British Columbia (UBC) for the conduct of research with human participants. I told them that the approval of my application to the Behavioral Research Ethics Board (BREB) in UBC, Vancouver was based on certain agreements I entered into with the University. One of them is that I would not impress on any NYEP youth participants or their parents to participate in the research study without giving them adequate time to decide as to whether or not they would like to. And if they do not choose to participate, there should be no penalty whatsoever. I told them that I would keep to this agreement even though I am running out of time.

The opportunity

Adamu had read about those regulations in the consent forms as well. However, as I took time to explain further, he seemed to be impressed with my honesty. He cleared his throat and said: “I have question for you.” I responded, “I would try to answer your question if I can.” He then lowered his voice and said something to the effect that according how we do things in Nigeria I could have given the forms to him and ask him to get them signed in two days and we could make the dates look like it took 2 weeks. However, I decided to follow the instructions of my University even though none of my University colleagues were there to know this. Then he posed the real question which I did not write down at the time of this conversation but later tried to reconstruct it: “Why do you act like a white person—is it because you have lived too long with them in their country and so you have become like them, or what makes you do things the way you do them?”

I thought for a while after I left their house that day, trying to search my heart for a more comprehensive answer to his question—I mean more comprehensive than the on-the-spot response I gave to Adamu. No one had ever asked me such a question before so I had to think hard. My thoughts were: “Of course my stay in Canada for more than 16 years should count for something, as I rub shoulders with some fine well-mannered people who are taught from young age how to treat other people with respect. Additionally, most of my studies in UBC have been on ethics education—the ethic of care and ethic of justice, with emphasis on self-respect and respect for persons. More importantly, I thought I have a law of God written in my heart since I gave my life to Jesus—it is God I seek to please, and even though no man sees me, if I am convicted of wrong doing in my heart, especially towards another human being I usually fall on my knees before the Lord and confess the wrong doing, and in some

cases I had to also confess it to the person I had wronged. This had not been an easy thing for me to do, so I try not to be frivolous with my words or actions. On the other hand, this fear of God in my heart sets me free from all fear—fear of man, woman, and the law, because to live this way is live in Love (properly referred to as Agape) and Love is the fulfilment of the law. However, I gave a simpler answer to Adamu that day—in his house and in the presence of his wife and daughter: “Yes, living in Canada has some influence on me, and I hope that my work with our youths have influenced their character as well. However, what is even more important is to have the fear of God in one’s heart—because I believe that He watches everything I do to others as well as everything others do to me—He watches, even when no one else is watching.” His response was, “This is wonderful—I believe I can do anything to help you in your research—I am prepared to be your “community Leader!”

I was very pleased to hear those words coming from him because it was clear to me that he respected my convictions and would try to be honest in his capacity as a community leader as well. He was my next door neighbour for 8 years in Katsina-Ala, and he is probably in the best position to know if my claims were true or not. Moreover, he worked closely with Mr. Nege in the handling of the affairs of the CNA. Being my neighbour, I had given him money on few occasions to pay my dues when I was not able to attend some of our meetings. So I arranged with him a time slot to interview him as a community leader after I interviewed him as a parent of Adah, a youth participant. On the whole, I found this part of my experience very interesting—the *challenge* was cancelled out by the *opportunity*—one community leader’s claim of my untrustworthy behaviour was totally nullified by another community leader’s experiential reality. As such, I never had to defend myself against Mr. Nege’s allegations about dishonesty.

I therefore interviewed Adamu, the father of Adah as a community leader. Some of the things I interviewed him about had to do with the safety of the neighbourhood and his perception of the relevance of the NYEP. I also interviewed him with regards to the effectiveness of the vigilante group.

3.4 My Community Member/Researcher Dual Position

The Western training and way of understanding experience which I brought to the field of narrative research in the Nigerian context can be both a source of strength and weakness in terms of ideological positioning, trust building, potential power inequalities, and the dilemmas of interpretation (Fox, 2008). Narrative research methodology embraces multiple ways of representing lived experience discursively, regardless of a particular level of literacy, education or formal occupation. The way in which we come to a shared understanding, a common purpose, and acceptable ways of interpreting the incidences that occurred in my life, as well as what is occurring in some of my participants lives presently, to serve the purpose of this auto-ethnographic study requires a sensitivity and sensibility associated with the postcolonial dilemmas in narrative research. For example, the issues of power, language and ideology featured prominently in this narrative inquiry because of my diaspora positioning, being on the fence between the developed and the developing worlds. My position as a community member, initiator of the NYEP, as well as a researcher could present a conflict of interests. For example, I initiated NYEP as a community member and had no idea that I would research it later on. As such I had no idea how my researcher position might change the views of my participants about whether I was empathizing with their situation, or taking advantage of them. Even though I have experienced a life of poverty within the African context—a fact which lingers in my memory, the participants of my study

seem to perceive me as a foreigner—or “Batu” (meaning a “White person”). I am not a white person, as they could see, but I act White—as far as they were concerned. For them the act of observing out-of-school youths, having a chat with them about why they are out of school, and attempting to address the problems causing school dropout, constituted a white person’s behaviour. They have not been used to people in the community who are prepared to take their time to listen to another person’s concerns, much less consider ways to address those concerns. I do not believe this means the community members do not care about each other. However, in a situation where people do not have enough for themselves, or so they think, it is not reasonable, by their standards, to think of others. On the other hand, they have been aware of White missionaries coming to the villages proving medicine and sometimes training people about good nutrition for free. They may not understand why the missionaries do these acts of kindness, but they could make the association between free services and a White person.

Other reasons they could conceive my behaviour as a White person’s behaviour is because I am usually strict about work ethic, keeping time, being consciously productive with my own hands, instead of engaging in “under the tree women talks.”

I therefore thought the aforementioned constitute strengths and weaknesses—weaknesses which could present barriers in my relationship with my study participants, especially when I enter the site for data collection. Having anticipated this, I have considered working with the community leader Mr. Abul Nege who always acted as the leader of the community, and had been a colleague of mine for more than 15 years during the time I taught at the college of education Katsina-Ala. He is well educated and is able to think more critically than most members of the community. This is an advantage because he is able to

look at my intentions in NYEP critically, and not with sentimentality; he is also able to criticize as well as applaud the project as need be. Most importantly, his support could make the people feel at ease about my intentions to conduct a research study, and maybe, convince them to think of me as their own community member, who empathises with the situation of the youths.

I believe I should re-state in this section that the reasoning given in my community is typical of the reasoning in any African rural community, who have little contact with people who hold different world views and therefore do things differently. I know for myself that if I had been in this rural community all my life (I mean without the opportunities of travelling abroad as I had on several occasions), I would probably have similar worldviews with my community members.

3.5 Validity Issues in Narrative Research

Contemporary social science now consists of two communities—conventional social science and reformed social science (Polkinghorne, 2007). The present study is located within the reformist community. In the main, social science has passed through the “paradigm wars” between the two communities, yet there remain elements of non-acceptance of the reformist efforts.

Typically, the issue of validity is approached by applying one’s own communities protocols about what, in its view, is acceptable evidence. It is my position that different kinds of knowledge claims require different kinds of evidence and argument to convince readers that the claim is valid. Moreover, the general notion of validity concerns the believability of a statement or knowledge claim. Validity is not inherent in a claim, but the characteristic of a

claim by the ones to whom the claim is addressed. Sometimes people grant validity to a statement simply because of the authority of the person who makes it. However, for judgements about the validity of knowledge claims to have scientific merit, it is required that they are based on the weight of the evidence and arguments offered in support of a statement or knowledge claim. Thus, a statement of knowledge claim is not intrinsically valid; rather, its validity is a function of inter-subjective judgement. However, it has long been the position of the reformers that what counts as evidence and what is acceptable as seasoned argument needs to be expanded so that knowledge claims about the understanding of human experience and how it can be included in social science. Validation of claims about the understanding of human experience requires evidence in the form of “personally reflective descriptions in ordinary language and analysis, using inductive processes that capture commonalities across individual experiences” (Polkinghorne, 2007, P. 475). The present study has “captured commonalities across individual experiences” over a period of two decades—my research participants experiences in 2014, and my experiences in 1964. This involves defensible corpus of materials for use in discourse analysis; defensible methods as we move from text to context or move back and forth between them; and taking responsibility for implied claims particularly about reception (Pickering, 2008). I conclude this section with a set of questions that Ellis & Bochner (2000) suggested one should keep in mind when interacting with narrators:

How do we judge the merits of these stories? When do we know they are reliable and telling? I think it’s the same judgement we make about any author or any character. Is the work honest or dishonest? Does the author take a measure of herself, her limitations, her confusion, ambivalence, mixed feelings? Do you gain a sense of

emotional reliability? Does the story enable you to understand and feel the experience it seeks to convey? (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 749).

Reflexive dyadic interviews generally take on a conversational approach in the interviewer tunes in to the interactively produced meanings and emotional dynamics generated within the interview. Although the interviewee and the interviewee story remains central in the interview process, the words, the thoughts and the emotions of the interviewer are also considered important.

3.6 The Interviews: Participants as Narrators

The site of my research had been my neighborhood for eight years. My five-bedroom house is still surrounded on every side by round huts and more newly constructed brick houses. After staying in Vancouver for 3 years, with only a brief visit in May 2011, I anticipated to be received as a visitor—at least for the first few weeks of my arrival, and I was right—many of the neighbours came out to greet me as I arrived in Katsina Ala, Sunday 11th May 2014. The change of the community leader from Mr. Abul Nege to Adamu meant a slight change in the conduct of the interviews. It was intended that youths would be interviewed first and then parents and then the community leader. However, there was a delay in when the interviews actually started, so we interviewed whoever was ready to be interviewed. As such the dates of interviews of youths and parents were not sequenced one after the other—some parents and some youths were interviewed in the same week, for example, while other youths and parents were not. The effect of the delay in getting a community leader is fully discussed in chapter 4 (see Section 4.1 of this dissertation).

The interviews

Hamlet: Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?

Polonius: By th' mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed

Hamlet: Methinks it is like a weasel.

Polonius: It is backed like a weasel.

Hamlet: Or like a whale?

Polonius: Very like a whale.

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act 3, Scene 2, p. 17.

The above interview appears as a display of the power relations at a royal court. Hamlets' interview may be seen as an illustration of pervasive doubt about the appearance of the world (Kvale, 1996).

Interviews include a wide variety of forms and multiplicity of uses—from structure questions to negotiated text. The interviews in this study may be of the negotiated text form than structured questions. Unlike the interview between Hamlet and Polonius, I as the interviewer would refrain from manipulating the content of the response of the interviewee. Rather, more questions would be asked as a response to a narrator's answer to ensure that the interviewer understands what is being said by the interviewee. Reflexive dyadic interview will be employed in this study. Here the interview might take a conversational form in which the interviewer tries to tune in to the interactively produced meanings and emotional dynamics within the interview itself. Though the focus is on the interviewee and the interviewee's story, the thoughts, and feelings of the researcher are also considered (Ellis, 2004).

3.7 Data Collection, Data Management, and Timeline

The primary sources of data were the interviews. Journal entries and photographs of people and places were also collected as other sources of data. Some videos of the prospective NYEP participants are part of the data. My own story is considered a part of the data, as well as any observations made during interviews about the demeanor of the interviewees which might indicate comfort /discomfort with which an interviewee responds to a question. The entire interview process was tape-recorded, and transcribed. To ensure anonymity pseudonyms were given to participants—youth, father, mother—starting with the same letter of the alphabet for all members of one family. The letter chosen for a particular family is indicative of the youth's actual name in the alphabet.

Time-line

I was in Nigeria May 4th, 2014

I conducted Field work between May 18th and July 21st

I returned to Vancouver July 31st, 2014.

CHAPTER 4

Methods

Chapter four is divided into three major sections with sub-sections under each section. The sections are as follows: Methodology and Data gathering procedures. The data gathering includes the research questions, description of sources of data (includes participant interviews, and personal reflective journal and field notes), methods of data gathering and organization. The chapter also highlights the total number of interviews, as well as the timelines for interviewing youths, parents and the community leader, and how the first community leader's decision not to participate affected the study.

The research questions:

Data gathering was guided by the following research questions:

- (1) What are the experiences of NYEP youth participants and their families? And
- (2) How are their experiences informing my understanding of my own experiences and interpretations of those experiences retrospectively?

The sources of data

There were ten participants in the study (6 youths, 9 parents and 1 community leader). As have been reported, they were chosen because they are participating or have participated in NYEP, or their child has participated or is participating in NYEP; or a leader of the community from which NYEP participants originate. The data sources were gathered through mainly interviews with youth participants and their parents, as well as the community leader.

Interview data were enriched by other sources, including field notes, observations and informal conversations both during fieldwork in 2014, and notes gleaned from the everyday happenings of the NeboReach Youth Empowerment Project when it was active to corroborate, or offer insights into the project status. My personal experience is also considered part of the data in auto-ethnography because it describes my own experience with education, my autobiography, and my own possible interview responses. This is intricately tied in with the experiences of my research participants because my experience, among other things, motivated me to initiate the NYEP in 2005.

The methods of gathering and storing data

The entire interviews were tape-recorded using an old-fashioned (reel-to reel) tape recorder. This meant that all the interviews had to be recorded when there was a supply of electricity—either by regular source of electricity or the use of a generator. The use of batteries proved impossible by reason of the financial costs involved. Hence all participants had to come to the site for the interviews. Some youths have both of their parents and some have lost one of their parents through death—not for any other reasons such as separation or divorce. The same initial letter pseudonyms were given to family members according to their family ranking based on the actual name of the youth participant in the alphabet. For example, “Family One” got its designation based on the alphabetical positioning of the actual name of the youth participant in this family. So the actual name of the youth participant in Family One comes first in alphabetical order, then Family Two, Family Three, Family Four, Family Five, Family Six. Hence the pseudonyms of all the members of Family One start with an A, Family Two start with B, Family Three start with C, Family Four start with D , Family Five start with F, and Family Six start with G as follows:

Family One: Adah (AC), Adamu and Adama (Adamu was also the community leader)

Family Two: Bukar (BC), Baba and Binta

Family Three: Chinyere (AC), Chuku and Chibuzu

Family Four: Dauda alone (BC) (Father Deceased, Mother Sick)

Family Five: Fanan (AC), Faityo and Fater

Family Six: Gabriel (AC) and Gbanan (Father Deceased)

As was earlier stated, every family participant was given a pseudonym that starts with a letter of the alphabet designated for that family alone. For example, Family One is given the letter A, Family Two Letter B, Family Three letter C, Family Four letter D, Family Five letter F, Family Six letter G.

Letter E was not used in this case because it is not common to find names in the Nigerian languages I know which starts with the letter E. All family names are taken from Nigerian languages. In Family One Adah, Adamu and Adama are common Hausa names. In Family Two Bukar, Baba and Binta are common Hausa/Moslem names. In Family Three Chinyere, Chuku and Chibuzu are Ibo names. In Family Four Dauda is a Hausa name. In Family Five Fanan, Faityo, and Fater are Tiv names and in Family Six Gabriel is an English name, and Gbanan is a Tiv name.

Please Note:

For “After College” (AC) youth research participants, their responses were based on actual experience after completing college/university Education. For “Before College” (BC) participants their responses were based on actual experience, however, they were also allowed to project what their experiences might be

during college and after college.

Total number of interviews and interview questions

Six youth participants, all of Tiv cultural background were involved in the research (three females and three males). The fact that they all come from the same cultural background, and were three males and three females was not by design. The selection criteria—as described in Section 3.1 of the dissertation had to do with the extent to which youths were helped by the project, accessibility, and willingness to participate in the research. There were a total of nine parents involved in the research study. However, all fathers (Adamu, Baba, Chuku, and Faityo) opted to be interviewed with their spouses, with the agreement of the spouses, of course. Gbanan was interviewed alone. Dauda's mother could not make it to the venue of the interview due to health reasons.

The community leader (Adamu) who was interviewed with his wife as a father of Family One was also interviewed alone as a community leader.

Total participants: six youths, 9 parents, and 1 community leader. Since four sets of parents were interviewed together, the number of parent interviews became five.

Total interviews: six youth interviews, five parent interviews and one community leader interview making the sum of the number of interviews to be 12

The number of interview questions for youths were 37

The number of interview questions for parents were 16

The number of interview questions for the community leader = 9

The total number of interview questions equal to $37 + 16 + 9 = 62$

Time frame for interviews

The youth interviews started on Saturday July 6th 2014 at about 5 pm. Shimaya and I had one hour Focus Group/Social time with the Youth Participants as we celebrated Research Assistant (Ishimaya's) birthday with a few drinks and munchies. After the party, I gave every Youth Participant a copy of my own personal story. One of them asked if they were supposed to return them after the interviews were over. My response was: "No, I want you to read it and keep it as a confidential document because this is how I will treat your personal story as well--confidential." I then used my personal story to tell them how I was motivated to initiate the NYEP. I took time to explain that I was not looking for a good story, or a correct story but an honest, heartfelt, genuine experience. I then asked each of them to give me a time slot for when they are available for interviews, which they did.

Everything happened in this section as planned, except the date we actually met with the Youths (6th of July, 2014) was far later than intended. This was partially because of the decline of Mr. Nege to act as the Community Leader in the research study, which delayed the date the field work started (2nd June). Another factor was the late arrival of the Research Assistant (Ishimaya) to Katsina-Ala. She was on assignment with the National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) in Nassarawa State, Nigeria and she had to obtain permission from the Director of NYSC to travel to Katsina-Ala, Benue State. This permission did not come easily and that caused some delay in her arrival. I believed that it was important for her to be present during the Youth Participants' interviews, so I waited for her arrival to Katsina-Ala before embarking on it. In retrospect, I think it was worth waiting for Ishimaya, having seen

how the youth participants interacted with her during the Focus Group/Social session—they interacted more with her than they did with me. She served them some drinks and munchies as I prepared to present them copies of “My Personal Story.” Shimaya was present during the interviews, although I conducted the interviews with every participant, with the exception of Chinyere who lived in Makurdi, about half-way between Katsina-Ala and Nassarawa. Hence we made an arrangement with her (Chinyere) to be interviewed by Ishimaya, the Research Assistant as she passed through Makurdi on her way to Nassarawa.

The average interview time for youth participants was 1 hour 15 minutes. The focus group/ social time was about 2 hours because we waited for every youth participant to be present. However, Gabriel did not make it to our focus group/social on 6th July, 2014 and had to come on the 7th July to receive his copy of “My personal Story” and have his drinks and munchies. On the whole, much time and resources were spent on reaching youths and getting the consent forms signed, because they were harder to get at home. Additionally, every cost incurred by a participant on their trip to my home for the interviews was paid to him/her on arrival. Some Youth Participants do not live at home any longer, so they had to travel from their location to Katsina-Ala.

All Parents of youth participants signed the consent forms to participate in the research study after 2 weeks of receiving the forms. They were all interviewed except the mother of Dauda who is very elderly, and lived about 20 km from Katsina-Ala. It was not feasible to have her interviewed because all interviews had to be conducted where there is a generator to ensure the power supply was not interrupted. The usual source of power supply in Katsina-Ala could not be depended upon so I had to use my generator when the power supply was cut off. We experienced such interruptions during interviews, and I had to request

that the generator be switched on. On the other hand, she could not ride the hire machine to the project site because of her advanced age.

All fathers who had spouses volunteered to be interviewed together with their wives. On asking the wives their preferences, every wife agreed to be interviewed with her husband—although I could not tell if the wives only agreed with their husband’s preferences or that was the option they had in mind. I was curious to know, however, asking the wives their individual opinions could be undesirable as it could be seen by the husbands as a way to question their leadership role in the home. Hence I refrained from asking the wives any further individual questions. There were fewer parents’ interview questions than youths’ interview questions. However, parents had the tendency to talk more so their average interview time was almost the same—parents’ average interview time was about 1 hour compared to 1 hour 15 minutes for youths. There was no focus group session with parents but individual visits to their homes took much of their time and mine, and in most cases I had to ride “hire” motorcycle to reach their homes. Once with them, we engaged in non-research-related discussions before talking about research matters.

How the absence of Mr. Nege as community leader affected the researcher and the research

The researcher

As already stated (Section 3.3 of this dissertation), I had requested the permission of Mr. Abul Nege and Dauda to have their names on my team for the UBC/IDRN Graduate Students’ competition for funds to develop a project of their choice in a developing country. I had given the names and phone numbers of the members of my team to the coordinator of the competition did not have access to email. Apparently Mr. Nege later (January, 2013)

received a scam message on his phone which was suspicious to him, and he concluded it had to be through my contacts. He said this person who contacted him by phone had a plan to dupe him of some money. He sounded really angry when he made this known to me in August 2013.

The report of Mr. Nege's response through the educated people I sent to him had a crippling effect on me temporarily. I immediately received the report of Mr. Nege's decision, of not only refusing to participate in the study but also promising to discourage others from participating, I felt fear rushing over me like straying bullets hitting from every side—fear that Mr. Nege seemed to be a powerful and a respected man in the community and might be in the position to carry out his threats. I even thought of the possibility of coming back to Vancouver without any data. I thought of the distance between Vancouver and Nigeria and the financial costs and the inconveniences of travelling—what if I have to return to Nigeria to start this all over again? Then, I thought of what I will tell Office of Research Services (ORS), my Committee Members and my colleagues who knew I had travelled to Nigeria to collect data—maybe I would have to write a very comprehensive report to ORS—then what? For some reason my heart could not accept these negative thoughts, so I kept throwing them out of my mind, as often as they launched back in my mind, replacing them with some positive thoughts like “I know that every disappointment has a blessing behind it,” “if a door is closed, at least a window might open” and so on. Then I also remember the old saying “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” I have also known for myself—through my personal experiences that when I give enough time and attention to rationally look at the source of my fear, I usually compose myself in ways that give me the courage to replace fear with faith and find ways to advance instead of retreating. I usually isolate the source of my

fear from other things that are not. If the source of my fear is from a person's conduct or action I try to isolate the person from this conduct or action, and as well try not to be obsessed with this conduct or action. I try to think about things that this person did which had positive effects on me. In this case, I thought of the qualities I saw in Mr. Nege which made me think he would make a good Community Leader in the first place—and of course there were a couple of them—he seemed to be objective, and forthright in his dealings—or so I think and would likely be financially accountable. Hence this situation did not have to nullify his other qualities. I took a week to be alone to think through this—prayerfully of course. Before the end of that week I had the intuition that I should go to Baba to enquire if Mr. Nege had told him anything about the research study of Mrs. Orkar. I did, and his answer was “No.” This response immediately freed me from the fear, and produced in me the faith not only to commence the research study, but also to have an intuitive knowledge that the research study would proceed successfully and with no further hitches.

Research study (recruitment)

The process of recruitment turned out to be more effective than originally planned as there was a lot more interaction between the researcher and the participant families prior to the signing of the consent forms. The preliminary interactions took place in their own homes as opposed to during the CNA meeting as earlier planned. I felt that I had built a strong rapport with every participant family before the interviews, as I observed how they eagerly welcomed me into their homes. I believe the multiple visits to their homes gave them a sense of ease—each visit making our interactions more natural and conversations (non-research related) more fluid. I believe this in turn made the participants feel more comfortable to express their opinions when we met at my own home for the interviews. The visits to their

homes was the main source of stress for me during the entire fieldwork, since I had no personal means of transportation and had to use the “hire” as a means of transportation, however it turned out to yield positive results. Moreover, it is not considered culturally correct to start talking about “research” without properly going through the process of greeting one another or exchange pleasantries with members of the family which may include eating together as the case may be. Hence I remembered the story of a Canadian researcher my husband told me about. This Canadian researcher conducted his research among the Tiv people of Nigeria in the 1960s. He said that his first few visits did not yield into any fruitful research conversation because he wanted to start with his research agenda as soon as he had an audience—albeit only an audience as no one responded to his queries. He changed the situation by listening to, and acting upon the advice of a native of the area who said to him that the Tiv people would hardly consider anyone a friend who does not feel comfortable in their “ate” (a thatched round hut with no walls except supporting planks to reinforce the roof) where the elders spend time during the hot part of the day to eat, converse or deliberate on issues of interest in the village. The researcher started chatting with the villagers in the “ate” feeling comfortable with them and eating with them, and he got his data very naturally and easily after then. I kept that story in view, although I see myself as an indigene—just in case they may think of me differently since I have been away from the community for some years.

On the average I visited their homes at least three times, as a result I ended up knowing each participant very well—which I believe I could not have been achieved if I had recruited participants in the College Neighborhood Association meeting—a community event in a community setting as I had earlier planned. I could not carry out my earlier plans

because the first community leader opted out before the College Neighborhood Association meeting I had planned to attend, which took place on the 18th of May, 2016. It turned out that the alternative plan I had—to visit the families and introduce myself and my intentions to conduct a research study was more beneficial to the research process as far as I was concerned because I felt that everyone in the family consented to the study in the comfort of their family environment instead of as a response to an introduction of the researcher by the community leader who every one respected and would likely comply to his wishes for the community. I was therefore very satisfied that the participants volunteered to participate in the study because of their own willingness to do so—without peer pressure, or pressure from the community leader, both in the case of youths and parents.

Research study (interviews)

Visiting the homes of the participant families three times on average delayed the commencement of the interviews. The first time I went to their homes was to update them about my intent to conduct interviews with willing NYEP youth participants and their parents. Then I informed them about the consent forms and what they are for. Secondly, I went to their homes to give them the consent forms, informing them that I would be back to collect the consent forms after 2 weeks. They were encouraged to read over the consent forms during this time and sign them if they felt comfortable about participating in the study. Thirdly, I went to each participant families' homes to collect the forms and set the interview time for parents. Because of the aforementioned, the actual time the study commenced was June 01 instead of May 18th. The original plan was to complete the youth participant's interviews in the month of May, and conduct parents' interviews in the month of June. This could have been possible if I had attended the 18th May 2014 College Neighbourhood

Association meeting and distributed the consent forms there which could have saved me 2 visits to the homes of participants since I could have only needed to visit their homes once to collect the consent forms. That could have allowed more time to transcribe the interviews and conduct member-check in the month of July. However, some of the parents' and youths' interviews spilt into July and I could not complete transcribing early enough to conduct member-check. Hence the study time-line was affected, however, the content of study procedure remain basically the same. I assured participants that Ishimaya, my Research Assistant would pay the honoraria to each of them when the government pay civil servant salaries. That happened about a month after I left Nigeria—the government paid civil servants, and Ishimaya paid the promised honoraria to every participant.

Please note: The youths', parents' and community leader's responses to interview questions can be found in Appendix A2, Appendix B2 and Appendix C2 respectively.

CHAPTER 5

Portraits of the Youth Participants

(Data Analysis)

In this Section I analyzed the youth participants' data through creating a portrait of each of the youths. In other words, this is a synthesis of each youth's experience with family, NYEP, his or her struggle to attain higher education through the NYEP and how each youth responds to the situations of life based on their experiences in his or her own words.

The summary of youths' of youths and parents' responses are presented in Section 8.2

Below are the portraits of the youth participants of the study in this order:

Adah—Family One

Family structure

Engagement with NYEP

Present status and worldview

Bukar—Family Two

Family structure

Engagement with NYEP

Present status and worldview

Chinyere—Family Three

Family structure

Engagement with NYEP

Present status and worldview

Dauda—Family Four

Family structure

Engagement with NYEP

Present status and worldview

Fanan—Family Five

Family structure

Engagement with NYEP

Present status and worldview

Gabriel—Family Six

Family structure

Engagement with NYEP

Present status and worldview

Adah, Chinyere and Fanan are females, while Bukar, Dauda and Gabriel are males. Adah, Bukar, Chinyere, and Fanan have both of their parents come to the interview. Dauda's father is dead and his mother was elderly and sick and could not come for the interviews which took place at the project site (My home). I could not go to Dauda's home to interview his mum because we needed a constant supply of electricity and I had a generator at my home that would provide us with uninterrupted power supply.

Adah—Family One

Date of enrollment with NYEP: 20/01/2007

Age of Youth at time of enrolment: 17 years

Date of disengagement with NYEP: 02/07/2007

Date of Youth interview: 06/07/ 2014

Age at the time of interview: 24 years

Date of parent/parents interview: 01/07/2014

Family structure

Adah, a female, was 24 years old at the time I interviewed her in July 2014. She is number five of eight children (five males and three females) in Family One, a close-knit family—parents and children working cooperatively with one another. The parents endeavor to train every child to the secondary school level, and after then the parents decide who should go to college and who should stay home, depending on their chronological ages. Recognizing that the family could not afford to send every one of the youths who are of college age to college simultaneously, the parents carefully planned for their youths' college education in a fair and effective way—one youth at a time. Hence the youths did not show any sign of rebellion when any of them was asked to stay home and help care for the family, as the immediate older sibling leaves home for college. This was true with Adah as well; I was around when her immediate older sibling went to college while she helped her mum in the kitchen.

My family first occupied our home in the college neighbourhood in October 2002. I observed that neither of the parents of Family One was home with the children at the time. I later learned that the mother (Adama) was studying in the University of Nsukka, about 300 km away from Katsina-Ala, and the father (Adamu) was working in Makurdi, about 130 km from Katsina-Ala. The parents alternated coming home to visit the children at weekends, however, the mother visited more often than the father. Generally, the children conducted their home affairs in a mature manner. However, I did witness a disagreement between Adah and one of her siblings once during their parents' absence from the family home as they were involved in study or work away from Katsina-Ala town. Adama completed her degree and came back home to the family within a year of my family's arrival into the neighbourhood. Adamu retired about a year after Adama had returned home and most of the family members

were together—except one of Adah’s siblings who was in the university at the time. Their family home was adjacent to ours, so the parents and I communicated quite frequently.

The family ate together in their open compound and sometimes they would invite me to come and eat with them as I passed by to go to the township. I visited with them on few occasions, not necessarily to eat, but rather to tell them how I appreciated the orderliness of their conduct and the affection they have towards one another in their family. We lived as neighbours with Family One from 2002 until they relocated to another neighbourhood in 2013. I had returned to Vancouver prior to the time they moved from the college neighbourhood community to the new location, which was not familiar to me. Hence I had to find my way to their home through the help of a motorcycle hire person, when I returned to Katsina-ala for my fieldwork in 2014.

While they were still in the college neighbourhood, I called Father 1 occasionally to ask him some questions about how the youth on site (Valentine) was performing on the project business. Adamu was interested in the NYEP sales, which were still thriving at the time—with many College of Education Katsina-Ala students patronizing, as they spend their break time at the kiosk, maybe because his son—one of Adah’s brothers was a potential NYEP participant. Shadrack had expressed interest to join NYEP about the time I was leaving for Vancouver in 2010, but I was unable to enroll him officially before I left. However, NYEP approved his request for N10,000 (75 Canadian Dollars) to start a poultry business which he hoped would yield some profit towards his school expenses in the future. This request was granted with the understanding that he would officially register and join NYEP at a later date. This money would then be deducted by instalments, from his monthly stipends until it was paid in full.

Adamu was transparent in his report—he told me about how Victor left the Kiosk in the hands of his college friends—girls and boys alike to conduct the sales, and who, without a doubt used the money on themselves. He told me that the amount of money that could have been realized from the sales, could feed a family of 4, if this money were to be properly accounted for. Indeed, Father 1 gave me an honest report, which I appreciated, and yet at the same time I felt some discouragement at some of the realities on ground the NYEP site—some of which might well bring about the premature death of NYEP—as there might not be adequate capital to re-invest into the NYEP business as time went on. Moreover, the sales had been the only activity that kept the NYEP alive at the time, as I was not on site to direct other activities such as the Nigeria Independence Day Celebrations activities on 1st October every year when we invite guest speakers to address the group about how we can develop our sense of respect for and our responsibility towards our own families, community and even country.

There was no easy and quick way to get someone who might be equipped with the skills, and at the same time be willing to take over the NYEP sales from Victor. Nor could I imagine Victor giving over the sales to someone else without a fight. In effect, the reports from Adamu, which were corroborated by others in the community, revealed an enormous problem with no solution in sight. This problem became one of the issues I needed to address in Katsina-Ala, and since I had arrived in Vancouver with a return ticket to Nigeria, I travelled to Katsina-Ala in May 2011 to sort out this and other issues.

Engagement with NYEP

Adah was 17 when she joined the NYEP in 2007, two years after the official commencement of the project. Our family home had been the NYEP project site from its inception in 2005. The responsibility of Adah in the NYEP was sales of recharge cards, cold water, cold soft drinks, donuts, and other snack items. She conducted the sales in an open space within the Katsina-Ala Local Government Area offices which we had secured by obtaining permission from the officer in charge to carry out NYEP sales. At the end of each day, after sales, she gave the accounts book to the sales co-ordinator, Ishimaya, who checked the items sold, the items brought back, and the total money brought home from the sales—capital and profit combined. Ishimaya would check the records and ensure everything was balanced then she would forward the records to me. I would cross-check and sign the book, if everything was in order, and then separate the capital from the profit, reinvest the capital, and keep the profit in the project account.

From my observation, Adah might have had a desire to own a business early in her life. Her closest friend was in charge of a family food store at the College of Education Katsina-Ala, which was about 100 meters from where we lived, and Adah demonstrated an admiration for her business oriented friend by hanging out with her—most especially in the location where the food business was operated. Her dream of owning her own business came true when I took a three-day trip out of town. I had to let her know about my trip since my absence usually meant there would be no NYEP sales. In response, she went and bought coolers and other containers similar to what we used in NYEP sales, she bought her minerals and made her donuts and occupied the same space she used to conduct sales for the NYEP, and conducted her own business sales for those three days. Since her containers looked exactly

like the ones used in NYEP sales, none of her customers realized that she was selling for herself and not for NYEP as was the case in the past.

When I returned from the trip, I realized she had replaced NYEP business with her own. I went to their house and asked her mother if she was aware that Adah had replaced our NYEP business with her own business. The mother said she knew about it and thought it was all right that Adah had taken over the business, because her father hails from Katsina-Ala Local Government Area. I kept wondering if Adama was aware that I procured the selling space for NYEP by applying to the authorities involved. If she did, would it be fair of her to entertain the idea that it was all right for her daughter to take over the space to conduct her own sales—bring her commodities, sell them and use the profit on herself? However, I had no way of getting the answers to the questions that kept lingering in my thoughts without asking her directly about them. Then came also a question that haunted me for a while—was her statement about Katsina-Ala being the Local Government area of Adamu, Adah’s father used to remind me that I did not truly belong? Of course, even my late husband did not hail from Katsina-Ala Local Government Area. These were imaginations I entertained for a while, but which I could not prove without asking her about what was going on in her own mind. Moreover, knowing that she had the tendency to be erratic, I thought she might not answer such questions in a friendly manner and so I refrained from asking them. However, as I pondered much on these issues, I found myself gradually getting a sense of discouragement, as I thought that this NYEP work might be at best a thankless endeavour.

At the same time, however, there was a sense of accomplishment in my heart—that Adah already liked NYEP activities well enough to want to copy them, even if without the normal “copyright” rituals involved. After a few days of engaging my mind with the feelings about

my accomplishments, I no longer felt as discouraged as I did before. I convinced myself that Adah is getting some skills on sales which could prove useful towards her educational endeavours. So I remained calm and friendly towards Adama, however, I excused myself and left her compound to process everything going on in my mind and rested a little in my own house. Then I came back to her house later with a more friendly tone of voice as I explained to her that one of the goals of the NYEP was to equip all of the youths with the skills to be financially accountable and understand concepts such as income, expenditure, capital, profit, labour and the like. However, I did not think Adah had understood those concepts yet, and therefore had not taken into consideration that the money she brings home from the sales are largely the capital; that if she knew what the profit was, she would not have been so eager to have her own business started. I suggested that Adah would need to have a greater amount of capital to invest in many more items to realize a reasonable profit—minerals and donuts alone would not bring profit that is commensurate with her daily labour. However, Adama insisted that Adah could keep the business, and as such we left that space for her own business. Unfortunately, my prophecy came to pass—the profit was not worth the labour, so she abandoned her business within a few weeks of its commencement. Nonetheless, she had an eye-opening experience with running a business, and that seemed to be the experience she needed for her own business to properly take off.

During the interviews in 2014, Adamu told me that the clothing business was the main source of livelihood for his daughter. Adah had expressed similar notions about the importance of her thrift clothing business to her livelihood. Hearing these testimonies from both father and daughter encouraged me immensely, and enhanced my sense of success in the NYEP endeavour.

Present status and worldview

Adah is bold and very confident, and by her own free will expressed to me that she knows her parents have tried their best to help her complete her National Certificate of Education (NCE) but they have not been financially able yet, and she would be patient until they could. One day, we were walking from her house to a place called “head-bridge” in Katsina-Ala, which among other things is a sort of terminus for hire motorcyclists. I got a motor cycle hire to return to my house on one of my visits to her family home. This conversation we had in 2014, just before the beginning of the interviews, helped me understand the requirements for French students as opposed to the Chemistry students I had taught at the College of Education Katsina-Ala for some years. I did not have to understand the specific requirements of every department in the College of Education, as I was a lecturer and not a head of department at the time. Generally speaking the NCE is a certificate obtained in Nigerian Colleges of Education—a post-secondary but pre-university institution. A student who has successfully completed secondary school can gain direct entry into the College of Education. With direct entry, a student spends 3 successful years to get the NCE. If a student has completed secondary school but has not passed all the required subjects to gain a direct entry into a College of Education, they are allowed to gain admission for the preliminary entry if they have the number of credits required. With the preliminary entry, a student needs to spend 4 successful years in the College of Education to obtain the NCE. For students who want to major in French language, however, they have to meet the general requirements for every student, plus an additional number of months of training which has to be in a French-speaking country. This meant that Adah would have to travel to a Francophone African country in the company of other NCE students for a few months to experience the French

language in the context of a French community before she would be able to graduate with NCE in French. This is still a requirement for all French students graduating from colleges or universities in Nigeria. Adah sounded hopeful about going on the excursion to a French country since the parents (Adamu and Adama) were working towards supporting her at the time I visited her house.

However, two obstacles stood against this plan after a few weeks of our conversation. Firstly, all colleges of education in Benue State went on strike in August, 2014, a month after the interviews were conducted. This must have made the situation more hopeless for Adah because the proposed trip had to be taken during a school session, and this would be true even if parents were financially in the position to pay for the trip. Secondly, most parents could not pay for the trip even if the session was on—because most parents are civil servants and no salaries were being paid to civil servants for some months.

I had tried to keep in contact with Adamu, who is also the community leader for my research study to enquire about the welfare of people in the community and to ask when Adah might be going to a French country. Ishimaya, my Research Assistant told me in our phone conversation on the 29th of June that Father 1 passed by our Katsina-Ala house and told her to tell me that although the college is now in session, salaries are still yet to be paid, therefore, parents lack the financial means to send their children on this trip. However, he also said Adah had registered in the College of Education, Katsina-Ala and was taking classes with other students in preparation for this trip, which he hoped would soon take place.

Adah has a good command of English and expressed her views assertively in every aspect of the interview. She viewed her occupation as business—selling thrift clothing, and only

occasionally helping her parents on the farm when she visited Katsina-Ala from Gboko where she lives. She alluded to the fact that her occupation—selling thrift clothing, is the main source of her income, and gives her a profit of N2,000 (150 Canadian dollars) per month on average to spend as pocket money on herself.

All her older siblings have college/university education and have office jobs. Two of her younger siblings are in secondary school, and one sibling (Shadrack) has completed secondary school and is still making efforts to go to college.

For the years she had been out of school, Adah lived with relatives in Gboko where she is expected to have free room and board, so her spending money—N2000 (25 Canadian dollars) might be used for her provisions only. N2000 might be considered relatively low for youths who live in urban cities, however, it is reasonable for rural youths. She views herself as accepted by college students and college graduates alike, and she believes that they look up to her for leadership and never the other way round—for she had always been viewed as a leader in school and out of school. However, she was modest about her performance in school which she admitted to be average. She is currently saving money from her business to go to school, because she views education to be very important. She believes that people who are educated are better off than the people who are not educated because as she stated, “people who are educated are more exposed to things that happen in the world.” She also believes that it is better to educate a girl than to educate a boy so that “when the girl goes to her husband’s house she would have some respect.” On the other hand, she does not believe that her being out of college at the time of interviews had anything to do with her gender—she believes her father would educate boys and girls equally if he had the means. She also believes education is good in itself and it opens the door to employment. Moreover, even if

she were to win the lottery and have all the money she needs, she would still want to be educated further.

She alluded to the fact that NYEP taught her some things which helped her to set up her business. She also opined that NYEP should continue and expand because as she stated: “NYEP gave me the strength of struggling,” which other youths may also need. She also believes that the traders (Ibo people) in our community are better off than the non-traders. Moreover she thinks one needs a college education to be a good trader.

Meanwhile she continues to hope that someday her parents will provide the financial support for her to complete her NCE. I had expressed interest in contributing some limited personal financial help, on behalf of NYEP, towards her trip to a Francophone country, of course in proportion to what the family would have raised. She reads novels during her spare time and her aspiration is to work with an embassy someday.

Bukar—Family Two

<i>Date of enrollment with NYEP:</i>	<i>15/03/2005</i>
<i>Age of Youth at time of enrolment:</i>	<i>14 years</i>
<i>Date of disengagement with NYEP:</i>	<i>02/06/2006</i>
<i>Date of Youth interview:</i>	<i>06/07/ 2014</i>
<i>Age at the time of interview:</i>	<i>23 years</i>
<i>Date of parent/parents interview:</i>	<i>02/07/2014</i>

Family structure

Bukar, a male, was 23 years old at the time of data collection. He was the fourth of seven biological children of Baba. He said that one of his siblings died in 2002, just a week before my family arrived in the college neighbourhood. The other six children (2 males and 4

females) who are alive all live in the same compound with their parents. This makes the family sort of a cluster of family units. Two of the female children are older than Bukar, and two are younger. One of the two older females has one child and one of them has 2 children, none of the female siblings has a spouse, and each of them fend for her own family. The two younger females do not have any children and are under their parents' direct care. The other male child is older than Bukar and has a wife and three children which he fends for. Every family unit has their own hut and the family members eat together.

My impression was that, there was nothing much to make the family cluster feel like one family, except that their huts were in close proximity, and this gave Baba and Binta an opportunity to help with the grand-children, on a limited basis—since Baba said he was engaged most of the time with his carpentry work and Binta owned a food business in town. Bukar was the first youth I interacted with on a significant level upon my arrival into this community. He seemed to take a special interest in my family, maybe because my husband Benjamin had lived in the same house we were now living in and could have probably interacted with the youths of this neighbourhood, especially youths in Family Two because Family Two lived and still live in a compound on the adjacent right of my family home. Moreover, Bukar had completed his primary education by the time we arrived. This meant he could speak some English which served as a benefit for him to communicate with my children who at the time were unable to understand the Tiv language. None of his siblings were in school at the time. In the interview, Bukar alluded to the fact that he was the only one who had accepted or agreed to go to school among his siblings. Hence, it might be reasonable to conclude that the siblings of Bukar were out of school because they did not want to go to school at the time Bukar and I had a conversation prior to his joining the NYEP. During the

interview, Baba said that most of his grand-children are of school age but were not in school. However, he did not say why they are not in school.

Engagement with NYEP

As Bukar continued to interact with my family, I observed that he was around his house most of the time during regular school sessions. Bukar came by and chatted a little with me whenever I was out working on my garden in the morning hours. He was 14 years old at the time. As time went on, his visits became more frequent. Because of where my garden was situated Bukar could see me from his compound whenever I was out working in the garden, and he would leave his compound and come to see me. Soon he began to give me a helping hand by pulling out some weeds as we conversed. One day I asked him why he was not in school, seeing that most of our conversations in the garden happened during regular school hours. He told me that he had just completed his primary school and he did not apply to go to secondary school because his parents cannot pay for his secondary school tuition.

His statement painted a situation I had been familiar with in the last 2 years before my children and I left Vancouver for Nigeria for the burial ceremony of my husband Benjamin. Here, I have returned home to Nigeria with four university-age children who had no real experience with university education because I could not afford to pay university tuition for any of them. Of course, paying international university tuition fees in Vancouver is different from paying secondary school fees in Nigeria. However, we had one thing in common with his parents—we had been unable to provide the financial means to further the education of our children. The more I thought about his situation, the more I became determined to do something about it. I may never be in the position to pay university fees for my children in

Canada, but I know I would be in the position to pay university tuition in Nigeria—even if I have to do it one child at a time. Then I thought I could start with paying the tuition fees for Bukar’s secondary school which was a small fraction of university fees in Nigeria at the time—that is if he would be willing to compensate for the tuition fees with some work on my garden.

I called Bukar a few days after our conversation and asked him if he would be willing to take care of my garden in exchange for his secondary school fees. He readily agreed with my suggestion and without further waste of time, we registered him in a near-by day secondary school, and I paid the terms fees. We worked out the modalities of the nature of work he would do in the garden, how many hours a week and the number of total hours involved. Of course I paid him at a higher rate than expected for work on the garden since my intent was—most importantly to get him going to school. On the other hand, I did not want to pay his school fees for doing nothing, otherwise all the other out-of-school youths would want me to do the same for them. I was not surprised that within a week of working on the garden, Bukar brought a friend of his who needed a similar kind of school related financial assistance. I could not turn my back on the second youth either, although it was getting too financially involving for me and there was not enough work on the garden to compensate for the amount of money involved in paying both of their school fees. I had to think of some money generating occupation by which the money used for their school fees could be recovered. I then figured that if they could tie water sachets, we could freeze them in the ice-block machine my nephew, Jessi had built. Jessi was an NYEP participant when he built the ice machine. It was hard to get properly formed ice block because of the lack of adequate electricity supply. So we bought a generator as an alternative means of electricity supply for

when the usual source of electricity fails us, and we started the production of ice blocks. Soon we had petty traders coming to purchase ice blocks at my home, the project site. We felt like we were making some progress. Both Bukar and his friend were in a day secondary school at the time and they tied the water sachets after school. Everything seemed to have been working out fairly well.

An unusual event involving Bukar

During the time he was engaged with NYEP, Bukar got into a situation of misconduct I had to know about. He probably would be embarrassed if he were to be reminded about it presently, however, this is an incident which actually occurred, so it would seem worth mentioning here: I believe Bukar was very handy with metals and locks because his father does some carpentry work. One day he went with other youths to shops in the market area and broke the locks and made away with some of the commodities. They were apprehended by the vigilante (Katsina-Ala Local Government patrol team who were authorized to apprehend and bring to justice anyone found engaged in wrong doing or roaming about at the wrong time) and were all packed in a pickup and brought to their parents where each of them received some beating in the presence of their family members and everyone who happened to be around. Bukar felt embarrassed when I went to his compound to see him—fortunately, the beating session was over. I too felt a little embarrassed that my client was part of the beating squad, however, I kept my peace and did not say anything. Later that week, some children came to me and asked if Bukar would continue to work with me on my project seeing that he had committed this offence. I promised that we would give Bukar a second chance, which we did, and he did not have to quit working on the project. Bukar took his

second chance seriously, and has never committed an offence of that magnitude again—at least to my knowledge.

However, I observed that the interest to work in compensation for the school fees I paid for Bukar and his friend was diminishing. I figured out that without any further incentive than going to school the energy and the interest to tie the water was not there. Hence I forewarned them that in the following term I would pay them according to how much work they had done, and they would be responsible to do the registration and pay their own school fees—with the money they earned. I kept my word and in the following term paid them according to their labour, believing that they would be responsible enough to pay their own school fees by themselves. However, I observed that they were not going to school after a while. I asked Bukar why he was not going to school. He told me that he bought clothes with the money I paid him and so he could not pay his school fees and he got driven from school. I could understand the dilemma here, or so I thought. It was hard for a child who lacks basic amenities of life, such as proper food and clothing to care about going to school. Maybe Bukar felt that he needed clothing more than schooling. On the other hand, I could not help but think maybe he was not so interested in going to school in the first place. Whatever the case was, my encounter with Bukar gave me the motivation for the initiation of NYEP. However, as more youths became interested in joining NYEP, most of them secondary school graduates, I gave lesser periods of work for Bukar and his friend since I was not sure they were likely to use this opportunity to make their way back to school. Bukar stayed out of school for about a year, and later started going to school again. I later understood that his father paid his secondary fees from where I left off and this time, he had taken schooling more seriously.

Present status and worldview

When I visited Nigeria in 2011, Bukar was about 20 years old and very tall, and was acting very responsibly. He had completed his secondary education, which was financed by his parents, after I left for Vancouver. He was engaged in a motorcycle hire business at the time, and he would offer to give me a free ride whenever he saw me walking to town. Moreover, he seemed to have such an appreciation for what NYEP did for him (may be just being an eye-opener to the importance of education), that he would remove his hat and bend his head a little to greet me, which was a sign of respect in Tiv culture. Moreover as Bukar would later allude to in his interviews, he was the only child who agreed to go to school among the seven children of Baba and so if his father had enough funds to give a college education to one of his children, it would have to be him, and he also believes that his inability to enroll in college presently is due to lack of funds and not any other reason. I understood Family Two a little better during the course of the interviews, as Baba expressed a desire to see his children and grand-children, both males and females get proper education. However, he accepted explicitly that he was not in the position to afford college education for any of them and indeed none of his 15 biological children and grand-children had college education. He said he has a couple of his grandchildren in primary school now, and some in secondary school. After the interviews, it became clear to me that Bukar might have assumed his father's inability to pay his secondary school fees due to his own disinterestedness in going to secondary school at the age he was then. However, he seems to be more interested in education as he matured and understood the benefits of education. He admitted that he felt bad when his age-mates leave for college and he is out of school, but he said, it was not his fault, rather conditions of life had brought this upon him—meaning the inability of his

parents to pay for his college education. He alluded to the fact that he got things through NYEP which helped him to go to school, although he did not mention what those “things” were and I did not want to ask about what he meant by “things” because he is very shy to talk about receiving any financial help outside of his home. This might be a way of proving that although the family is poor, they are content with what they had. He acknowledged that education is very important for its own sake, and also it is important as a door-opener to employment opportunities and he thinks boys and girls should be properly educated.

On the other hand, he said he knew some of his age-mates who are well-off financially even though they have no college education, so he can still make it in life even without college education. People who are educated get more out of life, because they get better treatment since they know more, however, if one's circumstance does not allow a chance for them to be educated, it should not mean that they have lost their chance of being successful. So, in essence, what he is saying is that he regards college education to be worth striving for, but in the event that he fails to reach his goal of getting college education, he would get his financial success in other ways. He feels accepted among college students and feels comfortable with them although he is aware that some college students feel they are more prestigious than him, being not in college at the moment. Bukar is now a plumber and said he intends to save money through his plumbing work to go to college. Currently, he spends more time in Makurdi, the Benue State capital since he gets more contracts for his plumbing business in bigger cities than in rural towns like Katsina-Ala. He comes home occasionally to visit the family, or when he gets a plumbing contract in Katsina-Ala. While he is home, he helps his parents on the farm if they ask for it. Recently, we had the privilege of using his plumbing services, when a pipe in one of the two toilets in our house broke. Of course we

needed a plumber, and we could have gotten any plumber, but I felt very pleased to find out that Bukar was home for Christmas. We benefitted from his expertise and he was appropriately paid for his services. Unfortunately, I was not home to see the quality of his work on the toilet, however, it served the purpose of those in our house and they think they are content with the work Bukar did and they would ask for his services anytime the need arises again. Bukar hopes to save some of the money he makes from plumbing jobs to further his education with a view to eventually becoming an architect.

Chinyere—Family Three

<i>Date of enrollment with NYEP:</i>	<i>15/02/2006</i>
<i>Age of Youth at time of enrolment:</i>	<i>16 years</i>
<i>Date of disengagement with NYEP:</i>	<i>02/09/2008</i>
<i>Date of Youth interview:</i>	<i>11/07/2014</i>
<i>Age at the time of interview:</i>	<i>24 years</i>
<i>Date of parent/parents interview:</i>	<i>30/06/2014</i>

Family structure

Chinyere is a female and the sixth of six children of Family Three. Their family home is within walking distance from my home, however, I knew her from Victory Bible Church where she worships regularly and sings in the choir. Her parents are Roman Catholic believers, so she is the only one who goes to a non-Catholic Church. I did not worship there, but I visited her Church occasionally, especially when students were on holidays, and the Campus Chapel where I worshipped was closed. All six children in Family Three have either a 3-year college certificate or a university degree university degree, including Chinyere, however, Chinyere has not received her university certificate at the time of the interview because she had one course which she had failed and was still required to pass in order to

complete her university requirements. This means that she cannot yet apply for university graduate type jobs because in Nigeria one needs either a college certificate or a university degree certificate to get any kind of office job. Those who do not have a college certificate or a university degree are only qualified for cleaning jobs.

It takes four years to complete a university degree, and it takes three years to complete a college certificate. If one already has a college certificate, she or he can enter any university in Nigeria on the second year level. In professional colleges such as colleges of education students are trained specifically to teach, whereas in other colleges such as colleges of art and science, for example, students learn science and art skills. If a student decides to be a teacher after receiving a certificate from a college of arts and science, they would need to get a certificate from a college of education or get an admission into an education faculty in a university. However, Chinyere did not aspire to be a teacher, and instead completed her university degree in the science faculty of the University of Agriculture, Makurdi.

Chuku has a honey business centre and said that he employed a youth to take care of it since a youth is considered less experienced and more likely to work for lesser pay than an adult who has family responsibilities. He said during his interview that he earned about N40,000 on average every year from the honey business alone. He also does some mechanized farming from which he feeds his family and sold some of the produce for cash. He is also the Chairman of the “Live Above Poverty” (LAPO) initiative, which lends money to project farmers and business people to enlarge their farming or business projects with the understanding that they would repay the money with some interest after a specified time period.

Chibuzu sells yams in the market and farms during the rainy season. Chinyere says she helps her mother on the farm when she comes home to visit from Makurdi but has no farm of her own.

Engagement with NYEP

Chinyere was the first female to join NYEP, the first two being Bukar and his friend. She came to our house to ask if she could join the NYEP in 2006, at which time she had completed her secondary school and wanted to purchase the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board Examination (JAMBE) forms so that she could write the JAMBE which is required for admission into the university. She got the information about the NYEP recruitment from Ishimaya, the youngest of my five children, who worked with me on the NYEP as a sales coordinator. Chinyere's timing was perfect, with regards to joining NYEP, for it was at this time I was at cross-roads—as to whether to stop the project with the two primary school leavers who had not proven diligent enough to sustain the scheme, or to open it up to more mature youths, like those who had completed secondary school and aspired to go to college and who could actually be diligent enough to benefit from the project. Her enthusiasm in the NYEP and the fact that took the initiative to come to our house (which was also the project site) to inquire about it gave me much hope that there were more secondary school leavers who might want some financial assistance to prepare for the JAMBE. It was at this point that the name “NeboReach Youth Empowerment Project slowly emerged, with the main goal being the “promotion of college access” to rural youths. I also felt pleased about her enthusiasm because it was unusual for a young female to show interest in a project that involved sales, especially when the sales profits would not go directly to her. Usually, female youths prefer to do their own sales, even if they are limited to one or two items. Generally

speaking, it is not usual for a Tiv person to be involved in an occupation of selling. That is why almost all the provision stores in Katsina-ala belong to the Ibo people who came from the south-east part of Nigeria to establish their sales businesses. I realized that Chuku and Chibuzu had special interest in sales and that might have influenced Chinyere towards sales, and since she proved to be interested she might do well at it. However, I explained to her that I would go to her parents and ask their consent before she could join NYEP. I had two reasons in mind as I visited to discuss her enrolment into NYEP with her parents. The first reason was to be sure her parents, who were doing well financially at the time may not feel embarrassed that their daughter would be engaged in sales for another person while both parents were also involved in their own sales. The second reason was to make sure they would be willing to allow her to do NYEP sales even during the rainy season when most families engage in farming. She agreed that I could go to her parents to talk to them about the project—the goals of the project, our activities and time involvement—which I did. During the conversation I told them that their daughter wanted to join the project and that I needed their consent for her to do so. They consented verbally and Chinyere started with sales at the College of Education Katsina-Ala in a spot which I obtained through written permission from the College authorities to conduct NYEP sales. This is an open space at the college where the salesperson sits under a tree with a table and a chair, as well as chairs for the customers who would come to recharge their phones, make phone calls if they did not have their own mobile phones, buy cold soft drinks and cold water and snacks. We did not have good roads in Katsina-Ala at the time and Chinyere had to push the cart which contained the drinks and cold water manually to the college sales venue. Pushing the cart loaded with soft drinks and water demanded much exertion, but Chinyere did not complain about her job. I was

particularly impressed that, even though her parents were well to do, she still chose to humble herself and go through this hard labour, especially as a young woman. I also believed that her parents could have provided her the money to buy the JAMBE forms. However, she preferred to earn her own money to buy them. My joy was complete when I learnt from her, during the interviews in 2014 that she actually used the money she got through NYEP to buy the JAMBE forms after one year of engaging with the project. She sat the JAMBE only once and passed well enough to get into a pre-degree program at the University of Agriculture, Makurdi. She was the most dutiful youth I had worked with up to that point and she left NYEP when she had to relocate to Makurdi to enroll into the pre-degree program in the University of Agriculture Makurdi. With one year of pre-degree, she completed her program after 5 years.

Present status and worldview

Chinyere thinks education is very important and getting education is more important than having money; and for those who already have money, she believes that it is still important that they be educated because most people will respect one due to one's educational qualifications—where one completed their studies, what one studied, and the level of education one attained. She said that “there are more people who have university education these days, so people are more impressed when someone is in the master's program or higher.”

She said she is accepted among university students and university graduates alike, although she had left the university without properly graduating. She claimed that she was unable to pass a particular course because as she alleged the lecturer who taught the course wanted to

date her but she refused so she failed his course. She told me this in a phone conversation during the time I was conducting my fieldwork in 2014. I believe she chose to release this information privately because she finds this experience embarrassing and she might still have some fears about how this lecturer may feel about her if he knew she was talking about it. I had no reason to doubt her story because such immoral behaviours are rampant on the part of college and university lecturers in Nigeria, although they are hardly reported to higher authorities by the students concerned. The student either succumbs to the lecturer's demands and then passes the course or she forfeits passing the course, which causes delays in her graduation—as in the case of Chinyere. Many lectures are guilty of this behaviour, and the student who has such a complaint is ignored even in cases where the student attempts to disclose the incident. Additionally, since lecturers protect one another's interests, a student who complains against one lecturer may be hated by all lecturers and, as such the student can have a rough time during her university years. Chinyere believes that one day she will get her degree certificate because, as she says, education is important for its sake and it opens the door to employment. She believes that her family members would be able and willing to financially support her graduate studies.

Chinyere does not believe that her gender has anything to do with her status right now—as a seller of thrift clothing, rather than an office worker. However, I think she was talking about this with regards to her parents' willingness to financially support her educational endeavours. Considering her experience with the lecturer whose course she could not pass, one could say that being a female somehow did contribute to her inability to graduate. Moreover, she always uses the terms “finished university” instead of “graduated” when talking about her present status. She said that if her father had money to educate only one

child among the six of his children he would have educated only their firstborn who is a male child, according to tradition. However, she said she believes that it is better to educate females than males because girls provide more care for their parents when the parents are older than males do. Coincidentally, Chuku also thinks it is more profitable to educate females for the same reason. Chuku and his entire family might have enjoyed more financial assistance from his girls than from his boys. For example, Chinyere had been financially assisted by one of her older sisters throughout her university education.

Chinyere believes that one can do well without going to college; however, she also believes that such a person might do better if he goes to college. She gave an example of herself as someone who has studied computers in the university, but does not have enough computer skills to get a job in a computer firm. However, if she studies further, she could get some equipment and set up her own computer business, and then employ others to work for her. This seemed to be more than just giving herself as an example, rather, this is what she aspires to do because she later said she reads motivational books during her spare time and hopes to be a manager of a company someday.

She admitted that NYEP helped her in definite ways, and I quote her here: “For instance, when I finished my secondary school I had nothing doing—and like with their (meaning NYEP) pay I could—like—get somethings I wanted to buy for myself. I could no longer bother my parents—may be they may give me—but it was not like depending solely on them. [Also], it was from there I knew how to do donuts and even in the place of sales—the opportunity I was given to serve, I met many people who asked me—like if I needed admission to go to the College of Education where I worked many people could have given me.”

What I understand from the statement of Chinyere above, is that from the “place”—NYEP site where she learnt to make donut she was given an opportunity to serve which also turned out to be an advantage to her. This advantage came from the people she met during her sales that offered to assist her get admission into a university, maybe where this person or these people have influence.

She has an average spending income of N20, 000 per month from her business of sales. She thinks NYEP should continue and expand because other youths may need the experience she got from. She also agreed to represent NYEP should NYEP need representatives to see the Governor of Benue State for financial assistance.

Dauda—Family Four

<i>Date of enrollment with NYEP:</i>	<i>30/05/2011</i>
<i>Age of Youth at time of enrolment:</i>	<i>27 years</i>
<i>Date of disengagement with NYEP:</i>	<i>15/06/2014</i>
<i>Date of Youth interview:</i>	<i>07/07/2014</i>
<i>Age at the time of interview:</i>	<i>30 years</i>
<i>Date of parent/parents interview:</i>	

Family structure

Dauda said he was 30 years old and the third of 6 children in his family when I interviewed him in 2014. He lost his father when he was young. None of his older siblings went to secondary school because they were all married when they were of marriage age and left home fairly early. Dauda was left with the responsibility of caring for his family after completing his secondary school in 2009—fending for his mother and his younger siblings. His family lives 20 kilometers from Katsina-Ala town across the river from Katsina-Ala in a

place called Ugbema. He told me at the time of the interviews in 2014 that his mother was old and not feeling very well and was not strong enough to ride a motorcycle (hire) to come over to Katsina-Ala for the interviews. I was prepared to go to Ugbema to interview her, however, there was no source of electricity by which we could audio-tape the interview since there was no electricity supply in Ugbema at the time. As a result of the aforementioned the mother of Dauda could not be interviewed. I have never met any other member of Family Four besides Dauda but from what he told me prior to the interviews, none of his siblings had secondary school education. Unlike in the case of the female participants of NYEP, I did not have to seek the consent of the parent of the male participants because most parents who are concerned about the movements of their female children are hardly concerned about those of their male children. I obtained permission from Baba on behalf of Bukar because he was considerably younger than the rest of the other male participants at the time of enrolment with NYEP.

Dauda had completed secondary school at the time of his engagement with NYEP, but he had not passed his final exams, which meant he was not ready to buy the JAMBE form in preparation for college admission when he joined NYEP. What he intended to do with his earnings from NYEP was to re-sit his secondary school examinations through the West African Examination Council (WAEC). He could then proceed to sit for the JAMBE after his successful completion of the WAEC examinations. In 2012 he requested the sum of N25,000 (150 Canadian dollars) from me, on behalf of NYEP. I authorized Ishimaya, the former sales coordinator of NYEP to give him the money from my salary, since NYEP was inactive at the time. He later gave a receipt for this amount to Ishimaya, which was given to him by a secondary school in Katsina-Ala, where he received some instruction in preparation for

writing the WAEC examinations. This money was given to him with the hope that small portions of it would be deducted from his monthly NYEP stipend until full reimbursement was made. However, this did not happen since he did not make much progress with NYEP sales due to his lack of commitment to the business. He left the site almost every other month and stayed on his farm for more than a week at a time

Engagement with NYEP

Dauda was not one of the early participants of NYEP when it started in 2005. I first met him when I went to Nigeria in 2011. Prior to meeting Dauda, Valentine was the name of the youth overseeing the activities of the NYEP. Valentine had exhibited some irresponsible behavior upon my leaving the project site for Vancouver in May, 2010—lack of interest in the sales and in financial accountability as well as using the project site for parties. These were indications that Valentine was not making efforts to prepare to sit the JAMBE which also meant he had no interest to further his education, and by the same token had failed to meet the requirements of being an NYEP participant. I had some reliable sources for gathering information about Valentine's conduct when I was in Vancouver and the situation on the NYEP site caused me some concern. I took a trip to Nigeria to look for someone else who could fill in as the salesperson so that I could relieve Valentine of his duties. Since the project itself was still viable and could take on another youth who might actually be interested in going to college and, for that reason, be willing to work hard at keeping the sales going, I did not allow my frustration to lead me to consider shutting down the activities of the project. Although I was not going to be physically present on site, there was a certain momentum gathered through the participation of a total of 18 youths on the project between 2005 and 2010 which could not be quenched after just 1 year of my departure from the

project site—at least that was my thinking at the time. Moreover, there were many out-of-school youths in the community and I believed there were some who were desperate enough to get an education that they would work hard to benefit from the project. Hence, I invited some community members, three days after I arrived in Katsina-ala from Vancouver in May 2011 and I shared my concern about what I considered as the lack of interest in, and the lack financial accountability for, the NYEP business. One of the community members, also a lecturer in the College of Education Katsina-Ala, said that he knew a young man who was interested in going to college but lacked the financial means to start the process, which usually included preparing for the prerequisite examinations. I had only a month to stay in Nigeria, so we quickly arranged to get this youth on the project site, without much formal initiation in to his project duties. So at the time of my leaving Nigeria to return to Canada, Dauda was the only NYEP participant on the project site.

Some of the virtues stressed to new recruits on the project were: honesty, hard work and financial accountability. Due to the general sense of lack of honesty in financial matters in many public sectors in Nigeria, I warned participants that if any youth is caught misappropriating the project funds up to three times, he or she would be dismissed from participating in the project. I gave them the grace of “three times,” because I knew that it takes a while to switch from being financially unaccountable to financially accountable, since most Nigerian adults are so financially unaccountable that the youths have somehow believed that being financially unaccountable is the normal way of life. However, I believe that it is possible for one to learn to do the right thing if one really determines to—and I thought two mistakes might be alright, but not three.

After returning to Vancouver, I wrote a proposal for Graduate Students' Competition which I had indicate interest with the UBC/IDRN Coordinator at the Liu Institute for Global Issues to be a part of, prior to my journey to Nigeria in May 2011. The purpose of this competition was to procure funds to develop a project in a developing country of one's choice. Of course I wrote a proposal to develop NYEP, although my team was not among the three teams considered to receive the first, and second and third prizes. However, I was so preoccupied with the competition that I did not think much about what might happen with Dauda on the project site. I should have called Dauda on regular basis to check how the project was progressing, but I did not.

This section describes how Dauda was diverting the project funds to his personal benefit-- like repairing his motorcycle which he used for his hire business while living on the project site. I had entertained some fears about the ability of Dauda to continue the activities of the project while I was still in Vancouver between 2011 and 2014 because he was frequently asking me for permission to leave the project site and go to a nearby village to stay there and work on his yam farm for days at a time. It was somehow awkward to me that he would want to leave the project site and be somewhere else for long periods of time. However, it was complicated for me to be an administrator for the project from such a distance so I hardly argue with him about granting him permission. What I could do while I was on the project site was different from what I did once I was back in Vancouver. While I could easily observe participants' behavior and draw my own conclusions about whether they could be retained on the project or not, I could not easily make such judgements relying on their own report of their performance, or someone else's reports. I usually prefer to confront the participants about their own actions, and give them a chance to respond to my query. I take

an undesirable action if I am dissatisfied with their response to my query. However, I could only evaluate their response when I could see some physical evidence. That is the reason that I had not asked any participant to leave the NYEP site until I was physically present to dialogue with them about concerns I had about them.

Moreover, I had to put into consideration the fact that farming is what he knew best and maybe what he had more faith in—since he had experienced concrete evidence of its successes. Sales might be also be beneficial, however, its benefits might not have been proven by Dauda—and taking the time to prove it—might well be a waste of Dauda's precious time.

So, considering his instability on the project site, coupled with his propensity to use the project funds inappropriately, I had to ask him to leave the project site when I was in Katsina-Ala for my field work in May 2014. He left for his home in Ugbema in the month of June, 2014; however he still maintained a good relationship with us to the point where we could give him certain errands to do in the project site for a small honorarium. What I appreciated about him was the fact that he would tell the truth about what he had done, even though he knew he was doing the wrong thing. He had expected that I would ask him to leave the project site, so he did not show any surprises when I did.

Present status and worldview

Dauda is currently out of school, after completing his secondary education in 2009. He said most of his friends are college youths, and he feels very much accepted by them although he feels the college youths are his leaders and he takes the position of followership when he is with them. He feels bad when his friends are returning to school from holidays while he

remains at home. He said his performance was generally high when he was in school, and he is farming groundnuts to save money to go to college in the future. He farms groundnuts—one of the crops we call “cash crops” in Nigeria which could be sold for cash. He farms rice too, and when I was home for my field work in Katsina-Ala May in 2014, he had 3 bags of rice stored in a room on the project site. On one of the market days, he rented a pick-up truck in which he loaded all three sacks and he sold them in the market. He views education to be very important: “Yes. . . I would like to be educated—education is very important,” because, as he said “education is good and education opens the door to employment.” However, he also believed that education does not always lead to office employment. When asked if those who have college education are better off than those who do not have college education he said: “Not really—some people finished college but do hire work.” On his own though, he said he feels respected among other community members since his graduation from secondary school, much more than when he was still a secondary school student. As a farmer he spends about N5,000 Naira every month which he realizes from the proceeds of his farm. He made it clear that he would not have chosen farming as an occupation if he had another alternative: “I am forced to farm since I missed school—farming makes someone get old very fast.” He said NYEP had helped him with registering and writing pre-college exams, but his examination results were not good enough to get him into any post-secondary institution. He hopes NYEP continues and expands “because it will help those who want to go to school but are not financially balanced.” He said he would be prepared to represent NYEP if there is need for us to make a plea to the Governor of Benue State to help NYEP financially. He reads a lot during his spare time because he hopes to be a doctor in the future.

Fanan—Family Five

Date of enrollment with NYEP: 15/02/2008
Age of Youth at time of enrolment: 17 years
Date of disengagement with NYEP: 02/06/2008
Date of Youth interview: 09/07/2014
Age at the time of interview: 23 years
Date of parent/parents interview: 06/07/2014

Family structure

Fanan was 23 years old and had a nine month old baby when I interviewed her in July 2014. Her husband conveyed her and their baby to my family home and he remained with them until she completed the interview session. Apparently, she had gotten married in 2013 and had moved to join her husband in a different neighbourhood from where her parents and other siblings live and where she lived with them at the time I met her in 2008.

She is the fifth of nine children in Family Five—the family of a former Nigerian Army personnel who had engaged himself in vegetable farming in the swamps of the Katsina-Ala river valley since he retired from the Nigerian Army some years ago. I had visited their family home to ask for the consent of the parents of Fanan after she expressed her wish to enrol in the NYEP. I met the parents of Fanan for the first time during this visit—two days after I met Fanan.

Fanan was first introduced to me by one of my lecturer colleagues in the College of Education, Katsina-Ala. My colleague's family home was next door to Family Five home, and his family worshipped at the same Roman Catholic Church assembly where Family Five worshipped. This lecturer had heard about the NYEP and had asked me if I had room for one more youth who seemed desperately in need of financial assistance to complete her secondary education. Apparently, Fanan had approached this colleague of mine earlier in the

same year for possible financial assistance towards completing her secondary education—something which youths commonly do with people they know to have the financial means and the motivation to help with the education of children other than their own . This particular lecturer alluded to the fact that he was trained by somebody, who knew his financial difficulty, and was kind enough to offer him some help towards his education by paying his secondary school fees for some years. He also said he had helped to pay the school fees of several youths who were not his own children or even related to him. I asked this lecturer to meet with Fanan. The lecturer and I scheduled a meeting with Fanan in the lecturer's office at the Chief Lecturers' Office Block in the College of Education Katsina-Ala, where Fanan told her story as we both intently listened. The essence of her story, as far as I could remember, was as follows:

She had completed form one and form two in the Government Day Secondary School, Katsina-Ala, where she witnessed a violent confrontation between two male students on the school grounds which, somehow, resulted into a fatal injury to one of the students. Having seen the actual episode of the fight, she decided not to go to school the following day. She was so shaken by the experience that she decided not to return to that particular school despite her father's pleas that she go back to the same secondary school to complete her secondary education. I had the feeling that her father was in favour of her returning to the same secondary school because it was a government owned institution and, as such, more affordable in terms of tuition fees and other school requirements. Most government institutions provide free text books for their students which relieve parents of the burden of extra costs. Other day secondary schools in Katsina-Ala are privately owned—by some

church bodies, private organizations or by individual proprietors—some without government subsidies, and as a result they are comparatively more expensive.

This disagreement between Fanan and her parents caused her to be out of school for 2 years, and there was a stalemate between her and her father which could not be resolved. Hence she had approached her neighbour and church colleague to assist her find ways—financial and otherwise—by which she can transfer to another secondary school.

Engagement with NYEP

After listening to Fanan relating her story, I became aware of the complexities involved in the argument between her and her father. Was her father looking at a child shaken as a result of witnessing a violent situation at Government Day Secondary School, Katsina-Ala, and desired to be protected from the same environment, which she probably perceived as potentially dangerous, or did he perceive her as a disobedient child who simply refused to see her father's point of view? There was no easy way to know what he thought about his daughter's behaviour except by discussing the issue with him. I thought of how to approach the parents of Fanan.

Generally we endeavoured to ask for the parents' permission on behalf of every female youth who indicated interest to join the NYEP. One reason was that female children were allowed much less freedom of movement than their counterpart male age-mates. This was due to the fact that, the female child helped her mother in maintaining a comfortable home environment for the whole family and was, therefore, required to spend most of her time at home. Another reason was that parents were concerned about letting their female children out of their sight for fear that they might get pregnant. On this particular occasion, because I was

aware of the disagreement between Fanan and her parents, I determined to be very cautious when talking with them about Fanan's wish to join NYEP.

I enquired about the directions to their home, which Fanan gave me, and I went a few days after our meeting, when Fanan was not home (by design), to avoid the possibility of confrontation between Fanan and her father. I told the parents about NYEP and also told them about the intention of Fanan to join the project. Faityo appeared a little distressed as I watched his facial expression—possibly about what I had said. He then asked me if his daughter had gone to tell me that he had no money to pay her secondary school expenses and so she needed my financial assistance. I quickly responded: “No she did not tell me that!” However, I could not say that another colleague introduced her to me because I did not know if Fanan had approached their neighbour with her father's consent or not, neither could I tell them what Fanan had told me about their family feud because I did not know how the father would feel if he knew that this had been disclosed to a non-family member. Knowing how the average Tiv man tries to keep his family matters under his own control, I thought he might find it disrespectful for an outsider to intrude into his own family affairs. Hence, I just explained to him that we were running a project with some young people who are out of school to help them go back to school and Fanan had expressed some interest to join the project, so I wanted to ask for his permission on her behalf. There was a long silence. Then I told him that the ball was in his court: if he allowed Youth 5 to join the project I would be happy, but if he decided not to allow her to join the project, I could also understand. He then told me that Fanan did not listen to his instructions; that she always did what suited her and that he was tired of dealing with her issues, and so she could even come and live with me on the project site.

This part of his response was like music to my ears for two reasons: the first reason was that this would save commuting cost and time for Fanan. If Fanan were to be coming from her house to the project site every day, she might have to spend money that she did not have—on transportation. Secondly, if either Fanan or her father, or both, continued to entertain resentment towards each other because of the argument they had about where she should be going to school, there would be a possibility of further disagreements between them which could cause her father to be unhappy, and possibly stop her from coming to work at the NYEP site.

Fanan moved in and lived with us on the project site for about 4 months, and after that her parents decided that they wanted to enrol her in a Roman Catholic secondary school which was comparatively closer to the NYEP site than it was to their family home. In retrospect, I now understand this as being a “wise” move on her parents’ part to have their daughter earn a monthly stipend from NYEP and, at the same time, attend classes.

The NYEP agreement for prospective participants at the time was that the client, once enrolled in NYEP would be an active participant on the project—preparing snacks and drinks and selling them. It is from the profits of these sales that participants get monthly stipend of N6,000 (\$45 Canadian dollars). They were expected to save at least one-tenth of their stipend for one year during which they could have saved enough money to buy JAMBE forms for secondary school leavers, or to pay some secondary school expenses, as in the case of Youth 5. Also, it would not be reasonable to expect Fanan to perform her NYEP duties after coming from a whole day of attending classes. I reminded them about the NYEP enrolment agreement by explaining to them that a client would need to be with NYEP for at least one

year to save enough money for the procuring of the JAMBE form. However, they insisted that she enrol in St. Gerard Catholic secondary school that year.

I was disappointed that Fanan would have to quit NYEP, but I was also encouraged by the fact that the stalemate between Fanan and her father had been broken, which was apparent in his decision to allow her to enrol in a school other than Government Day Secondary School. I was so encourage by how things were turning out for Fanan that I paid for her school materials and part of her fees, this was from my own pocket and did not affect her monthly stipend. She stayed with us for a few more days, however, it was too exhausting for her to go to school, walk back to the site, and still carry on with NYEP activities. Hence, I suggested that she return to her family home.

Fanan quit NYEP and continued going to school from her home. NYEP could not continue to support her financially since she was no longer involved in the NYEP production and sales. One day, she visited my home and told me that she had been transferred to another school, which was outside Katsina-Ala. I did not enquire the reason for the transfer, but I suspected that her parents were not financially capable of meeting up with the cost of the tuition and other requirements of St. Gerard Catholic Secondary School, Katsina-Ala. I met her in Katsina-Ala town one day, and she told me that she was no longer in school and had returned home to Katsina-Ala.

Eventually, the parents or some relatives financially assisted her to complete her secondary education and she got into College of Health Technology, Katsina-Ala. She sent a text message to me in 2012, while I was in Vancouver, requesting a sum of N30,000 (\$250 Canadian) to pay her school fees that year.

Since NYEP had become virtually unproductive at the time, as a result of the constant farming activity which took Dauda from the NYEP site, I asked Ishimaya the former sales coordinator of NYEP to give her the money from my salary and to ensure that Fanan gave her a written statement—a sort of proof that we gave her the money, plus a receipt from the school to show that she actually paid the school fees, which Ishimaya did. The hope was that we could recover the money when NYEP became active again—either from NYEP activities or from a donor organization who would want to support NYEP.

I had some good experiences and some bad experiences with Fanan as we lived together in my home. The bad experiences were mostly related to her unruly behaviour, and the good experiences were related to her joyful attitude. Despite any disagreements—between her and me, or between her and any of my children—she was always full of smiles, and she sometimes let out a loud laughter that we all found to be contagious on everyone. Youth 5 was the only female of the five youths who lived with my family on the project site.

Her tendency to disobey made it necessary for her to be given the same instructions several times a day before they got to be carried out. However, unlike with her parents, instead of shouting at her in anger, I looked for ways of reinforcing good behaviour and punishing bad behaviour or disobedience. Hence I was able, eventually, to get her follow my instructions, and perform the duty required of her when she was on the NYEP site.

She came to my home a few days after my arrival in Katsina-Ala to welcome me when I went home for my field work in 2014, some weeks before the interviews commenced. She told me that she had gotten married in 2013 and she introduced her nine month old baby,

Felix to me. She said—as she laughed: “Mummy I used to be lazy but you had a way to make me work hard.” I also laughed in response.

Present status and worldview

Fanan was not in school and she described herself as a farmer/nurse during the interviews. She had completed her secondary education and enrolled in the School of Health Technology, Kastina-Ala. However, she was unable to complete the final project due to lack of adequate finances, which she needed to undertake the project. Because of this, she did not have the requisite certificate to practice nursing although she felt that she had the competence to do so. She told me this during the same visit in which she told me that she had gotten married.

Faityo had retired from the Nigerian Army and returned home to Benue State from Lagos where he had been serving. He told me that he owned a vegetable farm along the riverbank of Katsina-Ala during the interviews. He also owned a yam farm in his village which he used to feed his family. Fater sold the vegetables in Katsina-Ala Market, with the help of one of the female siblings of Fanan.

Faityo told me that eight out of ten of his children had completed university/college. However, I believe he was referring to all children under his care—for I know of a fact that he has nine biological children. He also said that one of his children was in the university and the last two of his children were in secondary school. I noticed that he did not make a distinction between secondary school and college— maybe for the simple reason that secondary schools are sometimes referred to as colleges in Nigeria.

Fanan said her main source of income came from a joint farming project with her husband, from which she got to spend about N10,000 on her family every month. Her husband is a primary school teacher, so she might have a greater financial advantage over the other female youths who were not married, since a paid income is more stable, and it could be used to enhance the farm project too. However, she did not refer to her husband's income during the interview.

She said most of her friends are college youths—she felt more accepted in their company and enjoyed being with them as well. However, she felt very bad when her college friends had to go back to their schools, leaving her at home. She felt more respected while in college—more so than at present, not being in college and at the same time unable to practice nursing. Somehow she felt those who are currently in college are leaders and she was a follower while with them. She read textbooks in her spare time because she intended to go back to school and complete her nursing education. She had been saving money from the farm produce to enable her do so in a couple of years. She said that college education was very important because those who had “college or university education have skills to get money.” On the other hand, there were several people she knew who were also doing well financially without college education. However, she said that they got their training under someone who had university education. She believed that she was out of college because of her gender and if her father had enough money to educate only one of his children he would educate a male child. Fanan personally felt that both male and female children should be given equal chance of getting educated. She said education is good in itself and it also opens the door to employment. Moreover, if she were to win the lottery, and suddenly have all the money she

could ever need, she would still want to further her education. Yet she felt that having money was more prestigious than having good looks or having education.

When asked if NYEP help her in any way, and asked to say how it helped her, she stated:

“NYEP helped me with money to get things for myself and I learnt some skills such as making pastries which I can use later in life.” She also felt NYEP should continue and expand because: “It will help those who want to go to school.”

Commenting about the Ibo traders in our community, she said “they are better than farmers, but not better than government workers,” in terms of financial capabilities. She believed that one needed at least a college education to be a good trader. She hopes to get adequate finances to complete her outstanding project so she could get her certificate in nursing.

Gabriel—Family Six

Date of enrollment with NYEP:

Age of Youth at time of enrolment: 14 years

Date of disengagement with NYEP:

Date of Youth interview: 09/07/2014

Age at the time of interview: 23 years

Date of parent/parents interview: 12/07/2014

Family structure

Gabriel is the son of a widow I had been acquainted with for a number of years before the inception of NYEP. Gbanan sold oranges at the College of Education, Katsina-Ala premises on a daily basis during the dry season, between the months of November and February, when oranges are in abundant supply. She bought and sold different items of food stuff during the

dry season, and works on her farm during the rainy season. She had four children (two males, and two females), Gabriel being the first.

I later learnt from one my friends that Gbanan lost her husband early in her marriage—after the birth of her last child and, as such had to fend for herself and her children early in her life. I thought that Gabriel would be pleased to know about NYEP, and that he would endeavour to join the project along with other youths who needed assistance with school related expenses, hence, I told his mum about the NYEP.

Engagement with NYEP

However, Gabriel did not show much interest in the activities of the NYEP, and had not been a regular participant of NYEP in the same way that other participants had been—engaging with NYEP duties and getting stipends on a monthly basis for school related expenses. Instead, he came at his own convenience and asked for some work to do for NYEP when he felt he needed some spending money. On few occasions I had sent someone to his house to check if he was in and would want to do some work, especially when one of the regular NYEP participants was unavailable to cover his/her duty, for one reason or another or when we needed extra sachets of water for ice production. Hence, besides covering the duties of NYEP participants, Gabriel could choose to tie some water sachets in preparation for ice production against the following day. The water sachets were stored in two gigantic rubber containers and were used to load the ice-making machine after harvesting and selling the ice produced the previous night in the morning of the following day. Since food traders came to the project site at 6:30 am to purchase the ice blocks on daily basis, we endeavored to keep two large rubber containers full of water sachets which were tied using bags similar to what

we use in the grocery stores in Vancouver to put the grocery items we want to buy. We sold each rock-solid ice for N10 (ten Naira), and those not properly formed were sold for half the price.

Since the production of ice was on-going, we were always in need of labour with the tying of water sachets and Gabriel took advantage of this job opportunity. However, he did not come often nor was he regular, so he was more like a substitute participant of NYEP, than a regular one. I did not put pressure on him about being a regular participant of NYEP because he was on the farm with his mum very often, especially during the rainy season.

It might be worthwhile to say a few words about our ice block producing machine. This machine was locally engineered by one of the participants of NYEP (Jessi) using an old fridge. He welded some aluminium plates to the interior of the fridge, using metal pipes that enhanced the flow of gas (propane) through the aluminium plates, causing the plates to reach such low temperatures when a steady electric current flow through them, and causing the water sachets, which were lined up on the aluminium plates to turn into ice blocks. We had two ice making machines, each producing about 120 sachets of ice blocks on a good day—when there was a constant supply of electricity. However, we hardly had a day in which we had an uninterrupted flow of electricity for up to 6 hours (because of unannounced power outages from the general power source), so we got a generator as an alternative measure for when the regular electricity supply was interrupted.

Jessi had learnt this craft under a local engineer who ran an entrepreneurship scheme, and who lived close to his home in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State. Jessi was one of the most stable participants of NYEP, and was one of the youths who got into the university after

engaging with NYEP for a year. However, he was not selected to participate in the 2014 research study of the NYEP youth participants because of the difficulty of accessing both himself and his mother (his father is deceased) due to the Boko Haram terrorist activities in Maiduguri at the time. Additionally, he is my nephew and could have lived with me with or without the NYEP scheme in place. I was not convinced that it was ethical for him to participate in the research study just the same way that Ishimaya could not participate in the research study because she is my daughter.

Returning to the story of Gabriel, however, I remember an occasion when Gabriel substituted for one of the NYEP participants. The job that needed to be done that day was to go to the ice machine (about 50 meters from the project site), harvest the ice blocks and bring them to the project site using a wheel barrow. Our usual practice was to instruct anyone harvesting the ice not to sell the ice on the way from the production site to the project site—merchants must always buy the ice from the project site to ensure that the regular customers can get ice every day. Secondly, there was the problem of financial accountability. The ice blocks were in so much demand that it was possible to sell all of the before they reached the project site. However, the sales coordinator needed to count the number of ice harvested, making it possible for her to know how much ice was remaining in the ice machine at the production site, for proper financial accountability. So Gabriel was reminded about this rule, which he observed—he did not sell the ice on his way—instead, he gave some ice blocks for free to a friend of his who was selling beverages. I would not have known about this, except the mother of Gabriel’s friend was my friend. This friend of mine who was also a lecturer at the College of Education, Katsina-Ala expressed her appreciation to me for the ice blocks given to her son, free of charge, as we passed each other by the College of Education Katsina- Ala

administrative area one morning. I told her that I did not authorize Gabriel to make the offer of free ice to her son, however, it was alright, and we both laughed.

In 2008, Gbanan came to my house to request for some food items for her family. She told me that she had been feeling unwell and so she went to see the doctor. The hospital ran tests on her and found she was HIV positive. She said she needed some financial support because she was no longer able to trade or farm as she used to. I gave her some food items which she took home to her family. However, I could not help thinking about Gabriel's college education and how he would proceed with his education since his mother was becoming incapacitated.

I had known that Gabriel had enrolled in the College of Education, Katsina-Ala in 2007 because he came to receive the Youth Education Empowerment Fund (YEEF). This fund amounts to N5,000 (55 Canadian dollars) which NYEP youth participants receive when they get an admission and register in a college or university. This fund was given only to a participant who gained an admission into college or university within a year of disengaging with NYEP. It was not mandatory to use the YEEF for tuition, but it had to be used for school-related expenses. There were three NYEP participants who received the YEEF—Jessi, Chinyere and Gabriel. Gabriel was not considered a regular NYEP participant, however, he was considered for this financial assistance mainly due to his apparent need of financial support, especially having gained admission into the College of Education Katsina-Ala. Those who gained admission into college or university while still active with NYEP usually had to quit NYEP to enrol into college or university since it was not practical to be a full-time student and at the same time engage with NYEP.

Gabriel was in his third year of college in 2010 and he came to ask for help with his school fees from NYEP just before I left the NYEP site for Canada. Having known about the health situation of Gbanan, I decided to assist with his school fees on behalf of NYEP. To ensure his tuition fee was paid, I personally went to the College of Education Katsina-Ala and paid N10,000 (85 Canadian dollars) from my salary on behalf of NYEP. NYEP was not very productive at the time because I was absent from the project site too often. I had to travel very frequently to the Canadian Deputy High Commission, in Lagos, (about 700 KM from Katsina-Ala) to obtain visa and other documents in preparation for my return to Canada to complete my studies at the University of British Columbia. Hopefully, this fund, like all the other funds I had loaned out to youth participants on behalf of NYEP, would be refunded to me when NYEP becomes active again, either through its activities, or through a donor organization which would be prepared to support NYEP in the future. On the other hand, I had never felt the need to exercise caution in releasing funds to participants who actually were in school and needed the funds, for fear that I may never be reimbursed. It is possible that I may never be reimbursed, but that would not be an issue, as far as I am concerned, because I had given funds to people I believed needed it in an informal way— that is before the inception of NYEP. NYEP, however, had made it possible for me to do what I love to do, in a more formal and organized way.

Present status and worldview

Gabriel was not in school at the time of interview however he said one of his siblings (a female) was in secondary school. He described himself as follows: “I am an NCE job applicant/ farmer,” and he has a monthly income of N2,000 to spend on himself from his farm produce, as he saves some towards furthering his education. He said he owns a farm

and he also shares a farm with his mother. When asked if he enjoyed farming as occupation, he responded “I enjoy farming for my survival—I was taught by my father to farm.”

His friends are mostly college students. He feels accepted in their company and thinks they like him. However he said that he feels like a follower rather than a leader when he is in the company of college youths. He feels popular when he was in college as well as at present when he is out of college: “I am popular in and out of college,” he stated. He was modest about his performance in school, which he said was average. When asked how he feels when his college student friends return to school and leave him at home, he said “I feel great—God’s time is the best.”

When asked whether it is more important to educate female or male children, he said that it is better to educate boys, to prepare them to take on the family responsibilities. He opined that the educated person lives a better life than the uneducated, and that education is good in itself and opens the door to employment. He also believes that if his mother had enough finances to educate one of her children up to college or university level she would educate him—because he is the first born. He intends to further his education in the future, and he relies on his savings from his farm, and also from his mason work during the dry season. He aspires to be a banker in the future.

He had an Ibo youth as a friend as he said, because he operated a kiosk in the past. I did not enquire whether it was his kiosk or someone else’s. Most likely an Ibo man owned the kiosk and he was operating it as an employee. I now, in retrospect, regret not following up on that line of the interview conversation—to know how long he operated the kiosk, and why he quitted. From my knowledge of youths in Katsina-Ala, most of them who operated another

person's business lost the job in a short time, usually because of financial losses incurred by the owner of the business. The situation had been a little different with NYEP, where the youth participant had to give account of their sales on daily bases to the sale's coordinator. However, we incurred a great deal of financial loss in NYEP since I left the project site for Vancouver in May 2010 due to lack of financial accountability on the part of youths who were in charge of the sales. Hence, financial losses had been the main reason that we have found it almost impossible to continue the activities of NYEP without my presence or that of Ishimaya (the sales coordinator).

Gabriel said the following about NYEP: "NYEP helped me to go to college." However, I believe he was referring to this one time financial assistance he received from me on behalf of NYEP. As mentioned earlier, he was not consistent enough on NYEP to reap its financial benefits as other youths who were properly enrolled in NYEP and performed NYEP duties on daily basis. He thinks that "NYEP should continue since its aim is to educate." He said he was prepared, if asked upon, to represent NYEP, should we decide to seek financial assistance from the Government of Benue State, in Nigeria.

8.1 Summary of the Findings

With the research question in view, summary is made in four key areas of the data across youths, across parents and within families. These four key areas include *demographics, the importance of college/university education, gender and class, and the perceived relevance and effectiveness of NYEP*. The community leader's responses are not directly related to these constructs but can support, inform clarify, or contrast the issues discussed in this research.

Youths who could not complete their education because of poverty or corruption

By way of introduction, all six youth participants involved in this research study (three males and three females) are from the same ethnic group, and they speak Tiv as their first language. All hailed from the same rural area, where the research was conducted. One of them (Fanan) lived with me and my family on the project site for a couple of months, whereas Dauda lived on the project site in my absence between May 2011-June 2014, the rest came from home (within Katsina-Ala) to conduct the NYEP business. Their ages range between 23 and 30, and they possess very different temperaments and exhibited very interesting and unique attitudes and behaviours which gave me a raw and rich experience of dealing with strangers—working in the family home which was the NYEP site on daily basis (no more than 3 youths at one time). Intricately bound together, or so it seemed to me then, I felt that nothing would ever separate us, for they were my children, and I am still “Mummy” to all of them especially when they have school financial needs which they think I should know about through texts, even to date. I would continue to love, correct and push them to go higher in their educational endeavors—hence my commitment to NYEP.

The six youths are known by their pseudonyms as Adah (female), Bukar (male), Chinyere (female), Dauda (male), Fanan (Female) and Gabriel (male). As mentioned earlier, some of the youths lived on the project site, and some came from home daily to conduct the sales. There were other participants of the NYEP who lived with my family on the project site as well, but they did not meet the criteria of selection for the research study (see section 3.2 of this dissertation).

All six youths who participated in the study were not in school, college or university at the time of the interviews although some had siblings in school, college/university. Bukar and Dauda had completed secondary school, Adah and Gabriel had completed college of education, Fanan had completed her nursing training at the School of Health Technology Katsina-Ala and Chinyere had completed university. However, none of the four who completed their post-secondary training had obtained any certificates as yet. There are two main reasons they gave for their inability to complete their training with certificates. Unfortunately three of the youths informed me about their situations before the interviews. Adah was the only one who gave the reason for her inability to complete her college of education training during our interview conversation as shown below:

Miriam: . . . Why are you not in college right now, have you finished or you are about to finish or can you tell us a little bit about your story?

Adah: I have not finished.

Miriam: Okay you have a little more to do in college, but you are not in college right now, even though you have not finished

Adah: Yes Ma

Miriam: What is the reason?

Adah: Because I was supposed to go on an excursion to a French country but could not go due to financial reasons.

After the interview, I thought solemnly about our conversation with Adah above. I felt that Adah would not have volunteered to give this information on tape had I not been very

specific in the way I asked the questions. I had asked her the same question during an informal conversation at her family home when I visited her family to give them the consent forms. At the time, Adah and both her parents explained to me about the fact that Adah had been out of school for three years, after having completed her course work because it was not financially possible for Adah to go for this excursion to a French country along with other students. However, I realized that Adah's response during the interview was slower and Adah herself was a little unassertive. Then it dawned on me that giving information during an informal conversation is different from giving formal information that is supposed to be recorded. I later asked Adah if she minded me using this information for my research study and she said she had no problem with my using the data. After interviewing Adah (first to be interviewed among the youths), I was careful not to ask questions about any sensitive information the other three youths have given to me during our informal conversations. I felt getting information on tape is very important but saving the participant from the embarrassment of having to give their sensitive info on tape is more important. It was clear that they did not mind me using their information, but they preferred to give me the information in my ear and not in the tape. Being an African myself, I am aware that most Africans are comfortable with things done informally than formally

Similarly, Gabriel had told me during my visit to their home to give the consent form to him and his mother Gbanan that a lecturer at the College of Education Katsina-Ala had demanded some monetary bribe from him but he did not have the money to give and so he failed that particular lecturer's course. In response to what Gabriel told me, I arranged with him to see the lecturer to discuss why Gabriel failed. Unfortunately, Gabriel did not show up on the day we planned. As such, I do not know if Gabriel was accusing the lecturer appropriately or not.

I do not know Gabriel's character as well as I knew Chinyere's since he was not really a committed participant of the NYEP. So I forgot about his case. Nonetheless, I intend to use his information as part of the data.

Fanan had also told me when she came to welcome me from Canada on the first week of my visit home for the fieldwork in 2014 that she had not yet obtained her nursing certificate because she lacked the money to complete the last project she needed to do after completing her courses. The demands for the execution of the project included going to the interiors for nursing practice, and she could not meet up with the financial involvement. The difference between Fanan and the other three youth participants I have been discussing about is that Fanan had married and was living with her husband and their baby at the time of the interviews. Hence from the responses of these four students—formal and informal, it can be summed up that there are two main reasons for their inability to obtain their certificates after completing their college or university studies. One reason is *lack of finances* as in the case of Adah and Fanan; and the other is *the effects of corrupt practices* as in the case of Chinyere and Gabriel.

Parents who have greater number of children seem to have lesser financial resources, and parents who have lesser number of children may have more financial resources

Looking at parents and the number of their biological children, Adamu is a retired civil servant/farmer and Adama is a primary school teacher/farmer (8); Baba is a carpenter/farmer and Binta is a night time food retailer/farmer (15); Chuku is a business owner/farmer and Chibuzu is a yam seller/farmer (6); Faityo is a retired soldier/ farmer and Fater is a vegetable retailer/farmer (10); Gbanan is a fruit retailer/farmer (4). The parents reported different

figures for people under their charge, example Adamu reported 40 and Baba reported 36 and so on. However, their biological children are who they have to provide for to be considered as responsible parents and so the number of biological children are considered as the crucial data in this section.

When asked if he enjoyed farming, Adamu said “I do farming because there is no other thing to do to supplement my low income.” Baba said “Farming is part of our tradition so we inherit it.” Chuku said, “I like farming not because it was handed down to me, rather I farm to feed my family and also make money from it.” Faityo said “Not so, I farm to feed my children and sell some items to make money.” Gbana said “As Tiv people, our tradition is to farm and if I do not farm I would not have food to eat or get something to sell and buy provisions.”

The importance of college education

To the question: Do you think that generally people who go to college are better off in life than people who do not? Adah, Bukar, Fanan and Gabriel said “Yes.” Dauda said “Not really—some have college education and are doing “hire” with someone else’s motorcycle,” Chinyere said: “Some are not educated but are doing well, however if they go to college may be they will do even better.”

To the question: Why do you think college education is important—is it because to be educated is good or because education opens the door to employment? Adah, Bukar, Dauda, Fanan and Gabriel said that to be educated is good and education opens the door to employment? Chinyere said “Education is good—even if one has his/her business and employ others.

If you were to win the lottery and you have all the money you need in your life, will you still want to go to college?

Adah said “Yes, because I would like to be well educated even if I have money.” Bukar said “Yes, I will use the money to further my education.” Chinyere said “I will still be educated—because when you have education, you will know how to increase your money.” Dauda said: “Yes, because I would like to be educated—education is very important.” Fanan said I will go to college.” Gabriel said “If I have all the money I need, I do not have to be more education.”

All parents said college/university education is necessary although they emphasized different reasons—most said because college education helps one to effectively do whatever they have to do. It is curious to note that Baba’s response had a condition attached: “Yes, if parents have the means—those who have college education can do better than those who do not.” In this response he alluded to the important difference college education make in people’s lives, yet cautious enough to start with the phrase “Yes, if parents have the means.”

All parents said they would like all their children to acquire college/university education, however Adamu cautioned: “It depends on the child’s performance and tendencies—in the villages, children who learn trades like carpentry are more stable than children who go to college and insist to stay in the cities where they may not get jobs.

Gender and class

Looking at gender and class issues in youth responses, only two youths (Fanan and Gabriel) answered “Yes” to the question: “Do you think your gender has something to do with your being in college/not being in College?”

Then to the question: “If your father has enough finances to educate one of his children, who among you and your siblings would he prefer to educate? Why?”

There are varieties of responses here. Adah said “Everyone equally,” Bukar said “Me because I am the one who accepted to go to school,” Chinyere said “Everyone equally,” Dauda said “The eldest child” Fanan said “The male child” Gabriel said “Me—because I am the first born,”

To the question: “Generally speaking do you think it is better to educate boys or to educate girls?” Why? Adah said: “It is better to educate a girl so when she goes to her husband’s house she will have some respect,” Bukar said: “Educate both,” Chinyere said “It is better to educate females because in my experience the educated girls helped the family more than the educated boys,” Dauda said “Educate both,” Fanan said “Educate both,” and Gabriel said “Educate boys, to take family responsibilities.

In parents’ interviews, the question asked was: In your opinion, is it more important to educate boys or girls?” Most parents said they would like to educate boys and girls alike. However, Adamu said “As an African I would say it is better to educate boys—the girl may marry a different tribe.” Immediately his wife (Adama) interjected with the words “if a girl is educated she would enjoy her education where ever she goes,” and so Adamu agreed with what Adama said and later stated: “Girls have recently proven to help parents better than boys because boys tend to take on the responsibility of helping the wife’s family.” Baba said “I want all my children to all be educated—I see no difference—they are all mine.” Chuku said “In the past we thought that educating girls cannot benefit her family, but now we have seen that girls can help their parents better than boys.” Faityo said “The boys and girls should be educated all the same.” Gbanan said “I will educate them all.”

Although this is my personal observation, and not a statement from a respondent, I feel it is appropriate here to add that among the fathers or heads of households, Adamu was more liberal in allowing his wife to give her opinion on the interview questions. The wife (Adama) seemed to cherish the opportunity her husband gives to her to express her views during the interviews, however, I observed that she was not aggressive about giving her opinion, except when she sensed that her husband wanted her to speak or when he asked her to speak. Adama is a university graduate—the only university graduate among all the parent participants—both women and men. Binta spoke the least among the women. She had such a limited English vocabulary so her husband interpreted some of the things--he stated them in the Tiv language when he felt they were important for her to know.

The perceived relevance and effectiveness of the NYEP

All parents agreed, without exception that the NYEP helped their children who participated—for different reasons. Adamu and Faityo said participating in the NYEP helped their children acquire business skills, Chuku said his child was able to procure the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board Examination (JAMBE) forms with the monthly stipends given by NYEP. When asked whether or not the project helped his daughter, Chuku stated: Yes it did—in getting financial assistance to buy the JAMBE form and she passed the exam and got an admission to university.” Baba said, “Yes, I already said it help him. When he has assistance, it helps me too.” He had earlier on stated “His going to the project helped him to get some small money to buy somethings instead of stealing.” This last statement reminds me of when Bukar and other youths were caught in criminal behavior by the Katsina-Ala vigilante group. Please see “Unusual Event Involving Bukar,” in “Bukar—Family Two” portrait (see Section 5.1 of this dissertation).

Within families, children and their parents seem to hold similar opinions about the importance of college education, whether it is more important to educate boys or girls, and whether or not the youths were helped by joining the NYEP. It is interesting to note the response of Adah and her father (Adamu) as to how the NYEP helped Adah.

Miriam: Do you think that NYEP has helped you? In what ways?

Adah: Yes, they taught me some things which helped me to set up my business.

Miriam: Do you think NYEP should continue and enroll more youths? Why?

Adah: Yes, it gave me the strength of struggling—may be it will help others too.

To the parents the question asked was: Do you think enrolment in the project has helped him/her? How? Adamu said “Very, very beneficial—she is surviving because of the business she is now doing-- moreover, she learnt some strategies on the project which helped her deal with some problems she met when she had her own business—example people take her commodities on credit to pay at the end of the month and when she goes to get the money they would say why have you come—we have not received salaries yet.” Baba said “Yes, I already said it helped him—when he has assistance, it helps me too.” Chuku said “Yes it did—in getting financial assistance to buy the JAMBE form and she passed the exam and got an admission to university.” Faityo said “She now works harder at her business as a result of joining the project.” Gbanan “Yes, it did.”

The last question in this section was: Are there some suggestions you want to make about how the project can better serve the community?

Adamu said “It would be good if the project bring something which the whole community will see—for example if the project brings a borehole everyone would see the water and they know that something is happening.” Baba said “As for me it is very hard to say this is the way you should do, but the man helping me is the one who will say this is the way I am going to do—a beggar have no choice.” Chuku said “With the problem of water we face, the project can bring a borehole and our children can sell water and get money for school fees.” Faityo said “Project can bring school to us sef.” Gbanan said “As they are going and getting money that is all—nothing more than that.”

CHAPTER 6

Discussion

6.1 Poverty in Nigeria: Rich Country, Poor People

The focus of this study is on the experiences of the NYEP youth participants and their families, and how their experiences are informing my understanding of my own experiences and interpretations of those experiences retrospectively.

In this Chapter I discussed the experiences of my research participants and their families with regards to their struggle against the obstacles they faced to get college/university education as evidenced by their responses to the interview questions in Chapter Five of this dissertation. I also discussed gender factors and how it affected the study, the participants of the study, with a subsequent articulation of my reflections on my personal experience of how these same factors affected my life in general, and my educational pursuits in particular.

There are three key factors which militate against the meaningful livelihood of a large proportion of the population of Nigeria. These are: *poverty*, *corruption* and *rural life*. There is a symbiotic relationship of sorts here, with corruption and rural life increasing the effect of poverty, and the more harshly the effect of poverty hits an individual, the more likely their honesty with regards to financial accountability with public funds is compromised. This is not meant to suggest that rich people are not corrupt. Rather, the corruption of the richest people—Presidents, State Governors and other important policy makers—somehow gets embedded into the scheme of policy-making and do not seem to appear as heinous crimes as

it does when an ordinary public officer is found to embezzle public funds. I here relate a recent incident in Nigeria to illustrate the source of my knowledge claim. During the May 2014 elections, many State Governors in Nigeria used civil servants' salaries to conduct their political campaigns. Salaries were not paid for as long as five months consecutively sometimes, and I was very perplexed to hear people complaining about the non-payment of salaries privately—without any demonstrations on the streets. I knew then that there would be no solution to the problem of non-payment as long as the masses are quiet and in a sense seemed to endorse this state of affairs by their won non-action. Then I wondered what kind of leaders have the heart to take away civil servants' rights to survival, as I came close to the possibility of facing hunger myself. Businesses were coming to a standstill as most civil servants had not received salaries for a period of five months. Parents could not pay their children's school fees and many people could not afford to get prescription drugs for their sick family members, except in cases where they were allowed to get it on credit—what is popularly known as “take now and pay later.” Many of the traders who sold consumable items were generous enough to let their credible customers to use the “take now and pay later” scheme and that reduced the levels of suffering in the community. I could not make a sense of this phenomenon for a long time until when I learnt through the recent United States and Canadian elections that every Presidential Candidate had his/her own campaign team who raised financial resources from willing members of the public for their campaigns. Then it dawned on me, “Ok I see it, the Presidential and Gubernatorial candidates in Nigeria could not have raised their campaign funds from the public and so they used civil servants' salaries to conduct their campaigns.” It later became clear in my mind that although using the salaries of civil servants for political campaign was not right, it made some sense to me in retrospect,

and I had some empathy towards the people who committed this act. Somehow this act became a little more pardonable in my mind, and maybe in other peoples' minds, for the simple reason that if the Presidential and the State Gubernatorial Candidates relied on fundraising for their political campaigns, perhaps no elections could have been held in Nigeria in 2014. By stating that "Somehow this act became a little more pardonable in my mind" I do not mean to compare the fundraising for political campaigns in the United States of America with the unethical practice of using civil servants' salaries in Nigeria to conduct political campaigns, without their consent. Rather, I mean that my bewilderment was lessened when I understood that the political candidates in the United States had people who were rich enough and willing to support their political campaigns, whereas the political candidates in Nigeria may not have candidates to support their political campaigns, and so they used civil servants' legitimate earnings, without their consent, to conduct their political campaigns. I believe that the reason this keeps on recurring during political campaigns, without any kind of protest is because Nigerians have been brain-washed in thinking that this is the only way political campaigns can be conducted in Nigeria.

There are many other ways in which corruption plays out on every social hierarchy in Nigeria which is not nearly as understandable as the aforementioned case of taking money from civil servants' salaries to conduct political campaigns. Generally speaking, there is no explanation to the levels of poverty I observed in Nigeria in 2014 except to blame it on corruption and lack of proper infrastructure. In my opinion, the increased number of beggars asking for money from travellers through the vehicle windows and the number of hawkers weaving in and out between traffic fighting over customers are all symptomatic of poor standard of living in Nigeria. The National Economic Empowerment and Development

Strategy (NEEDS) authored by the National Planning Commission in 2004 was initiated from the office of the then President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Olusegun Obasanjo, and he gave two main goals of the scheme which he stated as follows:

Our goal is to fight corruption to a standstill.” (p. 8). Later in the same document he stated: “The goal of NEEDS is to mobilise the resources of Nigeria to make a fundamental break with the failures of the past and bequeath a united and prosperous nation to the generations to come” (National Planning Commission, 2004, p. 20).

It seems clear that “the failures of the past” in the second statement has to do with “corruption,” and therefore these two goals are arguably of the same essence. The two goals can be joined together and be re-phrased as “Our goal in developing the NEEDS agenda is to fight the corruption that has been firmly entrenched into the fabric of the Nigerian society, so as to direct our resources to legitimate causes and ensure some level of prosperity for Nigerians for generations to come.” The NEEDS document (National Planning Commission, 2004) reported that although Nigeria is rich in natural and human resources, seven of every ten Nigerians live on less than US\$1 a day. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) report on Nigeria in 2011 used the oxymoron “Rich country, poor people” to describe the situation in Nigeria. So if the then President of Nigeria, President Olusegun Obasanjo had realized the root cause of poverty in Nigeria, and even claimed to fight against it, why are there no signs of positive change against corruption in Nigeria? Rather, there are increased levels of corruption different from what I used to see when I lived in Nigeria from 2002 to 2010. I was horrified to see new hybrids of corruption. Some of these hybrids of corruption I observed in 2014 include a policeman coercing vehicle owners to give them money, based on false

allegations that the vehicle owners or drivers have broken a traffic regulation. I here relate an experience I had in Lagos, a port city in Nigeria.

I needed to confirm my flight back to Canada on the KLM Royal Dutch Airlines the morning of 28th July 2014, so my brother in-law instructed his driver to drive me to the KLM office in Victoria Island, from his house in Ebute Metta. A police officer, dressed in traffic police uniform stopped us at one of the bridges. The driver, having known the usual “police-game” refused to stop, and was speeding to get away from the police. I was so scared the policeman might shoot at us so I got mad with the driver and harshly instructed him to stop. He obeyed my instruction and stopped, but he whispered to me that the policeman was just attempting to get some money from us—in fact from me, because I was the one being driven. The policeman could see that this is an office vehicle and maybe he figured that I must be an important person, at least so I reasoned. Coming from Canada, I could not believe that a policeman can actually falsely accuse a driver of breaking traffic regulations because I have never come across such an episode in Canada, nor had I ever experienced a situation where a policeman actually tells a blunt lie to dupe some road users of their money in Nigeria prior to this experience in 2014. Hence I did not know who to believe—the driver or the policeman. However, I decided to engage the policeman since I believe I needed to obey the law of the land, and it was the policeman who would know the law more accurately. To cut the long story short, after an hour of threats to “take the vehicle to the police station” and a more pleasant conversation of “how much money do you have,” which was directed at me, this policeman duped me of N3,000 (three thousand Naira) because I had told him I only had N4,000 (four thousand Naira)—he was kind enough to leave me with some little money N1,000 (one thousand Naira). The driver later told me that the police do that every day to

anyone who is polite enough to engage in conversation with them. Most drivers speed up and leave them on the bridge. I still did not believe what the driver had said until my brother in-law confirmed the driver's statements as true. My brother in-law refunded my money which the policeman received from me, and I thanked him. At that point, I felt a dark cloud of doubt come over me, stifling any faith left in me for the fight against corruption in Nigeria.

In addressing what prevents social and economic progress in Nigeria, the NEEDS document (National Planning Commission, 2004) pointed out that despite great natural wealth, Nigeria is poor and social development is limited and that "if present trends continue, the country is not likely to meet the Millennium Development Goals" (p. 20) The Millennium Development Goals were developed through the United Nations Millennium Declaration of September 2000 and was adopted by 149 world leaders, including Nigeria. The Declaration committed the United Nations member States to achieving the following Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015:

- (1) To half the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day and who suffer from hunger.
- (2) To achieve Universal Primary Education.
- (3) To reduce maternal mortality by three-quarters and under-five child mortality by two-thirds. Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases. Provide special assistance to children orphaned by HIV/AIDS.
- (4) To significantly improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.

However, the publication of the NEEDS document did not continue after the first document by National Planning Commission (2004) was published, so there is no information to be found in the NEEDS document by which one can directly follow up on the MDGs in Nigeria.

A google search led me to comments made about the NEEDS document (National Planning Commission, 2004) by different Nigerian authors (Oloba, 2014; Obinsanya, 2014). Oloba wrote:

The goal of NEEDS is to reduce poverty in Nigeria and this can materialize only if the various sectors are thriving. One of the pillars of NEEDS is promoting private enterprise. . . . One of the prerequisites of increased production is the abundance of energy i.e. electricity, which is mainly utilized for driving machines for the production of various items. (Oloba, 2014 p. 145).

Oloba (2014) later made a comparative analysis of consumption of electricity worldwide – United States, Cuba, United Kingdom, Ukraine, Iraq, South Korea, South Africa, Libya, Egypt and Nigeria. Of all these countries only the United States has a greater population (250.00 Million than Nigeria (140.00 Million). Yet Nigeria had the least amount of electricity consumption per capita (0.03KW) compared to Cuba, for example with 0.38KW amount of electricity consumption per capita.

Obisanya (2014) utilized some events happening in Nigeria at the time of his writing to capture the state of affairs in Nigeria. One of the articles in his archives is about alleged bribes. With the title “Alleged Bribe: Otedola To Testify Against Farouk Lawan” Obisanya (2014) stated the following:

Billionaire Businessman, Mr. Femi Adetola, has been scheduled to appear as a prosecution witness before a Federal Territory High court in Lugbe, Abuja in the ongoing trial of a former Chairman, House of Representatives Ad-hoc committee on fuel subsidy, Mr. Farouk Lawan for alleged bribery.

This was an advertisement of the “Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Crimes Commission.” However, what comes into my mind as I am writing is “This is the same old story about corrupt practices which would continue to be a part of Nigerians’ experiences as long as they live.” And I even wondered if true justice would have been served in the above case.

The NEEDS report attempted to explicate the difficulties of eliminating corrupt practices in the Nigerian social milieu. There are three main reasons that hamper progress according to the NEEDS report, however I am laying emphasis on corruption presently:

“Past Governments in Nigeria, instead of focussing on delivering essential public services, assume control of major resources of national income. In the process, corruption thrived in public service and gained a strong foothold in society.” (p. 20).

The above statement is concerning to me because most people think that President Olusegun Obasanjo’s government was corrupt too, but he was only pointing a figure at “Past Governments.”

Secondly, although the NEEDS document pointed to the areas that need improvement for Nigeria to move in the forward direction, there are no systematic ways or strategies by which these goals might be implemented, and how the improvement may be brought about in such a way that could be significant to the general quality of the life of the average Nigerian. Efforts have been made by the Federal Government to deal with corruption, though. The Government instituted massive anti-corruption campaigns and established the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Crimes Commission, and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission which outlaw corrupt practices. I was in Nigeria (2002-2010) when the

above aforementioned Commissions were put in place, and was talked about very much then. However, these Anti-Anti-corruption Commissions themselves became corrupted. The reason, as I understood it at the time I was in Nigeria was that when a warrant was issued to bring some corrupt practitioner to justice, the people responsible to bring the corrupt practitioner to face his/her criminal offences are diverted from carrying out their assignments by receiving heavy monetary rewards to cover the criminal deeds of the corrupt practitioner. So the corruption in Nigeria goes in a spiral, enlarging in diameter and scope, and in my small mind, I fail to see any end of Nigeria's corruption in sight, and indeed corruption can be viewed as the "mother" of the poverty in Nigeria.

The aforementioned was part of what motivated me to embark on the initiation of the NYEP. In one sense, I felt that Nigeria is rich enough and could easily afford free primary and secondary education for its youths, as I have observed in the Western nations of the world—such as Canada, United States, and Great Britain. However, I found that parents in Nigeria have to pay for books, chalk and so on, for their primary school children even though the primary school level of education is called Universal Basic Education (UBE), meaning that it is a free and compulsory education scheme. The secondary school level of education generally charges tuition payment, whether it is a government or private secondary schools although tuition fees are generally lower for government secondary school students than private secondary school students. There are no loan schemes for students at any level of education in Nigeria so parents and some cases family relations have to pay tuition for their children's secondary and tertiary education, and students have to depend on parents for other school-related needs. There is some evidence that this state of affairs exists in other African countries, as alluded to in Aboagye's (2007) study (see Section 1.5. of this dissertation).

Similar to the report in Aboagye's (2007) study, I later understood from some of the NYEP youth participants that they managed to stay in college with the help of some of their relations who were willing and able to support them financially. In Nigeria, at present, I do not know of any government level organized loan schemes for students, as we know of in Canada and other western countries. Nor are there interventions organized on government levels such as the Neighbourhood Renewal Program and the Social Exclusion Unit with its promotion of community networks and various management initiatives which serve as community self-help in Britain (Wallis, 2002). There is really no practical solution to the problem that low income families are faced with in respect to their children's tertiary education. This brings to mind what Aboagye (2007) had to say in this regard:

It is important to keep in mind the social functions higher education institutions play and the importance of making them accessible to the broader cross-section of the African population. This can be done by ensuring that whatever policy is in place recognizes that African students may not have the capability of paying for their education. The level at which parents are willing to support their children financially also differs by gender and therefore has accessibility applications for low income and female students (p. 224).

In my observations working with youth on the project (NYEP) the relations who have better economic means and care enough to assist parents with the education of their children have made all the difference in the lives of the youths. However, relations are usually moved to assist financially when the student is already in the university and can prove that they need financial assistance to continue their studies. I believe relations gave financial assistance for NYEP participants who got admission into college/university to absolve the shame

associated with the awareness that a close relation is dropping out of school due to lack of funds. Although I cannot state conclusively, I somewhat agree with Aboagye's (2007) statement that "The level at which parents are willing to support their children financially also differs by gender and therefore has accessibility applications for low income and female students" (p. 224).

One of the youth participants of my study (Fanan) stated that gender had something to do with her inability to finish her nursing education. I appreciate the way she was reasoning since at least three of her brothers had completed college/university at the time of the interview. Adah, another youth participant who did not believe that gender had anything to do with her being out of school, as far as her parent's willingness to support her education was concerned. Could Adah have received more help from relatives if she were a male child? It is hard to say. Adah really thinks her parents believe in her own education even as a female, however, their financial resources were stretched at the time she needed to go for an excursion to a French country to complete her National Certificate of Education program at the College of Education, Katsina-Ala. In any case, the participants' expressions are usually perceived to come from their subjective feelings and beliefs in auto-ethnography, hence it is not our interest to determine what their response ought to have been.

The reality is that most rural parents who could pay the tuition for all their children's secondary school education were unable to pay the tuition for their children's tertiary education. To this end the goals of NYEP had been to help youths to access college/university education, by financially assisting them, through the monthly stipends to buy the JAMBE form, write the promotional examination, and obtain admission to a college or a university. Once they were in a tertiary institution, and they applied for and received the

Youth Educational Empowerment Fund (YEEF) from the NYEP, the job of NYEP is finished (although there was a case where a participant of NYEP, already in a tertiary institution was granted some financial assistance by NYEP because of the desperation of her situation at the time), the rest of the financial support for college/university-related expenses is taken care of by parents and their relations.

One of the main reasons for my commitment to the NYEP, in the past and in the present, comes from the conviction that if nothing is done to address the current situation, and the heads of households continue to be primary and secondary school leavers, poverty would increase exponentially in this community from one generation to the next. I figured that although I cannot help the whole world, I can, at least do something to alleviate the suffering for one or two people who I cross their paths every day of my existence in this community.

Rural dwellers and poverty

Poverty has been addressed to a great extent in this dissertation. However, it would be worthwhile to quote again The NEEDS Nigeria document report on where poverty is likely to occur: It states: “Poor people are more likely to live in rural areas, be less educated and have larger families than the rest of the population.” (National Planning Commission 2004, p. 20).

The aforementioned observation reported by the National Planning Commission (2004) describes the experiences of my research participants. I will here mention specific examples of how some of my research participant families worked to defy the conditions they are faced with as rural dwellers. In Family One, one of the siblings of Adah relocated to

Lagos, where he now works as a house help to a family and earning some income to save for his education. If he had remained in Katsina-Ala, he would not have such an opportunity to earn any monthly income in this way after NYEP became inoperative. NYEP operated in full capacity between 2005 and 2010, and operated skeletally between 2011 and 2014 due to lack of administrative personnel to operate it. It was the only source of regulated income for youths who did not have degrees and as such could not secure any office type employment. Bukar relocated to Makurdi, Capital of Benue State, where he gets more contracts to work as a plumber. Adah moved her thrift clothes to Gboko, where there are more opportunities for trading being closer to the eastern part of Nigeria than Katsina-Ala is, and where there are more Ibo traders. Chinyere sells her thrift clothing in Makurdi, the capital of Benue State, a bigger city than Katsina-Ala. So by moving from a rural town to a city, my study participants were increasing their chances to improve their financial situation by doing what was in their power to do. However, they hardly questioned or raised concerns about situations they found themselves due to the negligence of those who are in the position to improve these conditions.

I observed the same passive attitude towards suffering with most youths I have worked with. As a Lecturer (a term used for a college teacher) of Chemistry in the College of Education Katsina-Ala from 2002 to 2010, I had invigilated examinations where students were writing papers in semi-darkness because of unexpected power outages at times when the College generator is either dysfunctional or out of fuel. Being used to how things operate in the Western parts of the world, I expected that such examination writing would be postponed till conditions are more favourable. However, when I made the enquiries as to if the students could see, their usual response was “We can manage.” With these responses I

would allow the exam writing to continue till the end. The students' tendency to accept suffering in silence might have been because they have internalized a sense of unworthiness to a better conditions of living, or maybe most did not have the sensibility to imagine any other way to live, having been in this kind of situation for decades. Some may even feel the pain in their present conditions of living, may know that their experiences are not normal or acceptable, it can be changed, and it ought not to be happening in Nigeria, especially considering the rich mineral resources that Nigeria has been endowed with. However, they do not have the will to explore ways to bring this change about.

Returning to poverty, it is a phenomenon that is readily observable and its presence acknowledged by some community members, on daily basis, usually among themselves, as they interact with one another. I must state that it is hard to detect this when one is a casual observer or new to the community. I made this observation when I lived within this community for eight years (between 2002 and 2010), and probably was beginning to be accepted as a member of this community. I often heard people use the word “chan” which means “poverty” in the Tiv language in their morning greetings. The greeting goes like this:

Person 1: “Underver (have you woken up)?

Person 2: “E-h-n (Y-e-s)!”

Person 1: “Under nana (how have you woken up)?

Person 2: “M-h-m mder dedoo, chan tse (I have woken up well, only poverty).”

This kind of greeting is used by old and young people alike—sometimes to be funny, but sometimes to allude to a literal situation in their lives. Moreover, the kind of poverty referred

to in this greeting includes the lack of basic amenities of life such as good food, clean water and adequate clothing for the family. Thoughts about education were not paramount in their minds during such basic daily interactions. However, the poverty factor impinge on accessibility of educational opportunities for most youths in my community especially the youth participants of NYEP some of who are my study participants.

Sarah Lawrence–Lightfoot (1997) made a distinction between “voice as witness,” and “voice as interpretation.” Commenting on “voice as witness,” she stated the following:

The use of voice underscores the researcher’s stance as discerning observer, as sufficiently distanced from the action to be able to see the whole, as far enough away to depict patterns that actors in the setting might not notice because of their involvement in the scene (p. 87).

Then, commenting on “voice as interpretation,” She stated:

Here we not only experience the stance of the observer and her place of witness, we also hear her interpretations, the researcher’s attempts to make sense of the data. She is asking, “What is the meaning of this action, gesture, or communication to the actors in this setting?” and “what is the meaning of this to me?” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997 p. 91).

In the results for youths, parents and community leader (see Appendix A2, Appendix B2, Appendix C2 in this dissertation) the researcher’s stance as discerning observer is obvious, standing on the edge of the scene—a boundary sitter—scanning the action, systematically gathering the details of behaviour, expression and talk, remaining open and receptive to all stimuli. In Chapter Six, the researcher assumes the interpretive role. As Geertz (cited in

(Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) reminds us in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, the ethnographer's work is inevitably interpretive; it is a search for meaning. It involves the researcher tracing a path through a dense thicket of interpretations, "through piled-up structures of inference and implication" (p. 91).

Youths' testimonies

As has been alluded to in Chapter Five, the responses of four of the six youth participants show clearly that *poverty* and *corruption* played a great part in their inability to move forward in their tertiary educational endeavour. Poverty was the main issue in the case of Adah and Fanan to complete all college requirements and obtain their certificates from College of Education Katsina-Ala, and School of Health Technology, Katsina-Ala respectively. On the other hand *corruption* was the main issue in the case of Chinyere to complete her university degree and receive her certificate from University of Agriculture, Makurdi. Similarly, Gabriel is yet to obtain his certificate from College of Education Katsina-Ala because of *corruption*.

The amount of money the youths get to spend on themselves on monthly basis range from N2000—20000 (\$10-100 Canadian dollars). There is no minimum poverty level for all Nigerians because it is generally viewed that poverty levels vary according to people's locations—people who live in the rural areas have limited opportunities to procure wealth whereas people who live in big cities are likely to make money by engaging in varieties of odd jobs. Take for example Adah's monthly spending money of N2,000.00 Naira (\$10 Canadian dollars) could easily be raised in a day by a trader selling thrift clothing in Lagos. Therefore selling thrift clothing in Lagos, a port city in southern Nigeria, is different from

selling thrift clothing in Gboko Benue State of Nigeria. Yet Adah was happy about the fact that she owns the thrift clothing business as she considers it the main source of her livelihood. Comparing Adah's monthly spending money of N2,000.00 (\$10 Canadian), which she earns from the sales of thrift clothing and Chinyere's monthly spending money of N20,000.00 (\$100 Canadian) which she also earns from thrift clothing, one is tempted to wonder what could be the reason for such disparity in their amounts of income, engaging in the same kind of trade. It may be hard to decide on what could be the reason for this difference considering the number of variables that could be involved—amount of capital available for the trade, the economic capabilities of audience or customers who patronize them and so on and so forth. However, I am inclined to think that their locations play a great part in the differences between their monthly incomes. Makurdi is a bigger city, and the State capital of Benue State. Whereas, Gboko, though have some few people residing there that are very resourceful in trade, compared to Katsina-ala, it is a smaller city than Makurdi.

Parents' testimonies

Looking at parents and the number of their biological children, Adamu is a retired civil servant/farmer and Adama is a primary school teacher/farmer (8); Baba is a carpenter/farmer and Binta is a night time food retailer/farmer (15); Chuku is a business Owner/farmer and Chibuzu is a yam seller/farmer (6); Faityo is a retired soldier/ farmer and Fater is a vegetable retailer/farmer (10); Gbanan is a fruits/vegetable retailer/farmer (4). The parents reported different figures for people under their charge, example Adamu reported 40 and Baba reported 36 and so on—including their extended family members. However, their biological children are who they have to provide for to be considered responsible parents. In Nigeria, there is no social welfare, food stamps or government assistance of any kind, so their

income must come from the salary/pension and from their farm produce. Parents were not required to estimate their incomes during the interviews, however, based on what their occupations are, it can be assumed that Chuku and Chibuzu's income ranks higher among parents, followed by Adamu and Adama, then Faityo and Fater, Baba and Binta, then Gbanan. These results show that the poorer families have greater number of children, while the families which seem to be doing well financially have fewer children. Baba's case is an example of a commonplace experience among people who live in rural areas in Nigeria—parents who have more children usually have lesser income compared to parents in the cities. Even in the rural towns, parents who tend to have more children have less financial resources. This study also shows that all of Chuku's children had completed their tertiary education, whereas none of Baba's children have had a chance to go to any tertiary institution as yet. It is no wonder that this is the case since Chuku seem to possess more financial resources than Baba. It seems to be an age-old traditional pension system in the rural areas—to have enough number of children so that a significant number of them will survive and pay for one's old age financial security.

The statement Baba made with regards to the difference between children who are in school and those who are out of school has implications here: "Children who do not go to school are home and parents can send them, where as those who go to school just want to rest when they return from school." I am inclined to think that the clause "and parents can send them," would mean "send them to go anywhere and do anything," however, I believe he has in his mind the farm as one of the most important places to send his children.

The story of Daniel Igali further substantiates the point that the poorer people have greater number of children in the rural parts of Nigeria. Daniel hails from Eniwari, a rural

settlement in Bayelsa State of Nigeria. He came to Canada in 1994, developed a wrestling career and won an Olympic Gold Medal for Canada in 2000. He recently got inducted into the BC Sports Hall of Fame and Museum. He related his story on his personal website as to how he acquired his wrestling skills. He explained that he had so many siblings that he had to wrestle with them during meal times to ensure that he was adequately fed. He mastered the art of wrestling since childhood, and this skill opened a door for his career as a wrestler in Canada. I have no way to prove the authenticity of Daniel's story however, I can endorse the possibility of it being true especially as he cared to relate it on his personal website which I visited in 2013 to study a school project he had developed in Bayelsa State Nigeria, through the financial assistance of Canadian based interested donors.

Poverty due to the lack of ideas to create wealth

Moreover, the kind of poverty I observed in my community was not only the poverty of material resources. I believe that the greatest reason for poverty is the lack of the resourcefulness of persons in this community; so one can say that a good proportion of the poverty experienced is caused by the *poverty of lack of ideas*. Take for example the case of Adah's business ideas, which she alluded to have acquired through her engagement with the NYEP—specifically through her experience with sales during the time she participated in NYEP. One would think that buying and selling needs only common sense. However, until she actually engaged in the NYEP, it did not occur to her that she could use any amount of money she had to buy a few retail items and to continue doing so until she realizes that her money is increasing because of the turnover through the small profits. Besides Adah, other youth participants said the NYEP helped them—to establish their own businesses during and after their experience with tertiary education. Chinyere sold thrift clothing when she was a

university student, and still sells thrift clothing as far I know—four years after completing her university education. I observed that even adult members of our community started setting up tables for the retail of some consumable items in front of their houses after observing the NYEP sales activities.

In my own case, I always engaged in one kind of money generating activity or the other, even prior to living in the college community. Business was constant in my home, even if just to ensure that all the members of my household were usefully occupied. There was always the need to have care-givers for my children when I had to teach, so it was needful to bake bread or cool drinks for sale to supplement the household income since we had so many mouths to feed. In this way, all my children grew up having their own responsibilities towards one another and towards the sales. Because of this I have not experienced abject poverty as an adult, except in situations of non-payment of salaries by the Government of Nigeria which mostly occur during Nigerian elections as was mentioned earlier in this dissertation

In retrospect, I have begun to see why buying and selling was my second nature at the time of the inception of the NYEP, and it did not seem to be the case with my NYEP participants. Moreover, even my tendency to be engaged in buying and selling might have come from watching my father's business activities. My father was a businessman—he reared animals and sold them, he cultivated larger farms by using paid labour and sold the produce when they were out of season, He owned vehicles with which he went to the bushes during the dry season, cut and collected wood, to sell as firewood during the rainy season. Through these activities my father acquired a reasonable amount of money and property to the extent that he was considered a rich man by the rural standard of living. That may be why

I have a business mindset and had problems understanding how people can live in abject poverty and yet seem to do nothing about it.

Interpretation of data

In this sub-section I attempted to link youths and parent's data. Then I interpreted the community leader's work with the vigilante group in the light of Nigerian cultural context. I also interpreted some of the youths' responses in the light of my personal experience (see Section 6.2 in this dissertation). Starting with Adah

Adah

Miriam: "Do you think NYEP should continue and enroll more youths? Why?"

Adah: Yes, because NYEP gave me the strength of struggling—others may need it too.

With Adamu (Adah's father)

Miriam: Do you think NYEP has helped Adah? How?

Adamu: The NYEP was very, very beneficial—she is surviving because of the skills she learnt from the NYEP. As a thrift clothes retailer, people would come to her and take some clothes on basis of "take now, pay later." At the end of the month when salaries are expected to be paid, Adah would go to them and ask for the money. Then she is asked "why have you come, salaries are not yet paid?" Adah would then have to go back and come to ask for her money again at another month-end.

I interpreted Adah's father, Adamu to have further explicated Adah's notion of the "strength of struggling" by his response. In this way, their responses corroborated each other.

I also discussed how Adama was supportive of Adah even when Adah decided to use the NYEP sales space for herself, which was inappropriate by ethical standards (see Section 5.1- Adah-Engagement with NYEP). Adama's attitude with regards to Adah's action further convinced me that this family is close-knit and support each other even in unsavory behavior.

Bukar

With Baba (Bukar's father)

Miriam: Do you think NYEP has helped Bukar? How?

Baba: NYEP helped him to get some small money to buy something instead of stealing.

I interpreted Baba's response in the light of the experience Bukar had with the vigilante (see Section 5.1 in this dissertation—Bukar—engagement with NYEP—unusual event with Bukar). I believe Baba was implying that if Bukar had not participated in the NYEP he might have continued in the habit of stealing as a youth.

Chinyere

Miriam: Do you think it is better to educate boys or girls?

Chinyere: Better educate females because they help their family better than educated boys do.

With Chuku (Chinyere's father)

Miriam: In your opinion, is it more important to educate boys or girls?

Chuku: In the past we thought that education a girl would not benefit her family, but now we have seen that educated girls can help their family better than educated boys.

I interpreted their responses to be similar because of their experience in their family that demonstrated this to be so. When Chinyere got an admission to the university she went to live with her sister to attend university as well as to receive assistance with her tuition and other school-related needs. On the other hand, her older male sibling who had college education is in jail presently because he fatally injured his girl-friend, a fact which most people in Katsina-Ala know. A colleague of mine told me this in our phone conversation in 2012 because the supposed girl-friend was a wife to one of our colleagues who had died a few months before this incidence occurred.

Dauda

None of Dauda's parents could attend the interview, so I used Dauda's verbal responses and his behavioral responses towards NYEP and how he viewed the importance of college education to see how these demonstrated his true feelings about college education.

Miriam: Do people with college education fare better than those who do not?

Dauda: Not really, some finished college but they do "hire."

This response corroborated Dauda's behavior as demonstrated by his constant request to leave the NYEP site and travel to another village to tend to his farm. He made adequate money from the sales of his farm produce to fix his machine and engaged in the "hire" business.

I interpreted his attitude and behavior to imply that he did not believe college education would make him more comfortable financially than hire work would.

Fanan

Fanan went to my house to welcome me as soon as she learnt that I had arrived in Katsina-Ala. She was excited to tell me that she is married and had a baby. I was pleased with her for coming to tell me about her current status. Then I went to her parents' home to give them the consent forms. I congratulated the parents for Fanan's marriage. However, Faityo (Fanan's father) responded that he did not know that Fanan was married. I felt a little concerned because this could mean Fanan did not tell him about her marriage which would imply that there are problems that may have negative repercussions to their relationship. When I came to collect the consent forms from Faityo and Fater, Faityo said to me that Fanan is married to a Primary school teacher who has no money.

With Fanan

Miriam: What determines social prestige— education or wealth?

Fanan: Money

In my opinion, Faityo's comments about Fanan's marriage and Fanan's comment about money being more important have similar implications. I interpreted this to mean that Fanan had got her idea of the importance of money above other things from her father's beliefs and attitude about money.

Gabriel

Miriam: How do you feel when your friends go to school and leave you at home?

Gabriel: I feel great! God's time is the best

With Gbanan (Gabriel's Mother)

Miriam: How do you spend your weekdays and weekends in a typical week?

Gbanan: I go to Church Choir on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. I go to Church in the morning and in the evening on Sundays.

The responses of Gabriel about "God's time is the best" was the only positive one among all the youths' responses when it comes to being left at home when their age-mates go to college. Most of them said they feel sad or shamed. I interpreted Gabriel's response to come from the fact that he is around his mother who goes to Church a lot, where dependence on God and accepting every situation with thanksgiving is taught.

With the community leader

Miriam: How effective is the vigilante group to the safety of the neighborhood?

Community Leader: The vigilante group has been very effective.

The effectiveness of the vigilante group has to do with the fact that the members patrol the neighborhood in the late hours of the night. They are usually out to catch any person walking around. They question any person they catch and if he does not respond satisfactorily to their queries, they beat the person up. There was a time they beat and set on fire one of the hire boys. He was suspected to be responsible for most of the burglaries and rapes that have happened for many years. The vigilante meted their judgement on this person without contacting the police. I interpreted this act (usually called "jungle

justice”) to be possible only in Nigerian or maybe other African cultures—in the Western world, the police, or other law enforcement agent would have to be involved.

6.2 Reflections

The understanding of the experiences of the youths and their parents through their responses to the interviews, my personal experiences and the observation I made as I worked with the youths participants of NYEP for five years, I have somehow reflected deeply within myself about my personal experience as a girl child, especially with regards to accessing educational opportunities in the 1960s. One factor that characterizes the similarity of my experience with the experiences of my study participants is *poverty*, although as explained above, the levels of poverty we experienced might differed somehow—I did not experience abject poverty as some of my study participants might have, although I lived in a rural settlement where there was lack of basic necessities of life—like tap water, good roads and electricity just like they do.

The salient factor that militated against my educational opportunities was gender-related, and I was not the only female who was faced with this problem at the time. All my female siblings faced the same problem, and unfortunately none of my female siblings has a college certificate or university degree certificate up to date. This phenomenon was easy to understand since the place of the woman was generally understood in the 1960’s to be that of home-making and child-bearing. Her access to education was not considered well-deserving of serious consideration. Furthermore, corruption was not a pandemic in Nigeria as it is now. Therefore corruption did not contribute towards my near-loss of a secondary school opportunity resulting in my hard, agonizing experience, which I related in Chapter One

(Section 1.3) of this dissertation. Even the access to primary school education did not come without some challenges. I would here relate how I came close to losing the opportunity to get into primary school in 1960.

I was born into a polygamous home of fifteen children--five males and ten females. As I approached school-age, my mother took me to a different village to live with my aged and dis-abled grandmother to help her fetch water from the river and cook our meals. I did not argue with my mother about living with my grandma for obvious reasons: First, there was no such thing as a “child’s right to be educated” as far as I knew then. Secondly, if I had expressed the desire to go to school in preference to living with my grandma, it would have amounted to an un-caring attitude, on my part towards my grandma. Thirdly, it was generally believed then, that caring for elderly people would result in some kind of “blessing” for the care-giver, especially if they did it with the right attitude. I wanted that blessing, on top of the fact that I loved living with grandma, because she allowed me the freedom to play with my friends—since there were fewer activities in her house than in my mother’s house.

My grandmother died in 1960, and I returned to my parents’ village and enrolled in a government primary school about 10 kilometers away from where we lived. By the time I enrolled in primary school, primary education had become compulsory for boys, although girls could do as they pleased or as their circumstances dictated—whether they get educated or not did not seem to matter substantially to those in charge of enforcing compulsory primary school education. For me, it was a welcome opportunity to go to school and I did the best I could while in primary school and passed the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations as well as the Common Entrance Examinations and I attended the interview for secondary school selection in Maiduguri, Borno State of Nigeria where I was selected for an

admission into the Federal Government Girls' College Kano, Nigeria where tuition, accommodation, feeding, and transportation were paid by the Federal Government of Nigeria. In fact all my educational expenses were paid through the Nigerian Scholarship schemes—both Federal and State Governments Scholarships up to the Master's degree level—without any financial involvement from my parents.

The stories of the youth participants of my study revealed that the obstacles the female youths faced, and may still be facing with regards to college/university education has little or nothing to do with their gender. At their time, girls' education had received substantial consideration and is almost being regarded as important as boys' education.

Ogoda (2009) made the following observation with regards to the girl-child education in Nigeria:

It is obvious that some efforts towards the development of the girl-child education had been on ground in Nigeria. However, socio-economic and cultural practices still impinge on their education. Thousands of girls in the country still face a number of constraints that keep them from enrolling and staying in school. Among the most notable are: Traditional pattern of gender division of labour, fear of loss of cultural values attributed to western education, direct and indirect cost of education, sexual harassment and exploitation of girls and early marriage and pregnancy (p. 4).

My study participants have no experiences of “early marriage” obstacles since they are not Moslems, neither did their parents demonstrate any apparent “fear of loss of cultural values attributed to western education,” as far as I could gather from their interview responses.

The efforts observed by Ogodu (2009) must have included educational propaganda, awareness schemes and actual experiences of parents who have benefitted from the education of their girls. These as I have also observed most recently during my field work in 2014, are gradually, but certainly, influencing the way the education of the girl-child had been construed in Nigeria. The responses of the parents of my research participants show clearly that parents are no longer placing more importance on the education of boys than they are on the education of girls. Four of five parents said they give equal importance to the education of their girls and boys. One parent said the education of girls turned out to be of more economic benefit to him than that of boys, in actual experience. These show some of the reasons why there is a positive turn with regards to girl-child education in Nigeria. However, this kind of propaganda was non-existent at the time I was growing up. So at the time my father made the comment about not educating his girls, no one saw anything wrong with it since it was generally accepted that a woman's value is measured in terms of how well she took care of her home and the number of children she reared. In retrospect, believe I must have somehow internalized those cultural values which were prevalent at that time I was growing up, otherwise why was there no plea bargain registered on my memory, with my father on this subject? At least I could have tried something—even begging him to pay some part of the secondary school tuition so that my mother would pay what she could.

Just as Trahar (2009) stated: “As a very young child I was always writing stories. . . . The meaning that became part of my family narrative was that I was always writing stories, very creative stories. . . . But is that the meaning that I am applying retrospectively? How can I know?” (p. 2). The idea of revising the past retroactively when writing one's lived history strongly applies in my case as well. I am writing my story in 2015, hoping that it will be of

interest to my audience because of the debates about gender equity that have spanned a period of four decades—that is from the time I was growing up in the 1960's till now. I may not be interested to write my story in the 1960s, if I could have, when gender equity would have had no meaning to any class of audience.

Returning to the youth participants of my study, accessibility to tertiary education involved a whole set of different variables. With the increasing corruption and nepotism, hard work no longer counted as an asset to accessing educational opportunities, rather it is one's connections with those who are in the policy making positions in the educational sector that matters. Presently what was known as Federal Government of Nigeria Overseas Scholarship Scheme (Which awarded me scholarship to study in for a Master's degree in UBC in 1983-1985) is no longer operative. The Commonwealth Scholarship scheme which has its origin outside of Nigeria, is still obtainable by Nigerians to study abroad, however, there are only a few allocations given to Commonwealth States. In Nigeria, those who are in the position of allocating the Commonwealth Scholarships give it only to their relations or friends who may or may not have merited them.

Fortunately for me, connections might have been important, but not necessary to allocate the scholarships. I received the Benue State Scholarship (1977), and later, Federal Government Scholarship (1982) with no special connections whatsoever. Moreover, for some reason, things worked in my favor at every turn. In the 1970s there was the emphasis for access to education for girls in my particular province (Borno Province). Other variables worked in my favour and made my pursuit of education a smooth ride after getting into Federal Government Girls College in 1965. My Province being in the North and predominantly of the Moslem faith had the girls married in their early or late teens and did

not get further than primary school education. Hence there were very few girls in the university when I was admitted into Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria with the result that girls were encouraged to pursue further education at the time. The process of university admission (which was then done by quota system) favoured me on this basis, as well as the fact that Borno State spent more money on university students per capita than any other state in Nigeria due to the fact that it had fewer students competing for university education. I remember that during my Bachelor's degree in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, I had free accommodation, free meal tickets, free transport money, and good amount of spending money which we called "Bulgaria," which I have not known the reason for this name up to date.

6.3 Gender Influence on the study

Gender differences set the undertones of every human social interaction in my community. One phenomenon that is readily observable in the home is the division of labor between men and women in traditional Nigerian homes. A man is not expected to be associated with kitchen work, which unfortunately is still true in many homes in my rural community, and even in the homes of most of my research participants. Ideally, girls help their mums in the kitchen, and boys work with their fathers on the farm, and as such girls spend most of their time at home. However, gender did not appear to be important when it comes to accessing educational opportunities with regards to the youth participants, according to the responses of my research participants to the interview questions as seen in Chapter Five of this dissertation. This is not surprising at all, since the girl is responsible to help her mum cater for the family only as long as she is at home; someone else would take up this responsibility when she have to go to college where she may stay in the school residence.

All youth participants expressed their opinions casually, and without hesitancy—the kind of hesitancy I would have experienced if I had to respond to this question in the 1960's. Two female youths (Adah and Chinyere) were bold about their preference of educating girls rather than boys—of course they gave reasons to support their preferences. Their responses would be discussed a little later in this chapter.

The parents' interview responses corroborated some of the youth participants' bold responses as to their preference to educate girls rather than boys. Most parents have realized the extent to which educated girls have demonstrated their ability to support their parents financially—in a way that was thought to be possible only with educated boys. In the past, it was supposed to be the case that when a girl gets married she becomes more concerned with her husband's home and his people than her father's house and her parents. In the parents' interviews, the question asked was: *In your opinion, is it more important to educate boys or girls?* Most parents said they would like to educate boys and girls alike. However, Adamu said “As an African I would say it is better to educate boys—the girl may marry a different tribe.” Immediately his wife (Adama) interjected with the words “if a girl is educated she would enjoy her education where ever she goes.” In response to what his wife said, Adamu posed and cleared his throat, and stated the following (in agreement with her), “Girls have recently proven to help parents better than boys because boys tend to take on the responsibility of helping their wife's family.” Baba's response was: “I want all my children to all be educated—I see no difference—they are all mine.” Chuku said “In the past we thought that educating girls cannot benefit her family, but now we have seen that girls can help their parents better than boys.” Faityo said, “The boys and girls should be educated all the same.” Gbanan said, “I will educate them all.”

From these responses, it is clear that parents either prefer to educate both boys and girls or preferred to educate girls than boys.

To reiterate what was said before, from the responses of my study participants it is clear that gender factors had not been a great hindrance in the educational experiences of the female youth participants. Returning to the responses of Chinyere and Adah, whose preferences were “to educate girls,” Chinyere had the following comment: “Better to educate females, because in my experience they help their family better.” It is significant that she added “in my experience,” because it shows that her knowledge claim is very authentic. However, I find Adah’s response the most amusing to me: “Better to educate a girl so that when she goes to her husband’s house she will have some respect.” Her response was to the question: *Generally speaking do you think it is better to educate boys or to educate girls? Why?*”

Adah’s response reminds me of Adichie’s (2006) observation of how her glorified women who were university graduates were rated among other women. In her book, *Purple Hibiscus* (2006) Adichie tells about how her mum came to tell her that she was pregnant, and both she and her brother Jaja exclaimed “Glory be to God.” Her mother went on to explain that after she had had Chimamanda (the author of *Purple Hibiscus* (2006), and then had some miscarriages, the community wanted to influence her husband, Mr. Adichie to have children with other women. Chimamanda’s mother talking to her Stated:

God is faithful. You know after you came and I had the miscarriages, the villagers started to whisper. The members of our *umunna* even sent people to your father to urge him to have children with someone else. So many people have willing daughters,

and many of them were university graduates, too. They might have borne many sons and taken over our home and driven us out, like Mr. Uzendu's second wife did. But your father stayed with me, with us. (Chimamanda 2006, P. 28).

The above quote seems to support Adah's opinion—it may be beneficial to have girls educated so that they would have respect in their husband's house. And if they give birth to boys, they would also increase their chance of keeping the husband. Although at the time I was growing up, I would not have been able to imagine the luxury of “getting education so I could have some respect in my husband's house,” since the prospects of ending up in my “husband's house” was the reason for my father's refusal to educate me. However, by some strange arrangement of destiny in my life, I would say without a doubt that education had an important effect in my marriage, and education became even more important after my husband's death. In fact it would be appropriate to say that it was education, and the additional advantage of having grown-up children—two males and three females that placed me high above reproach, especially in the eyes of my in-laws at the burial of my husband. I will relate more of these experiences later in this chapter. For now it suffices to state that, Adah's response about educating girls so that they may have respect in their husband's house, touches my heart deeply as I realized, in retrospect that she was talking about what I had personally experienced, without her knowing it. It took me a while for me to realize this as well—going through the audio-taped interview responses, putting them on paper, comparing one participant's response with another—nothing did it. Generally, I just found Adah's responses very deep— sometimes I think they are “funny”, “extraordinary,” and so on. However, the moment I started writing Chapter Six, in which I started to engage in introspection about my study participants' responses and my own experiences, I started

seeing clearly the significance of Adah's response—I mean this particular response about “educating girls” in my experience, especially with regards to my married life. The significance of Adah's response to my experience would further be elaborated when I discuss my experience during my husband's burial (see Section 6.3 in this dissertation).

I am here reiterating what had been stated earlier, with regards to the youth participants of my study, to address a case in point. It is safe to state that there is no evidence to suggest that female youth participants faced difficulties to access college/university education because of their parent's negligence to educate their girls. Fanan stated that her gender has something to do with her being out of school. Her claim could have merits—however it is hard for me to verify this due to the experience I had of her parents' impatience about her leaving the NYEP so she could go to school (see Chapter 5, “Youth Portraits—Fanan” in this dissertation). This experience had made me think that they wanted her to be educated so badly they could not wait for her to complete the year of her engagement with the NYEP. On the other hand, at least three of her male senior siblings have completed college or university education at the time of the interviews, but again, this may be because they are older than her (most parents educate their children in chronological order, especially when they cannot afford to educate all of them). Moreover, she was married and living with her husband during the time of the interviews, so maybe the parents did not think that furthering her education was their responsibility at the time. On the other hand, although Chinyere did not think her being out of school had anything to do with her gender as a female, at the time of interviews, one can say that her being out of school—without any certificate for her university degree is indirectly related to her gender. If she were not a female, she might not have encountered this demand from the lecturer about dating. That

having been said, one has to bear in mind that she could have faced victimization in other ways such as giving bribe to pass a particular lectures course as the case was with Gabriel—not based on gender, but on the oppressive behaviour of the alleged lecturer in this case.

Generally speaking, the youths—males and females alike were free in their expression and each felt that they had a “voice” to be reckoned with. On the other hand, the female parents that have spouses were without any “voice” whatsoever. When I asked whether parents wanted to be interviewed together, or separately, the men said they wanted to be interviewed together with their wives. I then asked the women if they held the same opinion with their husbands. They all said “Yes,” although they know that being interviewed with their husband’s meant the husband’s would give most of the responses, which might not have been of any disadvantage to them. However I think the absence of their voices in the research might have created a void in the study, even if the results of the study might not have been significantly altered.

It was during the parents’ interviews that I was reminded that women have no voice in this community—a fact I have almost forgotten in a matter of four years as I left Katsina-Ala community and returned to Vancouver in 2010. I was reminded again about how difficult it is to know the true feelings of a woman in this community, especially when she is not in agreement with her husband about the issue under discussion; and even when she says she is in agreement with him, it is still difficult to know if she is really in agreement with her husband’s opinion, or she is just saying she is, because she wants to appear to be respectful towards her husband. Moreover, since her husband has to know who she is talking to and what subject she is talking about, she is limited on what she can find out on her own.

I remember how women Lecturers of the College of Education Katsina- Ala decided to find out certain information on the “Statutory Rights” of women in marriage. Their decision was as a response to the ease with which we observed family members come to the house of a deceased man and collect all the properties belonging to the man, in some cases, leaving the woman and her children with little or nothing. Hence the women Lecturers formed an organization called “Katsina-Ala Women Association (KAWA)” in the 1980’s and registered it. We ensured that this was exclusively a women’s organization and men were not invited. It was from there I found out about the need to register marriages in the courts after conducting the marriage ceremony in the Church, because it is only court marriages that cover women’s rights statutorily. This gives her the right to appeal to the courts if her husband’s properties are taken from her family home by his relations in the event of his death. We kept this organization secret for some time, until some of the husbands found out about it and they demanded us to shut it down. None of us argued against shutting the organization down because none of us were bold enough to protect our rights as women at the time. In retrospect, I remember that occasion with regrets—that I did not know better at the time to fight against closing the KAWA organization. It also reminds me, in retrospect, how my ethics courses and anti-racist courses in UBC prepared me to stand against injustice in any shape form or fashion.

Returning to my study participants, Adamu was more liberal in allowing his wife to give her opinion on the interview questions. The wife (Adama) seemed to cherish the opportunity given to her by her husband to express her views during the interviews. However, I observed that she was not aggressive about giving her opinion, except when she sensed that her husband wants her to speak out or when he asked her to comment. Adama is a

university graduate—the only university graduate among all the parent participants— both women and men. I believe Chibuzu and Gbanan might have secondary school education, and Fater and Binta might have had primary school education. Binta spoke the least among the women. She had such a limited English vocabulary that her husband interpreted some of the things he said in the Tiv language when he felt they were important for her to know.

Although the difference between the expressiveness of Adama and the other women parent participants of the study could be ascribed to their level of education— Adama being a university graduate and the other women participants with lesser levels of educational qualification. However, his might be true only to a limited degree. Rather I think it is because Adamu is more liberal in allowing his wife some freedom of expression—may be due to the fact that he had lived and travelled to more places than the other male parents who for the most part lived and did their businesses in Katsina-Ala. Generally speaking, expectations of women to obey their husbands and sometimes other male members of the community, especially in the public sphere is the same for graduates and non-graduates alike. Moreover, speaking generally on behalf of all my study participants and myself as ordinary citizens of Nigeria all of us can be represented as “silent lives,” as far as “voice” in policy making decisions are concerned. So in this regard both the researcher and the researched, together represent one of the categories or groups described as “the silenced” (LeCompte, 1993, p. 10), because of the levels of corruption which exists in the Nigerian Government hierarchies which had, to a large degree, obfuscate the possibility of democratization in Nigeria as we know democracy in Canada and the United States. In this case, we represent the “silenced lives” not because we lack consciousness of our own oppression, but rather we have chosen to suppress that knowledge because, like most Nigerians our own “voice” is not really

needed on any level of policy making by virtue of our position as the “masses.” But the most important reason for our silence may be the fear of the dangerous implications of speaking against the government. I remember visiting a relation in July 2014 who showed me a document which revealed somethings about some government officials at the time, and whispered to me “this must be kept a secret if you do not want to get into trouble.” Of course I had no interest to talk about such things—secret evil plans of oppressive dictators, and so I never said a word about it to anyone. So it is legitimate for me and my study participants to feel oppressed since our “points of view are believed to be unimportant or difficult to access by those in power” (LeCompte, 1993, p. 10).

Returning to the relationship between men and women in my community, I believe the female participants of my study (the researched) and myself (the researcher) carry a “double burden” of oppression—one “burden of oppression” coming from the government and the other coming from our spousal relationships. I figured that I am not in the position to deal with the “burden of oppression” from the government since it is hard to stand alone and successfully “fight” in that capacity—challenging the government’s huge arm of rule. However, I tried to devise a way of exempting myself from the “burden of oppression” from my spousal relationship, and men who would like to take an advantage a specific situation of health in our family.

My husband suffered from bipolar illness most of his life, and that was hard on everyone in the family because my husband and I did not agree on most important subjects—even about how hard we should work to meet our family’s needs. Hence I had my mind made up very early in our marriage to use the brain I have to make plans for the family with or without my husband’s consent. This was very difficult to do in Nigeria, but it became easier

for me when we came to Canada. I received a lot of support from his doctors, social workers and even his professors who understood the situation of his health. Even in Canada, I have met one or two people who told me that it would be impossible for me to do graduate work with the condition of my husband's mental health. One of such person was actually saying this from her own experience. Even though I did not argue with her, my thoughts were contrary to what she said—I was thinking that my husband's condition of health should be the one reason to push me in the direction of successful educational career. So I followed what my heart was telling me, constantly praying to God to make me strong for the sake of our children. And I always believed that God had no choice but to answer my prayers and give me strength—supernatural strength—most of the time, to do what needed to be done to keep the family going. Nonetheless there were some circumstances in which I felt that my husband's actions were “undoing,” so to say, what I was trying to do to move ahead with meeting the family's needs.

The family was very young then, had good appetites, and other needs. Since my husband did not believe he was able to work, he did not look for any employment. The financial burden then rested squarely on my shoulders. At this point he had dropped out of his program in UBC, on health grounds, so he remained at home and helped with meals preparation (which was a hard thing for an African man to do, and I appreciated it) I could then continue as a full-time graduate student, working long hours a day just to provide adequate money for basic needs in the house. Some of the jobs I did included baby-sitting, and I could see that my husband did not like that very much. One day he got into a bad mood and he decided that I should no longer do baby-sitting jobs. He said that he felt humiliated that his wife (that was me), a holder a Master's degree, who had raised five children of her

own had to go to another woman's house—a woman who is younger than his wife, to receive instructions about taking care of her own baby. This was unacceptable, by his standards and he demanded that I had to quit the job. What he said might have been logical, but we did not need that kind of logic at the time—we needed food for the children, and I thought my husband had enough sense to understand this concept of that need. Surely if he understood the need to feed our children, he did not agree with the way I was trying to meet that need, and so he refused my plea for him to allow me continue with my baby-sitting job. I was hoping he would change his mind when his mood improved. However, I quickly quit the job when the baby's mother told me he had given her similar instructions about not making his wife baby-sit her baby. She was our family friend so she did not feel offended so much, which gave me some comfort.

Before I quit I told the Lord that I would quit the job to give myself and the mother of the baby some peace. Then I also told the Lord, I am going to follow the scriptural verse that says “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5: 22, NKJV), although I knew the Lord did know that I was quitting more out fear than out obedience at the time. None the less, the Lord understood my situation, and I received an intuitive guidance to quit the job. This intuition comes as “a peace sign” in a potentially troubling circumstance. This was the intuitive guidance that in retrospect, I have now come to understand to be the “still small voice” spoken of in the Bible (1Kings chapter 19 verse 12 NKJV), and so I usually seek this intuitive confirmation in my heart when I have to take serious decisions that affect any member of my family. This particular decision was very difficult for me to take because I believed that my children should not go hungry while I am alive and well. However, this situation was outside my repertoire of action so I quit the job

and tried very much not to worry about the consequences. I was able to keep my peace, which I did not believe I could, and I rejoiced that I have such peace. To date, most decisions I embarked on after receiving this kind of intuition—the “still small voice,” had always yielded positive results.

Returning to my story about quitting the baby-sitting job, within a few weeks we were out of food as a result of my quitting the job. However, I just waited on my husband to say something. Then one day he came home, in a good mood, and he told me he had gone to Brock Hall, to the Awards Office and had asked for financial assistance to feed his children because he had nothing to feed them. Then about two weeks later, he came with a cheque of three thousand dollars. We had enough money to buy food for the remaining part of the summer, and he even gave me \$200 dollars to buy dresses for myself. To me that was a miracle—I did not babysit, but we had enough to eat, and I had enough to buy myself two brand new dresses! The following winter term I got a Graduate Academic Assistant (GAA) position in my department, and other jobs the University of British Columbia, so I was able stop the baby-sitting job completely.

Another episode was when my husband felt he needed someone’s company after missing the family for two days. A social worker had given an advice for me and the children to stay with a family friend for two days when she felt it was going to be difficult for us to manage my husband’s mood at the time. Apparently he was feeling lonely after not seeing any of us for two days. He decided to call the police, the ambulance and the fire brigade. When they arrived at the house, they found him alone. They questioned him about his reason for calling them. He told them that he was lonely. They found it a little funny at first, but having known his health situation, they decided to take him to the emergency section of the

UBC Hospital to rest for some days. The family then got an opportunity to return into our home in his absence. However that whole episode was not funny for me because I had to pay for the charges related to the ambulance service which was \$44 dollars at the time.

On another occasion, my husband decided that he did not like the climbers at the back of our house in Acadia Park Family Housing in UBC. He said that as an African man, he is not used to having little plants coming almost into his house. He therefore trimmed all the branches of this climber. The Housing Resident Officer saw it and issued him a one hundred dollars fine. Apparently, there were regulations about trimming the trees. I had to pay the \$100 fine on his behalf. This made me apprehensive about what my husband might do that might cost me some money, especially when his moods were high. However, it was easier to manage his moods in Canada where people understood something about bipolar illness, than in Nigeria where people brand bi-polar patients as “mad people,” and as such place a stigma on any kind of mental illness. As a result people hardly accept mental health diagnosis easily in my locality. My husband himself fought his diagnoses when he first saw the doctor while studying in Dalhousie University Halifax, because he was told it was a psychiatric illness. However, later he accepted the diagnosis and was faithful with taking his prescription drugs. Our being in Canada had been a great advantage to me and our children because we could easily call someone for help—the doctor, the social worker or even a friend who understood the situation. But at home in Nigeria, no one would come to our rescue, especially at night when people are sleeping. Besides, the police do not enter into any domestic argument in people’s homes, until maybe after someone is dead.

I remember receiving news of the death of two of my female cousins at different times while in Vancouver. In each of these cases, there was a whisper which followed the

news: “Her husband killed her, but do not say anything about it.” I knew the husband of one of my cousins had a history of mental illness. So when I received such news I thank God that I am still alive. Such news also helped to reinforce my intentions of not going back with my husband to Nigeria when he decided to follow his brother’s advice to return home in 1996.

Living in Katsina-Ala and developing the NYEP

Generally speaking, in my experience, the process of negotiation between self-acceptance and conscious determination to develop a sense of belonging in, and the feeling of responsibility towards my community has meant a compromise in the face of apparent contradictions. On the one hand was my awareness of the need to be true to myself about what I believe in terms of how I should relate to other people. On the other hand, there was also the awareness that being true to myself in those ways may directly or indirectly interfere with my being accepted in this new community which I became part of by virtue of my marriage. These sources of contradiction influenced me to adopt a certain perspective, a hermeneutic that acknowledges the inevitability of thinking in dichotomous terms while always seeking the richer understanding that comes by working through the distinctions between the sources of dichotomy—always endeavoring to hold an attitude or choose a line of action in ways that held my personal values in high esteem, and at the same time holding a true sense of respect for someone else who may, or may not, think highly of my own values.

First, I decided that as an autonomous moral agent I have the right to make decisions for myself. My ethics courses in UBC helped me here a great deal—especially Kant’s self-respect and respect for persons (see Section 1. 5) in this dissertation. I have therefore espoused the self-respect and respect for person principles because these principles are also

fundamental to what the Bible teaches—and I grew up believing that the Bible is an infallible word of God. In fact the whole reason for human existence can be summed up in “loving God and loving fellow human beings, “as far as the Bible teachings are concerned. The Bible insists that “if someone says” ‘I love God,’ but hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.” (1John chapter 4 verses 20-21 NKJV). As if to support this scripture, Kierkegaard (1962) stated:

It is in fact Christian love which discovers and knows that one’s neighbour exists and that—it is one and the same thing—everyone is one’s neighbour. If it were not a duty to love, then there would be no concept of neighbour at all. But only when one loves his neighbour, only then is the selfishness of preferential love rooted out and the equality of the eternal preserved (p.58).

So I figured out that I have the liberty to make decisions for myself, as long as such decisions do not impinge on someone else’s (my neighbor’s) rights. For example, after living in this community for a while, I observed some salient and yet unspoken differences between men and women, boys and girls in this community. I later came to understand that women are often validated by men’s opinion of them generally, and then a wife is often validated by her husband’s opinion of her in particular.

However, by virtue of my husband’s mental state of health, having suffered from bipolar illness since 1981, I did not have the luxury of living under my husband’s canopy of protection so to say—or any kind of validation, as he seemed to be battling his sense of self-

concept for his own person. His good nature notwithstanding, his state of mental health did not afford him a strong sense of self that empowered him to develop a sense of commitment toward his family, nor the will to protect any of his family members in any situation. This left me and our children at the whims and caprices of men who wanted to show their authority over women and children—especially women and children that they have no ties to.

In response to our perceived disadvantaged family situation, my children and I look out to protect one another constantly and consciously worked to ensure we have a close-knit family despite our physical geographical locations. Sometimes we had to protect ourselves against some of my late husband's relations who have the tendency to seek to direct our family affairs, which is viewed by them as acting according to their traditional practices and has hidden implications that a woman is not able to run a home on her own. They feel justified to intrude in our family affairs despite the fact that they offered no moral or financial support for the family in any way—not even for the education of my children, four of whom are holders of Bachelor's degrees presently. We prayed often with my children when we were together, asking God to help us trust him to provide our needs within our family, so that we do not need to ask for help from relations—neither my husband's nor mine. We also try to commit ourselves to each other so that any family member who has a financial need—especially a school-related financial need should be assisted by family members who are able to help out. With this, I can say that we have been successful in having our needs met within our family unit, and we also try to help others who are less fortunate than we are financially.

As I stated earlier, I do take my moral autonomy seriously—basing my attitudes and actions on the validity of my agency as a person—needing no validation from another

person. This does not mean that I hate being validated—I just do not work for them as other women I lived with in the same neighborhood do, or they think they have to do. I did not need validation from anyone about what I feel I am, or about what I feel morally inclined to do. I believe that spirituality, and a limited knowledge of moral philosophy helped me to stand firm on my convictions. Hence, generally I see myself as a non-conformist in any society where men seek to dominate women or vice versa.

I must point out, however, that from the standpoint of my Christian upbringing and my present conviction, I believe in the Biblical injunction “Wives, submit to your own husband, as to the Lord” (Ephesians chapter 6 verse 22, NKJV). I do not believe that this verse is intended to promote women oppression, or male domination, but rather to engender healthy relationships in the family. I believe this is why the verse “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church and gave himself for her.” (Ephesians chapter 6 verse 26, NKJV) is placed side by side with this other verse. In the plans and purposes of God, these two verses are to be understood as two faces of the same coin, as it relates to family relationships, in the sense that if a man loves his wife the way Jesus loves the Church, he would be willing to die to protect her. Also, if the man would be willing to die to protect his wife, she does not need to be told to respect him—rather, she would feel the desire to honor him in her own heart. So taken together, these two verses are both necessary and jointly sufficient to serve as a blueprint or a code of conduct which not only preclude any self-centered desires, on the part of the man to manipulate or subject his wife’s wishes under his own agenda for male domination, but also provides a solid evidence for any thinking wife to cultivate her own personal conviction of her own submission—through the awareness of her husband’s love for her, which includes protecting her. There may be some exceptions to

the behavior of men and women, but most people would agree that in a family situation, the man is more concerned with the big picture—such as purchasing or building a house for his family, ensuring that the family car is road-worthy and so on; whereas the woman is concerned with the meticulous details that promote the well-being of the family, such as good nutrition, clean surrounding good eating habits for the children and so on.

Moreover, the commandment for the man to love his wife and the woman to obey her husband in the Bible work perfectly in real life for those who understand the purposes behind them and strictly follow them. I have keenly observed, through the myriads of relationships we have had with other families that any married relationship where the woman is the financial leader on permanent basis—without any effort on the part of the man to change the situation, or where a woman enjoys making decisions for the family, with her able-bodied husband besides her, savoring her intelligent ideas and arguments without challenging some of them, are usually either buying days in the marriage, or they are not in a real marital commitment in the first place. Sooner or later, the man would find out that the woman wants to be taken care of—and she can't enjoy that “being cared for” if she is the aggressive bread winner. Hence I have always believed that a man ought to lead—or have the last word, so to say, in his own home—with issues involving his own family affairs. Hence if my husband enjoyed the fullness of his health to the point where he could protect his family I could have gladly taken my position as a supporting wife and ensured that I submitted to him. However, because he was not mentally and emotionally strong enough to do so I had to find ways of protecting myself especially from men who have no responsibility towards me, but want to rule me because of tradition. I came to this conclusion after I observed that with most African Christian men, especially in my rural area, they use the “Wives submit to your husband,”

Biblical injunction to thwart any efforts from their wives to establish her sense of autonomy.”

And then I also observed that they did not stop with their wives—they would suppress any woman who has no protection from her own husband in the name of religion. Most of the time their actions have nothing to do with religion at all, but they use the Bible to promote the domination of women because they know that no true Christian would refute any Biblical claims. I will illustrate the point I am making here by referring to an incident that took place after my husband’s burial ceremony:

A couple of men from the Christian community got together and came to see me in our family home. After exchanging pleasantries, they told me that they came to express their concern about my intention to return to Canada to complete my Ph.D. They specifically told me that I should not leave my children and go back to Canada, because if I do and something happened to my children they would blame me for it. I did not argue with them, neither did I hide their warning. Some of my children were there at the time of their visit, and they told me later that they resented the fact that these people were interfering in our family matters. When I got my admission letter from UBC, my children were happy for me, and they helped me to prepare for my trip and quietly took me to the airport. Most people knew about my trip only after I had reached the Abuja International Airport where I texted them “Good-Bye” notes. I felt I did the right thing then and I still feel I did the right thing now. Some people in the community are still not happy with me because of this—even though leaving home did not affect my children adversely. Rather, I believe my coming to complete my degree will help my family immensely, in the long run.

I relayed this story to give an idea of what my position is in the community. I feel like an indigenous outsider. As James Banks (1998) pointed out, there are four types of

researcher/knower categories: (1) Indigenous Insiders, those who are members of the community they study, (2) Indigenous Outsiders, those who were once members of the communities they study, but through high levels of education or other circumstances are no longer considered members, (3) Non-indigenous Insiders, those who became accepted as insiders, and (4) Non-indigenous Outsiders, those who remain outsiders. Although I have been a member of the Katsina-Ala community most of my adult life, as a teacher in the College of Education Katsina-Ala, and as the initiator of the NYEP, I felt like a misfit most of the time because I do not understand the language, and most of my worldviews significantly differ from that of the members of the community. Even if my convictions are viewed as strange and positive—like in the development of the NYEP, or strange and negative—as in being a woman who does not need to depend on a man, none of these cause me any concern at all. I feel that it is not my responsibility to try to “fit in”, rather I believe it is my call to look for ways in which I could offer my time, resources and strength to lessen the suffering of humanity—my own and other people I know, just in the same way that other people had also tried to lessen my own sufferings. If NYEP helps to change the suffering of even just one family in the community, I would feel that I have performed a holy act—with the help of God of course. I have mentioned earlier in this paper that the interdependent nature of my relationship with the community fueled my desire to initiate the NYEP. As long as I live in this community, it is hard to imagine any heights of success that can numb my feelings towards the suffering of other members of the community. I would say that to a large degree I felt I was closer to my research participants by the end of my fieldwork. Having visited their homes many times I interacted with them on a much deeper level of relationship than before the fieldwork.

However, this deeper relationship opened up another side of our interdependence which was made more apparent to me during my recent (2014) trip home. Apparently, for some reason, I became a center of attraction to many—some for criticism and some for admiration—none more important than the other, of course for I believe that the antidote to negative criticism or over-inflated praise is to know who I am; for self-mastery and self-discipline must precede the building of relationship with others. As much as interdependence can be a source of the possibilities for deep, rich, meaningful associations for a geometrically increased productivity, for serving, for contributing, for learning, for growing, it is also where we feel the greatest pain, the greatest frustration, the greatest roadblock to success and happiness (Covey, 2004). I found myself in a place described by Covey (2004) above, where I needed to draw from the wealth of self-confidence and self-discipline I had built up in my character to continue to function properly.

One day, one of my neighbours (not a research participant) revealed to me that some people are criticising me and sometimes she felt like defending me but she did not know enough of the “the truths” in the situation to do so. I had desired to have such an opportunity—to share my own “truths” as I knew it, whether or not it changed anything—preconceived ideas of the people in the community. My husband’s brothers’ anger about his returning home from Vancouver, his last days and his death in Nigeria were some of the reasons for the accusations about me. Interdependence would hold people accountable to personal happenings of that nature, or so I thought, and I saw it as an opportunity to share my own version of our family story on behalf of myself and my five children—especially as there was someone who was willing to listen. I think that to a great extent our family story has always been of great interest to people because of my husband’s own suffering from his

mental illness. At least I thought, maybe they deserve to know my own perspective of my own experience since they are people who had shared a sense of interdependent relationship with both my husband, myself and our children. It would have been hard for me to know where all the negative criticisms were coming from except someone among the “educated people” of the community had told me that some certain members of the community believed that I had killed my husband. I here give a background to that supposition as I discuss the cultural beliefs of the Tiv people regarding the death of a relative.

Cultural causes of death

It is believed among the Tiv people and possibly other African indigenous ethnic groups that anyone who dies is killed by someone in the family. Somehow, I did not try to understand this phenomenon until my own husband died. Unfortunately, again the gender issues were very important here. I have known some women who suffered all kinds of ill-treatment from their deceased husband’s relatives, especially in cases where the woman is uneducated, and the man was the main source of income for the household. The husband’s relatives would come to the deceased relative’s house to collect the man’s belongings from the house after his death, claiming that it is their “brother’s property” and so they are entitled to take them back to the deceased man’s parents’ home, in some cases leaving the wife and the children with little or nothing. Most of my brothers-in-law have good education, at least two of them studied in North America and Britain, and so they did not behave in the raw manner that others did—taking away my husband’s belongings after his death. However, they resented the fact that I did not abandon my studies in the University of British Columbia and return home with my children when my husband decided to leave Canada to return to Nigeria. Making the decision to stay in Vancouver, while my husband travelled back to

Nigeria was not as difficult as I had expected it to be for me, because I had received that “peace” sign in my heart which I refer to as the “still small voice,” instructing me to leave my husband to return home alone. Hence I refused to change my decision even when a number of people, some of whom I considered as friends wrote to me from home, telling me to return home and take care of my husband because of his deteriorating condition of mental health . Since I had known that I took the right decision, I maintained a clear consciousness—not because I did not care about him, and his situation—because I did, but in a different way—I had sent him some little money from my meagre income to help him purchase some of his drugs in Nigeria. However I did not feel led to “lay down my life,” so to say, for the marriage, so I was unwilling to make a move to join him in Nigeria or grant him a letter of invitation to come to Canada. This was one of the causes for real anger among my husband’s brothers to the point where some of them resented me so much that they gave me the “silent treatment” when I arrived in Makurdi, Nigeria for the burial ceremony of my husband.

There was no point to try to convince them about why I did not return to Nigeria with my husband. The fact was that it was safer for us to stay away from him at that point. We had managed our lives in Canada pretty well with the intervention of the Police, the Ambulance, and Social Workers, and I was by no means ready to go back to Nigeria with him where I and the children would have been at the mercy of my husband and his mood swings—no intervention from the police, the hospital or the ambulance. I felt also that it was better to preserve my own life for the sake of our children. But most importantly, I felt safe in my decision to leave him go home because of the intuition I received in my heart. I needed such a confirmation—which comes from a source other than my own heart so that I knew I

was not acting alone. This was important to me because I did not view my husband's health situation lightly, and if I had made this decision on my own, there would have been a possibility of being wrong and therefore regretting it most of my life. So for example if he had had a heart attack and he needed to return home for his treatment, I would never have debated about accompanying him home with the children, because I believe in getting one's priorities right. I believe human life is more important than any other asset one might acquire—even PhD education. However, my husband's relations found it difficult to forgive the fact that I left him to go home alone and so they disowned me at my husband's funeral. That of course gave the "right" to many people, even educated people, who may be or may not be related to my husband to resent me. But I know that love covers a multitude of sins so I continued to always act in love towards every one—even those who showed hatred towards me. For example, I was told after the funeral of my husband that one of my husband's relatives (a female) had arranged to have some people beat me up at the funeral. I did not know that beforehand, or may be better to say I had no evidence of a prior treatment of me in the family that could make me believe such a thing (although I was given a hint about possibility of Satan's kingdom breaking loose on me by a caring family friend). This person, who gave me this hint as I landed in Nigeria also advised me to make sure my brother, who was then a Retired Commissioner of Police accompany me to the burial ceremony. I heeded the advice and told my brother about it and so he came with me to the funeral. Still, I did not think that there was a possibility any one would have any reason to want to beat me up, so I just acted normally and kindly towards everyone, including the female relation of my husband who had planned to beat me up. I observed her to be acting a little strange towards me, but it did not bother me at all. For some reason, she changed her mind about beating me

up, and I may never really know why—whether it was an intervention of God, or because my brother, the Retired Police Commissioner was at the funeral.

I was given a car and a driver for our use in Nigeria, by a family friend my husband and I knew for many years. So after the funeral, which took place in Makurdi, Benue State, my daughter Helen and I were returning to Abuja, which happened to be in the same direction with this person's home. I offered to give her a ride to her destination, and she agreed. When we dropped her at her home, I gave her some money to spend on her own needs, and she gladly received it. The moral of this story is “We are best to ourselves when we are good to others,” and I dare add “even when ‘others’ refer to our enemies.”

6.4 I Believe in Destiny Fulfilling Miracles

To conclude this chapter, I am relating the succession of events—very unusual events which took place in my life, making it possible for me to be writing my PhD thesis at the University of British Columbia at this time. In retrospect, as I outline all the events, I realize why I must have regarded them as commonplace events—just as common as other events in my life—maybe because of the frequency with which they occurred, but more importantly because they seem to be jointly necessary and intricately connected together in weaving the tapestry of my educational progress, and possibly my destiny with the University of British Columbia, Vancouver Canada.

Overcoming the hurdle of getting into primary school

As I related earlier in this Chapter (Section 9.4.1) the first educational hurdle I faced was the hurdle of getting into primary school. I had to care for my sick and aged grandma which was a great pleasure for me at the time I did, however, in retrospect I have realized

how this could have stifle the prospects of getting primary school education for me—it was an elusive hurdle, one that was the most deadly to my educational progress, because no one would have tried to solve it—not even my mother or I, because neither me or my mother could have compared the importance of my going to school with my grandmothers need for care—which only I could provide because my other two sister were already married and every one of them was in her husband’s house.

This educational hurdle was as subtle as its solution—my grandmother’s death which happened in 1960. It seems cruel to me even now to think that my grandma’s death spelt my educational liberty, let alone articulating it at the time it happened. However, if my grandmother lived till 1965 at which time I completed my primary school, I would have had forfeited the chance of ever getting a primary school education. That was exactly what happened to one of my sisters who left our village to go and live with her half-brother who did not think to register her in school, even though he was a teacher. My sister never had a chance at schooling, and she blamed her lack of education and the subsequent condition which accrued from that on her half-brother as long as she lived. So it may not be fair to my grandmother, but it is appropriate to say that her death spelt my educational liberty. It was in my primary school regional geography class that I saw, for the first time a picture of someone from Canada. She looked like a teen-ager, from the Prairies because she was holding a few stalks of wheat in one hand. In that geography class I saw what “wheat” looked like and I enjoyed looking at the girl’s picture because she had her hair in a ponytail, was smiling broadly, as she proudly held the wheat stalks. In that geography lesson I was able to see a number of pictures of people who looked very different from me in their colour, length of hair and other visible attributes. However, it was only this Canadian girl I held her

memory to date—which I do not know if it means anything. After all, that was only a geography lesson—so I have never attached a meaning to my fond memory of “the girl from the Prairies.” Besides, I did not know of anyone in my village who had experienced any kind of international travel, so the possibility of ever coming to Canada did not cross my mind.

Generally speaking, we did not see people of different colour very often—I remember how as primary school children we ran to the motor road to see a White missionary riding his motor cycle between Biu and Garkida, passing through Kwajafa, my birth place. There was only one laterite road passing through the entire village of Kwajafa (called Local Authority) from Biu (called Native Authority, where the Emier resided). The first White missionary who hailed from the United States is still fondly remembered in my part of Nigeria. His name was Mr. Royer Kulp and he started his missionary work in Garkida 20 KM from Kwajafa before I was born. I can say in retrospect that my experience with Christianity had been possible at such a tender age because of the faithfulness of Mr. Kulp and his wife who gave their lives to preach the Gospel among the Bura and Babur people. Mr. Kulp lost his first wife to malaria, very early in her arrival to join her husband, I think in 1929, as they lived among the Bura people in their thatched roof. Mr. Kulp did not understand the Bura language at the time, neither did any of the Bura people understand the English language, so the people just came and surrounded him in his thatched roof round-hut, and sometimes on her grave and they mourned his wife’s death together with him.

He married another missionary woman after his wife died and the second wife also died of tropical diseases. Mr. Kulp continued the work he started, all by himself—although by this time he had mastered the Bura language so he was able to communicate with the people in Garkida town. He returned to the United State to retire when he was over seventy

years old. I was aware of the time of his death in America because most of our people received the news, and we all mourned for him at his death. Mr. Kulp's sacrifice was significant in my life because he was the first missionary who preached the "Good News" of Jesus Christ with a true demonstration of the "Love of God" towards the Bura people. I got hold of the "Good News," at about twelve years of age, and I am who I am today because of my encounter with Jesus Christ and His claims about His love for fallen humanity.

Overcoming the hurdle of getting into secondary school

The next educational hurdle I faced was with regards to getting into secondary school. I had related this in "My Personal Experience" in this dissertation (see Section 1.2). This happened after completing my primary school in 1965 and this may sound like a common event—I sat a Common Entrance Exam and went for an interview with other students, for secondary school admission into the Provincial Secondary School, Maiduguri. Some of my colleagues passed and got into the Provincial Secondary School, Maiduguri and I passed and got into a Federal Government Girls College, Kano. What was uncommon was the burden I felt in my heart about this episode that caused me to engage in such agonizing prayers—sometimes in the company of my mother—and sometimes alone, when we discovered that I was not one of the students that was selected for admission into the Provincial Secondary School, Maiduguri (the only institution I knew besides Craft School Maiduguri). At this point I thought I would never get a chance to experience secondary school education. Later, things turned around for my benefit—I got into a Government Girls' College, Kano, which was a more prestigious than Provincial Secondary School, Maiduguri.

To date, I still think about the comforting message I received from my cousin, Naomi Wakil, in which she clearly stated (I cannot remember the exact words) but I still remember the key words), that God had revealed to her that the result of my interview for secondary school admission was still coming so I should not be worried. Of course, my cousin Naomi knew how worried I was over the issue of not receiving any admission letter because we walked to and from school together—from Kwajafa Bura (our home) to Kwajafa Babur (where we went to school), a distance of about 10 KM every weekday and she could see that I was not as happy as I used to be. She also knew that since a number of my classmates with whom I had gone for the interview had received their admission letters—including my friend, Naomi Musa, it was not reasonable for me to expect an admission letter to be addressed to me alone, after a month had elapsed from the date of the arrival of those admission letters. As I explained earlier, no one—not even our teachers knew about the possibility of any other results coming besides the Provincial Secondary School results. So no earthly person could have revealed this information to Naomi, that is, at the time she gave me the information which she claimed was revealed to her by God.

However, although I felt my sadness lifted up from me after receiving Naomi Wakil's message, I was very perplexed as to how it was possible for her to receive some divine revelation about my situation. I reasoned in my rational mind that this revelation should not have come through Naomi, who was my number one bully to and from school. I did not doubt that God could give a revelation to me, or to someone else on my behalf—however, this “someone else” should not be Naomi Wakil because I thought she was not suited for that job since I considered her to have an immoral character. As a result of the reasons mentioned above I had a sort of battle raging between my head and my heart with regards to this matter.

I could not deny the fact that my heart was more peaceful, and I was able to forget about the non-admission issue—which was impossible to do before Naomi Wakil’s message, however, whenever I remember Naomi’s treatment of me to and from school I had serious doubts as to whether she received this message from God. But when my admission letter finally came into my hands, I believed that Naomi did receive a revelation from God for me. This experience began to change my own theology about the importance of morality and about who God could use and who He could not use. Indeed with time I had opened my heart to receive a message from any human being—the important element to look for is that intuition I mention earlier in this Chapter—the “still small voice,” which confirms that the message is from God. Since I started putting the attitude of “receiving” messages from God through any human being I come in contact with, into practice, I have received messages from God through the mouths of different people, including a drunkard who was chatting with me as we waited for bus on Alma Street in Vancouver. The key was to receive the message as from the Lord, with thanksgiving and act upon the message and see the results.

Other questions I still ask in this matter are: (1) Did Naomi’s message come as a result of our constant prayer with my mother that God would give me a chance to go to secondary school? (2) Was the decision about admitting me to Federal Government Girls’ College Kano made at the same time the decision of admitting my other classmates to Provincial Secondary School Maiduguri, or was it made after my agonizing prayer with my mother after I had known that my other classmates had received their admission letters? I have never received answers to these questions however, this singular privilege of obtaining admission to the Federal Government Girls’ College Kano seems to be the “ladder,” so to

say, that have enabled me climb higher, and to access educational opportunities unknown to my classmates who received their admission letters earlier than me, in the summer of 1965.

As I relate more of these events, I would invite my audience to give their own interpretation of them, which may or may not be agreeing with the way I interpret them. However, when the tapestry woven by these individual events is completed and presented to anyone who reads them, it will hopefully be clear that these were not random events but rather carefully selected as if, by someone who had the blue print for my life, and had the power to bring each event back to the right course whenever there was a force that threatened (and that happened rather frequently) to via a particular event to run off course.

Getting into Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Generally speaking, I was not aware of having much contact with any place outside of my domain at the time I completed my primary school education. Maiduguri was the first big city I had travelled to, and that was only because the Kwajafa local authority had paid for the trip for every successful candidate who had to attend the interview for admission into Provincial Secondary School Maiduguri. In retrospect, I can see clearly that if I had done my secondary school education in the Provincial Secondary School Maiduguri, my focus would hardly have been on university education, because Maiduguri is predominantly a Moslem area and the predominant ethnic group is Kanuri, whose girls were married off very early and only few of them, that is those that were allowed to go to secondary school, aspired to go further after their secondary school education. This may explain, at least in part, why all my colleagues with whom we wrote the common entrance did not obtain university education. Naomi Musa, my friend who got the letter of admission into the Provincial Secondary School

Maiduguri and told me about it had the highest qualification that I know of—being a Head Nurse in Maiduguri General Hospital, that was what she told me when I met her the last time I was in Maiduguri in 2006. I think most of my classmates could have aspired to further their education if they were in a different geographical location—I believe it was due of lack of opportunity, rather than their inability to excel in education that none of them are university graduates up to date. If Naomi Musa had the opportunity, she could have aspired to be a medical doctor, at least so I believe.

For me, getting admission into the Federal Girl's Government College Kano instead of the Provincial Secondary School Maiduguri meant that I was located in a geographically as well informationally privileged environment which was beyond what I had experienced during my primary school education or even what I could have experienced if I had gained admission into the Provincial Secondary School Maiduguri. Geographically Kano is about 100 KM from Zaria, where Ahmadu Bello University was located. The information privilege came from some of my secondary school colleagues who had boy friends in Ahmadu Bello University. At that time information did not travel as fast or as far as they do now, even in the Nigerian context. So being close to Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, we received news through the girls who had boy-friends in the university that there was going to be a pre-degree program called "School of Basic Studies" at the Zaria Campus of Ahmadu Bello University. Thankfully, when these girls spoke about what their boy-friends told them they did not do so privately—or only between them and their close friends, which I was not. Rather, they spoke about it publicly in class, as if to show off about the kind of privileged information they received through their boyfriends, and that privileged information got passed to every student, as result. I applied, and got an admission into the School of Basic

Studies in the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 1971, and received my first degree certificate in 1976.

Studying in Canada

Being a student at the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, I got to know about some of the graduates—some were friends of mine who went to study in the United Kingdom, the United States and a few of them came to study in Canada. Besides I had met Benjamin my husband at the Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS) at the time and he told me of his senior brother who was studying in Canada. Benjamin graduated in 1972, and got a teaching job in Benue State immediately after graduation. Benjamin and I got married in December 1974, and I continued with my studies till I graduated in 1976 with a BSc (Education) degree.

Benjamin got an admission to Dalhousie University Halifax in 1975, with the assistance of his brother, who was already engaged in Graduate studies in Dalhousie University at the time. I joined Benjamin with Helen, our first child (daughter) in September 1977). Because of the extreme weather conditions in Halifax and the other Maritime Provinces, Benjamin and I decided that we would like to study for our PhD in Canada, but we would choose the University of British Columbia, Vancouver where the weather is mild. This dream came true for the whole family in 1992.

My summer immigration experience

I have already related the experience I had at my husband's burial in 2002, but there is another experience I need to share to weave the tapestry of my educational life together. My daughter and I quickly made arrangements to travel home for Benjamin's burial and we did not have a chance to apply for what is known as Temporary Resident Visa (TVR), before

leaving Vancouver, with which to return to Vancouver after the burial ceremony. As a result, we became visa applicants again even though our study permit had not expired at the time. I was very shocked when I heard the Visa officer, after sympathizing with me about my husband's death, said something to the effect "I am sorry but I am not convinced I should give you a visa to Canada since your husband is now dead and you no longer have strong ties to make you return to Nigeria." First, I could not believe that he was speaking to me, because I had planned to stay for only two weeks in Nigeria and return to Vancouver to continue with my studies. However, right at the time the visa officer spoke to me, I remember hearing the "still small voice" I had referred to several times already in this Chapter saying to me that "You will return to Canada and do what God wants you to do there." Since I had proven this "still small voice" to be authentic and had never failed me, I strongly believed that I would return to Vancouver someday. As a result of following the "still small voice," my daughter and I went to the Canadian Deputy High Commission in Lagos (about 1000 KM from Katsina-Ala) to apply for Study Permits at least once a year for eight years with no favourable outcome.

I had by this time applied for and got re-engagement into my teaching job at the College of Education Katsina-Ala and settled as if I had no plans to travel back to Canada—at least that's what my neighbours thought. Towards the end of our waiting in Nigeria going to apply for study permits every year—putting our lives on dangerous roads and paying great sums of money (at least for us then) for the study permit application was seeming to be irrational. However, most of what God had done in my life looked impossible at first, so it was more irrational to give up on what I believe God had told me, than to continue trusting in what he said. Hence we continued in prayer with my children—sometimes praying

throughout the night, reminding God about what He had told me with regards to our return to Canada. To make the long story short, both my daughter and I obtained our study Student Permits and were both in Canada by May 2010.

My fieldwork experience in 2014

I have discussed the experience I had with my community leader Mr. Abul Nege who I first contacted while still in Vancouver, to be my community leader for my research study (see Section 3.3 in this dissertation). I had observed that he had good relationships in the community generally, and was the Chairman for the College Neighbourhood Association at the time. He had agreed to be the community leader for my research study however he declined after I had arrived in Katsina-Ala for the field work. I was very disappointed, but worse than that I did not know what to do without a community leader for my study, since I had submitted my research application to UBC Research Office with the understanding that I will also interview the community leader. I had even started thinking about the possibilities of returning to UBC without a data, and maybe return to Nigeria on a later date to collect the data. That would have had tremendous implications for me—especially economically.

However, I resorted to what I know to do in the most difficult circumstances of my life—pray to God. So I invited a few of my close Christian friends who believed in prayer to pray with me. As we prayed through the AM hours, one of the people told me that he felt in his heart that since I had developed this project as a result of my desire to assist the people of this community in their efforts to better themselves, God will not allow Mr. Nege to influence the people negatively towards my intention to carry out this study. I received that word from this Christian friend as from God and I became bold to go out to give my consent

forms to the families of the prospective study participants. Every one of the household heads I approached gave their consent and their children also gave their consent to participate in the study. Then later, Adamu volunteered to act as a community leader—without any effort on my part to make the request for him to do so—in fact, I was not in the frame of mind to start recruiting another community leader. I viewed Adamu’s kind gesture to volunteer to be a community leader, as a miracle. I got all my data ready and was able to meet my scheduled return flight to Vancouver.

Summary and conclusion

In this chapter I started out by discussing the issue of *poverty* for a great proportion of the citizens of Nigeria, with the claims that *corruption* is the “mother” of poverty. With the great endowment of natural resources to Nigeria, it ought to been one of the richest countries in Africa, if not the world. However, a great proportion of Nigerians—especially those living in *rural arears* experience abject poverty. I tried to look at these ideas in the context of my study participants’ experiences of their life in general and their struggle to access college/university education in particular, by using the responses they gave to the interview questions to corroborate the knowledge claims made. Then I tried to reflect on how the factors of poverty, corruption and rural living impinged on my own struggle to access education. I discovered that whereas the above factors serve as militating factors against the educational progress of my NYEP youth participants, gender was the greatest factor that stood against my educational progress in the 1960’s. However, a providential miracle changed my situation around, and I have been able to go higher in the educational arena than my primary school mates. These providential miracles had continued in my life to date, seemingly paving a way for me in places I could not dream of going on my own—by my

being ready to listen to the “Still Small Voice” within and act upon it in every situation in my life—and of course, this “Still Small Voice” can come through someone else. I have related about one-quarter of the incidences of how the “Still Small Voice” had led me in every kind of situation.

Conclusion

To conclude this section, I would revisit the research questions and reiterate how the research questions were informed by the research interviews.

I investigated the NYEP youth participants’ experiences with a two research questions:

- (1) What are the experiences of NYEP youth participants and their families? And
- (2) How are their experiences informing my understanding of my own experiences and interpretations of those experiences retrospectively?

Roulston (2010), addressing the subject “using research interviews to address research questions, stated: “once researchers have formulated research questions, they must consider the kinds of methods that might be used most effectively to inform questions.”(p. 80). In this regard, having identified my research purposes, I employed the auto-ethnography research methodology because I consider auto-ethnography most suited for the research purposes and therefore I carefully selected the research questions which are suitable for auto-ethnography—open-ended conversational sort of questions. This study investigated the experiences of my research participants with regards to accessing tertiary education, and at the same time using my own experience of accessing education generally and tertiary education in particular. My experiences and the experiences of my study participants allow for the comparison and contrasting our educational experiences over 30 decades—with my

experiences in the 1960's and my participants' experiences in the 2000's to understand experiences in the context of the Nigerian culture.

Since this is a qualitative study, an auto-ethnography study which sought the experiences of the participants and their feelings about such experiences, the interview atmosphere was made to be relaxed and conversational and the interview questions are simple and straight forward (see Appendix A1 for youth, participant interview questions, Appendix B1 for parents of youth participants interview questions, and Appendix C1 for community leader interview questions.

I kept journal entries which provided an additional data sources from informal conversations with the participants of the study, and also taking notes to remember the atmosphere in which we found ourselves at the time of interview—hot weather, mosquito bites and so on, because these extraneous variables do affect one's subjective responses to interview questions. That is why I included, as part of the data in the chapters on youth participants, their parents, and the community leader what atmosphere was prevalent at the time of the conduct of the interviews, how the participants were feeling at that particular time. Some of my experiences during the interviews included a situation where three of my four youth participants were not forth-coming with responses to interview questions about specific issues they were facing, whereas, they had already given me the answers to those questions prior to the commencement of the interviews through an informal conversation. I thought they would eagerly give me the same responses whether I was asking them the questions as we engaged in casual conversation or when I am tape-recoding the interview responses. However, I found that their readiness to respond to some questions changed once I put on the tape-recorder to record their voices. In such cases, I had to take their permission to

use the information they gave me during our casual conversations which they readily accepted for me to use as part of my data. So I thought maybe what they did not want is to sit in front of a tape recorder and say something like “my father did not have the money to pay for my educational expenses.” Moreover, this may be due to the expressions of the particular people group who were my research participants. The Tiv people are generally considered to be proud people and they do not want to show any of their lacks publicly. So my journal entries proved to be useful even as I am writing my dissertation. I also “selected” and not “sampled” my research participants, because “sample” implies being random, which would have been inappropriate since some of the youths who felt very proud to be involved whole heartedly in the NYEP activities and could not stay a year on the project were deemed unsuitable for the study.

The Findings of my study revealed that my youth participants’ educational progress had been stifled by *poverty* and that this poverty had been fueled by *corruption* and *rural leaving*, and *poverty of ideas* on how to generate resources. These findings were gathered not only through formal interviews, but also through informal conversations in which they supplied the information as they came to “welcome me from Canada” and I asked about their welfare. Hence the auto-ethnography methodology serves the purposes for this research well and I feel that I had gathered more useful data than I could have if I had only depended on formal interviews as the source of data.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

7.1 Educational Implications

This auto-ethnographic study investigated the experiences of the NYEP youth participants and their parents, and how their experiences are informing my understanding of my own experiences and the interpretations of those experiences retroactively. 18 youths participated in the project over a period of a decade. Six youths and their families were selected for the research study—the NYEP youth participants who met the criteria for participating in the research study (see Section 3.2). The auto-ethnography methodology was employed, and the results showed that the greatest hurdles the NYEP face in terms of accessing tertiary education are associated with *poverty, corruption and rural living*.

The major educational implications of the study is associated with the findings in the study that showed that although four of the study participants received admission to college/university as a result of engaging in NYEP, and even completed their courses, none of them could actually receive their certificates because of *poverty and corruption—Poverty in the cases of Adah and Fanan and corruption in the cases of Chinyere and Gabriel*. The poverty that delayed the completion of Adah’s program as well as Fanan’s program could be very situational and temporary—in fact I know this to be the case in Adah’s situation. I have been in contact by phone with Adah’s mother in the month of January, 2016. She informed me that after the arrears of both her husband’s and her own salaries were paid in December 2015 they were able to provide the financial support needed for Adah to go for an excursion to a French speaking country to fulfil the partial requirements for her graduation from the

College of Education Katsina-Ala. Adah also received admission to study for her degree program in an institution in the French country where she went to for the excursion. This indicates that it is possible to fight the poverty factor, especially if one tries to avoid depending on the government for salaries or any other government subsidies. The more difficult issue to tackle is the corruption. It seems to be with the current levels of corrupt practices in Nigeria, that nothing associated with accessing educational opportunities would ever be smooth and straight forward and that is what my study participants have been facing, and may continue to face.

At my own time, I did not have to face any situation associated with corruption. I was one of those who applied for and got into the School of Basic Studies, at the Ahmadu Bello University in January 1971 when I had no acquaintances in that university. I successfully graduated with B.Sc. (Education) degree in 1976 with no knowledge of any harassment from any of my lecturers. All school expenses for my first degree program were paid for by the Borno Provincial Government. Later, I got a Benue State Government scholarship to Study for M.Ed. (Curriculum) in Dalhousie University in Halifax, in 1977. I received some bursaries and awards in my Master of Arts in Education in UBC and I currently have a Graduate Student Initiative Scholarship (GSIS) in UBC. All of these events happened in a straight forward and ethical manner. Hence, I count myself fortunate to get such excellent education through sources other than my parents' financial assistance. In fact if it depended on parents I would have had only primary school education since there were some ongoing dichotomy between my parents' financial situation and their conviction about the importance of educating girls—with my mother believing in the education of girls, but she did not have the financial means to support my education, and my father, having the required financial

resources to support my secondary school education, but did not believe in the education of girls. So I was able to complete my primary school education without financial difficulties because there was no tuition for primary school education in Borno Province at the time. In retrospect, I cast my mind back to 1960's, when I experienced temporary obstacles in my educational progress, and imagine how different my life could have been with only primary school education if that situation had not been turned around. This helps me to appreciate the privileged situation I am in now—to be well educated and have a teaching career that has broken the cycle of poverty in my life and the lives of my children. Moreover, having good education myself has convinced me to believe in educating all my children as much as it is in my power to do so.

For the youth participants of my study, it is encouraging that the present situation, with regards to “girl-child” education in Nigeria has improved tremendously compared to what it used to be some decades ago. Many more “people have begun to see the need to educate the girl-child because of the contributions of some women achievers in the Nation’s building” (Ogoda, 2009, p. 1). This may imply that the parents and relations of my youth participants may never refrain from educating them due to the parents’ biases about educating girls, rather it would only be in the limitations of parents and relatives financial capabilities. As such, I believe that the thrust in the fight against non-education of children in my community—girls and boys alike, should be placed on educating parents and children on how to improve their financial resourcefulness through educating them about how to engage in money-generating projects, but more importantly how to use the money in prudential ways. I believe everything requires some education of sorts. I remember in my case, that I did not depend on business ideas alone, but I also read books about how to use the money

that I have in productive ways. Robert Kiyosaki's (1997) book which he titled *Rich Dad Poor Dad* was my favourite among the books I have read on how to generate resources and use the resources prudentially. Through reading this book, I understood the importance of saving at least 10% of my monthly income, and keep it as "seed," not to be eaten. This was easy for me to put in practice because there was a business venture put in place by the staff of the College of Education, Katsina-Ala called "The Multipurpose Co-operative Venture" where every registered member of the Multipurpose Co-operative is free to contribute any amount that is proportionate to their monthly income. A registered member and contributor to the staff multipurpose fund was also free to borrow any amount, in proportion to his or her income, upon a signed agreement as to how the staff would service the loan and at the same time pay the usual monthly contributions. I registered and became a member, and I was contributing a little more than 10% of my income every month. This served me very well with regards to saving money and in getting loans when I needed it, without going to any other source than the multipurpose fund. I also learnt from Kiyosaki (1997) that it is far better to take loans for business ventures than for personal consumable items, because as he explained in his book, the business venture would produce money to pay the loan, while consumable items such as vehicles, a house or a trip around the world would usually not produce the money to pay back the loan. I heeded to Robert's advice and I did not buy a car (when I could have) for 6 years of being back on my teaching job in the College of Education, Katsina-Ala, and contributing to the multipurpose fund. I must state though that I took a loan to pay for one of my children's educational trip because I considered that trip to be a necessity at the time. However, I bought a car only when my multipurpose financial contributions were large enough to pay for the car—and even that, I made sure I bought a car

(Toyota Corolla Station Wagon) which was strong and durable, and not necessarily luxurious. Some of my colleagues—especially those on the same salary schedule with me found this strange. Most of them were riding luxurious cars like Mercedes Benz, Volvo and so on. However, as I had earlier stated many times in this dissertation, I had no need to impress or be validated by anyone, and as such I rode my vehicle proudly. When I was leaving for Vancouver and needed to sell the vehicle, the price of the vehicle had appreciated because many people were using this particular model of vehicle for commercial purposes, so I sold the vehicle at the price I bought it two years earlier. It was then that my colleagues saw the wisdom in my action, since at this point their Mercedes Benz or Volvo cars had deteriorated due to the lack of good spare parts and the mechanical know-how to deal with these prestigious cars in Katsina-Ala. Some of my colleagues ended up walking or renting cars as I was doing during the six years I did not have a car. I was pleased with my action because I believe it is always better to start at the bottom and move up, than to start from the top and move to the bottom, especially in financial matters. So, this kind of education would be profitable to parents who are seriously looking for ways to support their children's education. I will further discuss ways to assist parents in my community (see Section 10.2) of this dissertation.

Recommendations for further action

One of the first things that became abundantly clear to me was the fact that my youth participants' educational progress had been stifled by *poverty* and that this poverty had been fueled by *corruption* and *rural leaving*, and *poverty of ideas* on how to generate resources. I believe it is possible to address some of these hurdles to progress through the NYEP, in a systematic way by addressing one problem at a time. I would start by addressing the *poverty*

of ideas, by developing lesson plans from some of the financial books I have read, such as Kiyosaki (1997), and my personal experiences in managing financial resources. These lessons can be given to parents and youths through lesson notes as well as lectures. Written and practical application tests would be scheduled periodically. Parents and youths would be encouraged if I start to reward good marks on such tests monetarily. If we can improve the parents and youths resourcefulness ideas, we would be reducing poverty without necessarily tackling *corruption* or *rural living*. Generally, rural living fuels poverty in that it restricts the availability of job opportunities. But if one can create his or her own job, then this restriction is already removed.

Secondly, another thing to do, which I have already started on in 2011, is to make the NYEP into a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in which some interested donor organizations can support NYEP financially, even if through loans. Just as I reported earlier in this dissertation, I have participated in the IDRN/UBC Graduate Student Competition for “funds to develop a project of our choice in a developing country.” I had in mind to secure funds to dig boreholes in my community. Clean water is the most needed commodity, and the months of January to April are the most difficult months in terms of accessing clean water. In our most recent conversation with my daughter who lives in Katsina-Ala we talked about how she could get clean water for her to prepare meals for her brother and herself. She told me that they usually buy expensive water sachets for drinking, but they cannot afford to buy them for meals preparation. Since every home would need clean water, water production would be the most lucrative activity in this community. However, the one or two members of the community who have caught this vision have not been committed to it or are not consistent enough with it, for reasons I do not know. What I do know is that if I get enough

funds to procure one professionally dug borehole which would cost about Fourteen Thousand Dollars (\$14,000 United States Dollars), including the digging of the borehole, the electrical generator which will power the horse power pump into the overhead tank, and my plane fare, I would take off sometime from my schedule in Vancouver, and go to the NYEP site in Nigeria to manage the sales of the water myself, as I train others how to keep the sales going after I leave the site. There are a few youths I know—including my daughter Ishimaya who grew up in Canada, where she learnt a good sense of financial accountability, and some of my friends' children who can be trusted with handling the sales after working with me for some time.

Thirdly, having understood the role of parents and relatives (a fact which became apparent through informal or interview conversations with study participants) with regards to their responsibility to ensure that their children remain in college/university after the NYEP assists them financially and otherwise to write the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board Examination (JAMBE), pass it and receive admission into a tertiary institution, one of the recommendation for further action on the activities of the NYEP is to find ways to purposely engage the parents of youth participants in the project itself, and not only in a research study of the project. During the interviews (July, 2014), I regretted the fact that most parents did not know the name, the activities and the manner in which finances were generated through the NYEP. The only thing they seemed to have known very well was that the main goal of the project was to help students who have completed secondary school education and were aspiring to get a college/university education to successfully realize their educational goals. This knowledge made them to respond favourably to the NYEP, however, they might have also enjoyed being invited to see some of the production activities we engaged with—such as

making pastries with our hands, preparing water sachets for ice production, and even an education about our book-keeping logistics which was simple and practical enough for anyone to understand.

Lastly, there is a way to purposefully address the corrupt practices of the lecturers (a name used for teachers in colleges and universities in Nigeria) with regards to how they coerce youth, especially NYEP youth participants to give them bribes or to date them. This phenomenon is a commonplace event in Nigerian universities, I believe because no one takes such harassments seriously. I remember an occasion where two students down the block from my property in Katsina-Ala were raped, and their money taken from them—before the vigilante group was put in place by the College Neighbourhood Association. I was asked to counsel these young women, as a staff member of the college, as well as being on the Christ Chapel Committee—the on-campus place of worship in the College of Education Katsina-Ala. I was weeping as they related the incident involving the break-in, however, none of the girls were emotional about it. The first girl who spoke out, looked bigger than the other girl, and she told me that one of the two men tried to molest her first, but he found her to be too strong for him so he got the smaller girl and molested her. I felt so sorry for the one who was molested, and tears were streaming down my face. However, the girl who was molested was just looking at me, probably wondering why I was crying. I thought at the time, that it might take a little while for her to realize what had been taken from her through this heinous act.

If NYEP is fully registered, it would be possible to summon lectures to court for molesting any NYEP participant. But also we might find a more effective means of dealing with such person or persons in our own way, since the courts are also corrupt and might drop the case if the lecturer concerned knows the judge or pays the judge some bribe. None the less, the mere

fact that any organization would take a lecture's molestations of students so seriously as to involve the courts would instill fear in the heart of the lecturers. If this kind of action is embarked on by other individuals and organization, the ease with which corrupt practices are engaged in by lectures will be reduced.

Summary and Conclusion

As Ellis (2002b) opined, the personal is political. The social movement literature suggests a growing recognition of the important connection among narrative, auto-ethnography, social activism and social practice. Personal narrative, traditionally have focused more on an individual perspective and concrete detail.

I personally observed that during the after-math of super-storm "Sandy" which hit New York and New Jersey late October 2012, it was the personal narratives of those who are hard-hit, the sense of community and collective identity that seemed to provide the individual determination to maintain a positive spirit and the courage to rebuild. Although the President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, promised support for victims to rebuild in his speech on CNN on Thursday morning, 15th November, 2012, the day to day picking up of their lives and actually start rebuilding came from the courage gained from a community perspective as each person shared their personal experience of "Sandy", the loss incurred and the resolve to work together and overcome the sense of hopelessness from this tragic event.

Moreover, researchers have stressed collective identity, emotional investment and negotiated relationships (Melucci, 1995; Polleta, 1997. As I stated earlier (see Section 1.7 in this dissertation), this way of construing human sciences research in the post-modern

conditions (Lyotard, 1984) and exemplified by the contemporary works of Caroline Ellis, and Arthur Bochner, appeals to my sense of what human science research paradigm should be.

In a world where we face challenges of safety with regards to normal social relationships such as in the home environment where children could be abused while enjoying the comfort of their own home, the school environment where teachers and children could encounter a psychopath holding a loaded rifle, our social movements should be more specifically about the politicization of self and daily life, and the injustices translated into the daily lives of collective actors (Melucci, 1988). Darnovsky, Epstein and Flacks (1995), for example observed that” large scale social change is accomplished in face to face relations at the level of personal identity and consciousness, in the household and neighbourhood whether or not such change is enunciated in public policy and macro-level power relations” (P. XIV). Darnovsky, Epstein and Flacks’ (1995) observation is pertinent to the context of the Katsina-Ala neighbourhood where the participants of the NYEP live. To combat the problems of unsafe neighbourhood, the College Neighbourhood Association (CNA) was created where members have a face-to-face meeting every month to eat and drink together as they talk about ways to deal with the deteriorating conditions of the safety of their neighborhood. The work of the vigilante group which was put in place by the CNA is to question and arrest any individuals found walking during late hours of the night. What is called “jungle justice” is accorded to individuals who are caught by the vigilante group without any consultations with the police department. This has immensely reduced the crime-rate in the community.

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APPENDIX A (1)

Interview Questions for Youth Participants

Section A: Demographics

1. How old are you?
2. How many siblings do you have and what is your birth position among siblings?
3. Are you and/or any of your siblings in school at present?
4. What is your occupation?
5. How much money do you get to spend on yourself in a month?
6. What is the main source of your income—farm, parents, hire or business?

Section B: Perceived Self-Concept, Abilities and Aspirations

1. How would you describe your performance in school—high, average or low?
2. What are your favourite subjects?
3. Would you say you do your best with every task and responsibility given to you in school and at home?
4. What do you enjoy doing during your spare time?
5. What are your aspirations—what do you want to be in the future if NYEP can financially support you to the highest level of education you desire to attend?
6. Are your friends mostly in college or out of College?
7. How do you feel when you see your age-mate leaves for college and you are still at home?
8. Are there any efforts you are personally making right now towards going to college?

Section C: Positional and Social Identity

1. Where do you think you are more accepted—among college students or hire youths?
2. With whom do you feel more comfortable—with college or out of college youths?
3. What was/is your sense of social place and entitlements before/ after college?
4. Do you think your age-mates now in college have more social prestige than yourself?

5. How do you relate to your age-mates that have college education—do you perceive them as leaders and you a follower or do you act as a leader and expect them to be followers?
6. What do you think determine prestige among the youths in this community—money, looks, education? Why do you think so?

Section D: Gender and Class

1. Do you think your gender has something to do with your being in college/not being in College?
2. If your father has enough finances to educate one of his children, who among you and your siblings would he prefer to educate? Why?
3. Generally speaking do you think it is better to educate boys or to educate girls? Why?

Section E: Importance of College Education

1. Do you think that generally people who go to college are better off in life than people who do not?
2. Are you in college, have finished college or would you like to go to college in the future?
3. Do you know examples of people who did not go to college but are doing well financially? Can you give examples of such people?
4. Why do you think college education is important—is it because to be educated is good or because education opens the door to employment?
5. If you are to win the lottery and you have all the money you need in your life, will you still want to go to college?

Section F: How NYEP Has Helped or Will Help You or Others You Know

1. Do you think that NYEP has helped you? In what ways?
2. Do you think NYEP should continue and enroll more youths? Why?
3. Would you be prepared to represent NYEP if we decide to appeal to the Government of Benue State to support our activities financially?

Section D: Farming as an Occupation

1. Do you own a farm or share a farm with your parents?
2. Do you enjoy farming as a means of making income? Why?
3. What other occupation have you tried besides farming?
4. Generally speaking would you say the Ibo traders in our community are better off than those who do not trade? Why?
5. Do you have any Ibo youth as your friend?
6. What level of education do you think one needs to be a good trader?

Please Note:

- For After College (AC) participants, their responses are expected to be based on actual experiences only.
- For During College (DC) participants, their responses can be based on actual experience for before college and during college responses, however, they are also allowed to project what their experience might be after college
- For Before College (BC) participants their responses can be based on actual experience for before college responses, however, they are also allowed to project what their experiences might be during college and after college.

APENDIX A2

Results (Youths)

By way of a reminder, I have inserted a table of the names and ages of the youth participants of the study, and the dates of their enrolment and disengagement with the NYEP:

Table A2.1: Youths' Engagement with NYEP

Youth	NYEP enrolment date	Age at time of enrolment (years)	Disengagement with NYEP Date	Youth Interview Date	Age at time of interview (years)	Parent/parents interview date
Adah	20/01/2007	17	02/07/2007	06/07/2014	24	01/07/2014
Bukar	15/03/2005	14	02/06/2006	06/07/2014	23	02/07/2014
Chinyere	15/02/2006	16	02/09/2008	11/07/2014	24	30/06/2014
Dauda	05/06/2011	27	15/06/2014	07/07/2014	30	N/A
Fanan	15/02/2008	17	02/06/2008	09/07/2014	23	06/07/2014
Gabriel	N/A	14	N/A	09/07/2014	23	12/07/2014

The youth participants' interviews started with a focus group session on the Saturday July 05, 2014 after I returned from a burial of the son of a close friend about 40 KM from Katsina-Ala. Most of the youths have gathered by 5 PM, however, we tried to wait for others to arrive so we did not start till about 7PM. Every youth introduced himself or herself and I

introduced myself as well, and after that I handed them each a copy of “My Personal Experience.” Ishimaya did most of the talking with the youths, and she also wrote a time slot for every youth present for when they would be available to be interviewed. Adah was the only one interviewed that day because she had to return to Gboko where she lived the following day. Others requested time slots on subsequent days.

That day was a sad day for me and for some of the youth participants because we all know this young man who was also in the age-range of most of the youth participants. He was born and raised in Katsina-Ala until his family moved to Makurdi about ten years ago. Besides, he had worked hard to further his education at the time of his death. He was a student training to be a pilot in South Africa. It was from there that his mother received the sad news that he died after a brief illness. Hence that day was an emotional day for me especially because I remembered how I was happy when his mother called me to let me know about his admission to a pilot school in South Africa.

People are self-interpreting, and how they understand their experiences of and in the social world is fundamental to cultural analysis. Even if the subject’s self-definition of an experience is limited or heavily skewed, it is central to what we study and cannot be bracketed out of the equation as it is in positivist, naturalistic and behaviouristic approaches (Pickering, 2008, p. 28).

Although I would not refer to this study as a cultural studies research, it has much to do with how culture creates and transforms individual experiences, everyday life, social relations and power, as I have observed in the responses of the participants of my study. Time has transpired between when the NYEP was initiated (2005) and when this research

was conducted (2014). Culture itself is not static as it is fluid, and as it changes, so also do the lives of human subject within it. Therefore, it is regarded that responses given by subjects are their unique understanding of their experiences – over time - and as such cannot be manipulated by the researcher’s perceptions. As such responses are reported as they were given—with a basic note--usually in italics to give a clearer meaning to what a participant might mean if they used “Pidgin” English or different ways of expression from the common use of the English language.

Table A2.2: Demographics for Youths

Questions	Adah	Bukar	Chinyere	Dauda	Fanan	Gabriel	Summary
Age	24	23	24	30	23	23	
Siblings	7	6	5	6	8	3	3-8
Your birth position	5 th	4th	6th	3 rd	3rd	1 st	
Number of siblings in school	2	0	0	0	3	1	2,0,0,0,3,1
Are you in school?	No	No	No	No	No	No	All said “No”
Your occupation?	Thrift Clothing Business	Plumber	University graduate/Job Applicant	Farmer	Nurse	College Graduate/Job Applicant	1 Farmer 1 Plumber 1 Business 2 Job Applicant 1 Nurse

Questions	Adah	Bukar	Chinyere	Dauda	Fanan	Gabriel	Summary
Average monthly spending	N2,000	N3,500	N20,000	N5,000	N10,000	N2,000	N2,000-20,000
Main source of income	Thrift clothing business	Plumber	Thrift clothing Business	Farmer	Farmer	Farmer	3 Farmers 2 Thrift clothing Business 1 Plumber

Table A2.3: Perceived Self-concept, Abilities and Aspirations for Youths

Questions	Adah	Bukar	Chinyere	Dauda	Fanan	Gabriel	Summary
Performance in school?	Average	High	Average	High	Average	Average	4 Average 1 high 1 High
Do you work hard?	Yes, I do	Yes, I do	Yes, I do	Yes, I do	Yes, I do	Yes, I do	All 6 said "Yes"
How do you use your spare time?	Read novels	Take time to rest	Read motivational books	Read	Read textbook	Play football	4 read 1 play football 1 take time to rest

Questions	Adah	Bukar	Chinyere	Dauda	Fanan	Gabriel	Summary
What do you aspire to be?	Work in embassy	Architect	Manager	A doctor	A nurse	A banker	Embassy
Who are Your Friends?	College youths	College youths	University Graduates	College youths	College youths	College youths	5 College youths 1 university graduate
How do you feel out of school?	I Feel Bad	I feel ashamed	I feel bad	I feel bad	I feel very bad	I feel great—God's time is best	4 feel bad, 1 feel ashamed 1 feel great
Saving for college?	Yes—through Business	plumbing to save money	want to be sponsored by my father	Farming and selling ground nuts	Farming and saving	Farming and saving	3 Farming, 1 plumbing, 1 business 1 to be sponsored

Table A2.4: Positional and Social Identity for Youths

Questions	Adah	Bukar	Chinyere	Dauda	Fanan	Gabriel	Summary
Where do you feel accepted?	College youths	College youths	University graduates	College youths	College youths	College youths	5 College Youths 1 University Graduates
With whom do you feel comfortable ?	College youths	College students	University Graduates	College students	College students	College students	4 with College students 1 College youths 1 University graduates
Do you feel More important in school or out of school?	No Difference	I feel important as I am working	I feel respected in or out of school	I feel more important after finishing school	I felt respected in college	I feel popular in and out of college	3 feel no difference, 1 feel important as a worker, 1 felt respected in College, 1 I feel important out of college
Do you think your age-mates in school more respected?	Not really	Some of them	Now that I have finished university, I feel comfortable	Yes, they are more important	Yes, I feel they are more important	Not at all	2 Yes they are more important 1 Not really 1 Not at all 1 Some are After

Questions	Adah	Bukar	Chinyere	Dauda	Fanan	Gabriel	Summary
							finishing University I feel comfortable
Are your age-mates in college leaders or followers?	I am a leader and they are followers		Yes, I still act as a leader	They are my leaders	I perceive them as leaders	I act as a follower	3 act as followers 2 act as leaders 1 with some a leader and with some a follower
What determines social Prestige— Education or wealth?	Education	Educator	Education	Education	Money	Education	5 Education 1 wealth

Table A2.5: Gender and Class for Youths

Questions	Adah	Bukar	Chinyere	Dauda	Fanan	Gabriel	Summary
Do you think your gender determine being out of school?	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	4 No 2 Yes
Who is	Every	Me	Every	The	The	Me because I	2 said

Questions	Adah	Bukar	Chinyere	Dauda	Fanan	Gabriel	Summary
the child your father will chose to educate?	one equally	because I am the only one who likes school	one equally	eldest child	male child	am the first born	<p>Everyone equally</p> <p>1 said the eldest child</p> <p>1 said the male child</p> <p>Me because I accepted to go to school</p> <p>Me because I am the oldest</p>
Do you think it is better to educate boys or girls?	Educate girls to have respect when they marry	Educate both	Better educate females because the help their family	Educate both	Educate both	Educate boys to take on family responsibilities	<p>3 Educate both</p> <p>1 Educate girls to have respect in husband's house</p> <p>1 Educate girls to care for parents</p> <p>1 Educate boys</p> <p>1 Educate boys to take on family responsibilities</p>

Table A2.6: Importance of College Education for Youths

Questions	Adah	Bukar	Youth 3	Youth 4	Youth 5	Youth 6	Summary

Questions	Adah	Bukar	Youth 3	Youth 4	Youth 5	Youth 6	Summary
Do people with college education fare better than non-educated?	Yes, educated people are more exposed to what happen in the world	Yes, because educated people get better treatment and they know more	Some people do not go to College but they are educated	Not really—some people finished college but they do “hire” work	Yes, the educated people have skills to get money	Yes, educated persons live a better life than the non-uneducated	4 Yes 1 Not really 1 Some
Are you in college, have finished college, or will go to college in future?	I would like to go to college someday to	I want to go to college in the future	I want to further my education someday	I want to go to College	I want to go to College	I want to go to College	5 I want to go to College 1 want to further my education
Do you know non-educated people doing well financially?	Yes, people who do business like hair and beauty centers	Yes, I know some non-educated age-mates who doing well financially	Yes, some of my friends did not go to college but are doing well	Yes, people who have lots of farm land	Yes, I know a few people who did not go to school but trained under someone who did	Yes, Through hard work	All six said “Yes”
Is education good for its sake, or because	Education is good, and education opens the	Education is good, and education opens the	Education is good—even for	Education is good, and education opens the	Education is good, and education opens the	Education is good, and education opens the	5 Education is good, and education

Questions	Adah	Bukar	Youth 3	Youth 4	Youth 5	Youth 6	Summary
it opens doors to employment?	door to employment	door to employment	someone who employs others	door to employment	door to employment	door to employment	opens the door to employment 1 Education is good, even for employers
If you win the lottery would you still go to college?	Yes, because I would like to be well educated even if I have money	Yes, I would use the money to further my education	Yes, I will still be educated, so that I will know how to increase my money	Yes, I would still want to be educated — education is very important	I will go to college	If I have all the money I need, I do not have to be more educated	5 said “Yes” and one said “No”

Table A2.7: How NYEP Helped Youths

Questions	Adah	Bukar	Chinyere	Dauda	Fanan	Gabriel	Summary
Do you think NYEP	NYEP taught me things	Yes, like things I	Helped me with registering	NYEP help me with	NYEP monthly	NYEP helped me to	All 6 said “Yes”

Questions	Adah	Bukar	Chinyere	Dauda	Fanan	Gabriel	Summary
help you? In what ways?	which helped me to set up my business	got from them to help me go to school	and writing Joint Admission and Matriculation Board Examination (JAMBE) and I got into the university	registering and writing pre-college exams, however, my results were not good	stipends helped me to get things for myself, also I learnt some skills I can use later in life	go to college	NYEP helped them
Do you think NYEP should continue and enroll more youths?	Yes, it gave the strength of Struggling—others might need it too	Yes, it will make a better tomorrow	Because of my experience, I think others need it too	It will help those who want to go to school but are not financially able	It will help those who want to go to school	Yes, because the aim is to help educate	All 6 said agree the NYEP should continue and enroll more youths
Are prepared to represent NYEP request Our Governor to financially support our activities	Yes, I will	Yes, I will	Yes, I will	Yes, I will	Yes, I will	Yes, I will	All six said “Yes”

Table A2.8: Farming as an Occupation for youths

Questions	Adah	Bukar	Chinyere	Dauda	Fanan	Gabriel	Summary
Do you own a farm or share a farm	I only help my parents On their farm	I only help parents on the farm if they ask me	I do not have a farm	I own a farm	I share a farm with my husband	I share a farm with my mother	2 share a farm 3 do not have a farm 1 own a farm
Do you enjoy farming for income?	Yes, because with a farm even little multiplies	Yes, I enjoy it because if you have a farm you do not spend all your money on food	I only go to farm to help my mother	I am forced to farm since I missed school—it makes one get old very fast	I do not enjoy farming, but I force myself to do it for income	I enjoy farming for my survival—I was taught by my father to farm	3 enjoy farming 2 are forced to farm 1 only help mother on the farm
What other occupation have you tried besides farming?	Selling used clothing	Motorcycle mechanic and “hire”	Selling used clothing	Hire	Nothing else	Mason work	2 selling used clothes 1 nothing else 1 motorcycle mechanic 1 Hire 1 mason work

Questions	Adah	Bukar	Chinyere	Dauda	Fanan	Gabriel	Summary
Would you say the Ibo traders in our community are finally more than non-traders?	Yes,	Yes, some of them—they do their business well	It is good to do business no matter what occupation one does	Yes, they are wise to put their money in businesses	They are better than farmers but not government workers	Yes, their community is higher in living standard	5 said “Yes” 1 said they are better than farmers, but not government workers
Do you have an Ibo youth as a friend?	Yes	Yes—two of them	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	5 said “Yes” 1 said “No”

APENDIX B (1)

Interview Questions for Parents

Section A: Demographics

1. How many people in your family?
2. What will you say your occupation is?
3. Can you give me names of your own biological children in chronological order, and what level of education they have attended and completed with a certificate?
4. Can you describe in detail what you do in a weekday from when you wake up to when you go to bed? How does this differ from the weekend?
5. What is your position of leadership in this community?
6. Do you regard farming as the best occupation or you farm because farming was handed down to you by your parents?
7. How many of your children are currently in primary school, secondary school, and college/university? Are there any of your children who are of school age and not in school?

Do you notice any difference in self-concept, aspirations and the friends of your in-school and out-of-college children? Please state specifically what the differences are.

Section B: Importance of College Education

1. Do you think college education is necessary for everyone?
2. What would you say is good about college education?
3. Suppose the Government of Benue State decides to educate all youths to university level free of charge, would you allow every one of your children to leave home and go to college? If not which of your children would you send to college? Why him/her?
4. In your opinion, is it more important to educate boys or girls?

Section C: About NYEP

1. Your son/daughter---- was a participant of the NYEP, did you want him to join or you just allowed him/her to join because he or she wanted to?
2. What are some of the things you liked/did not like about his/her joining the project?
3. Do you think ---enrolment in the project has helped him? How?
4. Are there some suggestions you want to make about how the project can better serve the community?

APENDIX B (2)

Results (Parents)

The first parents interviewed were Chuku and Chibuzu of Family Three. They were interviewed on June 29th 2014 at 8 pm. It was already dark when Chuku and Chibuzu arrived at my house at exactly 8 pm as they had promised they would, and I told them to come into the house through the back door. I had closed the front door of our house because of the stream of mosquitos trying to enter. The door at the back of the house is a metal door, and attached to the same hinge there is also a mosquito-proof door, or at least it was meant to prevent mosquitoes (at night) and flies (during the day) from entering the house. However, with mosquitoes it does not work very well in practice—the mosquitoes seemed to be attached to any human body that is passing through the door, so that with one person's entry, there is usually a large colony of mosquitoes that enters with them. At night I and the members of my family had trained ourselves to run in and out the mosquito-proof door, to reduce the number of mosquitoes that get in with us. This is not comfortable to do when welcoming some visitors in through that door. I had to open the door in a normal way and invited them to come in at a normal walking pace, so many mosquitoes came in with us into the house. I used a piece of cloth to drive away the mosquitoes over my head and feet even when interviewing Chuku and Chibuzu. They did not seem to be as concerned as I was about getting a mosquito bite.

Chibuzu and her friend had scheduled a night trip to Lagos (about 900 KM from Katsina-Ala) on the same night, for the purpose of selling some yams, and she was going to leave for the motor park after the interview. Hence she was called on her phone during the

interview by her friend to ensure that she was at the motor park at the scheduled time.

Because of that her mind was not totally with us during the interview, which did not matter much since it was mostly her husband responding to the interview questions. Chuku had said that he and his wife would be interviewed together, and on asking the wife's opinion she concurred with her husband's wishes so I interviewed them together. She only spoke a few words throughout the interview—mainly to respond to my “thank you for coming.” We completed the interviews and I saw them out of the gate of our house.

Adamu and Adama were interviewed on July 01, 2014 at 4pm. Baba and Binta were interviewed on July 02, 2014, around 5pm; Faityo and Fater were interviewed on July 06, 2014 around 3pm; and Gbanan was interviewed on July 12, 2014 at 6pm.

Table B2.1: Demographics for Parents

Questions	Adamu/Adama	Baba/Binta	Chuku/Chibuzu	Faityo/Fater	Gbanan	Summary
How many people in your family—including your relations?	40 people	36 people	15 people	15 people	10 people	Range from 10-40
What is your occupation?	Retired civil servant/farmer	Farmer/carpentry	Farmer/business Owner	Retired army personnel/farmer	Farmer	5 are Farmers, 1 do farm/business 1 do carpentry, 2

Questions	Adamu/Adama	Baba/Binta	Chuku/Chibuzu	Faityo/Fater	Gbanan	Summary
						retired
How many of your children have university/college certificate?	5 of my 9 children have completed university/college	None of my 15 children have completed university/college	6 of my 6 children have completed university/college	8 of 10 children have completed university/college	1 of my 4 children have completed college	1 “All,” 1 “None,” 1 “5 out of 9” 1 “8 out of 10,” 1 “1 out of four”
How do you spend your weekdays/weekends in a typical week?	I sweep animal house and feed animals, farm on Saturdays, and go to Church on Sunday	I do handwork continuously— weekdays and weekends, no rest.	I go to farm twice a week, and supervise my business center, go to Bible study on Wednesdays and Fridays, go to Church on Sundays	I go to farm every day after daily mass, and on Sunday I go to Church	I open my animal house, tie my goats in, I go to farm. I go to Church choir on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, I go to Church church Morning and evening on Sundays	All except 1 go to farm sometimes in the week, and go to Church on Sundays 2 cater for animals, 1 supervises business center, and 1 goes to daily mass

Questions	Adamu/Adama	Baba/Binta	Chuku/Chibuzu	Faityo/Fater	Gbanan	Summary
Your position of leadership in the community?	I help initiated the College Neighborhood Association (CNA)	I am the father of this community	I am the manager of LAPO—Living Above Poverty—an initiative to give small loans for business or farming	I am the leader of Family Fellowship in my Church	I am a leader in the Abave Women Organization—I am one of the leaders	1 helped created the CNA, 1 manages LAPO, 1 Father of the community, 1 Leader at Church 1 leader of Women organization

Questions	Adamu/Adama	Baba/Binta	Chuku/Chibuzu	Faityo/Fater	Gbanan	Summary
Do you like farming or you do it because your parents handed it down to you?	I do farming because there is nothing else to do to supplement my low income	Farming is part of our tradition so we inherit it	I like farming. I farm to feed my family and also to make money from it	Not so—I farm to feed my children and sell some items to make money	As Tiv people our tradition is to farm	2 said farming is a tradition, 2 said that they farm to feed their family and make money from it, 1 said

Questions	Adamu/Adama	Baba/Binta	Chuku/Chibu zu	Faityo/Father	Gbanan	Summary
						farms because there is nothing else to do
How many of your children are still in school, and how many are of school age and not in school?	I have one child in primary school, one in secondary school, and one child is of school age and not in school	Most of my children and grand-children are of school age, but are not in school	None of my own children are of school age and are not in school	All of my children who are of school age are in school	One of my four children is of school age but not in school	1 has no child of school age, 2 have children still in school, and some of school age who are not in school, 1 has most children out of school who are of school age
Do you notice any differences in the behavior of children who go to school, and those	There are differences—children who are in school talk about being doctors and engineers, and sometimes attempt to	Children who do not go to school are home and parents can send them, where as those	Children who go to school are better than those who do not—even those who go to secondary school are better than those who	All my children are in school or went to school when they were of school age.	Yes there is a difference—the children who are not in school like to roam about, but the	1 said children in school verbally express their aspirations, those out of school think of

Questions	Adamu/Adama	Baba/Binta	Chuku/Chibuzu	Faityo/Fater	Gbanan	Summary
who do not?	couple wires in their play time, but children in the villages think only about market days to get some money	who go to school just want to rest when they return from school	stop at primary school, in qualification and intelligence		children who are in school bring their assignment home and they sit down and do it	how they can labor and get money now; 1 said “children out of school are home and parents can send them---

Table B2.2: Importance of College Education for Parents

Questions	Adamu/Adama	Baba/Binta	Chuku/Chibuzu	Faityo/Fater	Gbanan	Summary
Is university/college education is necessary for everyone?	Yes, it is supposed to be necessary because everything you do is made easier with it—even buying your prescription drugs, doing business	Yes, if parent have the means, those who have university/college education can do better than those who do not	Yes, because whatever you are doing you will do better if you have college education	Yes, I want to train my children well so that even if they die they can stand on their feet	Yes, it is necessary—people who do not travel and are not young still enter college when they get	All said “Yes” university/college education is beneficial for different reasons—2 said everything you do is made easier with university/college education, 1

Questions	Adamu/A dama	Baba/Binta	Chuku/Chib uzu	Faityo/F ater	Gbanan	Summaryl
	or farming				money	said people who are well- educated can stand on their feet--
Suppose the Government of Benue State decides to educate all youths to university level free of charge, would you allow all your children to leave home and go to university?	It depends on the child's performance. In the villages, children who learn trades like carpentry are more stable than children who go to university, and insist to stay in the cities where they may not get jobs	I will allow all my children to go and I will not hold anyone back	I will encourage all the children under my care to go to university/college	I will allow all the children to go and leave only me and my wife	I will allow all my children to go, I will not hold anyone back	1 said it depends on the child's performance—some children are suited for trades, and not university, four said they will encourage their children to go to university
In your opinion, is it more important to educate boys or girls?	As an African I would say it is better to educate boys—the girl may marry	I want all my children to all be educated—I see no difference—they are all	In the past we thought that educating girls cannot benefit her family, but now we	The boys and the girls should be educated all the	I will educate them all.	3 said they would educate both boys and girls, 1 thought following the African

Questions	Adamu/Adama	Baba/Binta	Chuku/Chibuzu	Faityo/Fater	Gbanan	Summary
	another tribe	mine	have seen that girls can help their parents better than boys	same		tradition he would educate boys, I said he has proven that it is more profitable to educate girls

Table B2.3: Importance of the NYEP for Parents

Questions	Adamu/Adama	Baba/Binta	Chuku/Chibuzu	Faityo/Fater	Gbanan	Summary
Your son/daughter was a participant of the NYEP—was it with your full consent?	Everything about the project was explained to me so I encouraged her to join	I am happy—whether he tell me or not—I was given enough advise so I was not confused about the project	No, there was no pressure but I liked her to join—it is for her own benefit	No, I am the one who told her to join	No, I liked him to join the project	All parents said they willingly gave consent for their children to join the NYEP—

Questions	Adamu/Adama	Baba/Binta	Chuku/Chibuzu	Faityo/Fater	Gbanan	Summary
What are something s you liked/not liked about the project?	As far as I am know the project helped her because it exposed her interest in her private business	NYEP helped him to get some small money to buy somethin gs instead of stealing	I liked her joining the project because if the project goes well it will help others behind her	I wanted her to get help from the project—I wanted her to learn to do business	The project was about educated so I liked it. During the farming seasonI preferred him to go to the farm	All parents express their appreciation for how the project helped their children—2 said to acquire business skills education--
Do you think enrolment in the project has helped him/her? How?	Very, very beneficial—she is surviving because of the skills she learnt from the NYEP.	Yes, I already said it help him. When he has assistanc e, it helps me too.	Yes it did—in getting financial assistance to buy the JAMBE form and she passed the exam and got an admission to university	She now works harder at her business as a result of joining the project	Yes, it did	All parents agree that their children acquired some skills as a result of joining NYEP—2 said business skills, 2 financial, 1 did not say in which area
What are your suggestion son how	It would be good if the project bring something	As for me it is very hard to say —	NYEP can get borehole and our children can	Project can bring school to	As they are going and getting	1 said NYEP should do something

Questions	Adamu/Adama	Baba/Binta	Chuku/Chibuzu	Faityo/Fater	Gbanan	Summary
the project can better help the community?	which the whole community will see.	a beggar has no choice;	sell water to pay school fees	us self	educated that is good.	concrete, NYEP should get boreholes-

APPENDIX C1

Interview Questions for the Community Leader

Section A: About the College Neighborhood Association (CNA)

1. Why was the College Neighborhood Association (CNA) initiated in 2004, and what are its main goals?
2. Can you tell me something about the effectiveness of the Vigilante Group endeavor?
3. What are the perceived advantages of having the Vigilante Group, as conceived by you and expressed by the members of the community?

Section B: About Out-of-School Youths and Crime

1. Do you think every out-of-school youth would be willing to go to school if he/she has the financial means?
2. In your experience as a Community Leader and Student Affairs Officer, what do you see as the relationship between idle youths and crime?
3. Would you there are some relationships between youths in the “Hire” business and crime rate in the community? What are some of the relationships?

Section C: About NYEP

1. How do you see the NYEP in terms of empowering the youths in our community?
2. Do you perceive the NYEP as a long-term endeavor to reduce crime rate?
3. I have been thinking about asking you to be an on-site Director of the NYEP should we secure financial support from interested Donors, would you be interested? What are your reasons for interest/non interest?

APPENDIX C2

Results (Community Leader)

The community leader was interviewed as a parent of Family One and as a community leader on the same day. Adamu had volunteered to act in the capacity of the community leader following the decline of Mr. Abul Nege (please see section 3.2.4 for a detailed explanation of the decline of Mr. Nege and how Adamu volunteered to fill this position). After Interviewing Adamu and Adama on 1st July 2014, I asked Adamu if he was still interested in acting in the capacity of the community leader. He affirmed his decision to do so. Adamu had worked closely with Mr. Abul Nege during the College Neighbourhood Association meetings, and sometimes preside during meetings in the absence of Mr. Abul Nege. I had sometimes given my monthly dues (in cash value) to take to the monthly meetings of the College Neighbourhood Association when I was unable to be at the meeting myself. Hence I was pleased to interview him as the community leader.

Table C2.1: Importance of College Neighbourhood Association (CL)

Question	Why was the College Neighborhood Association (CNA) initiated in 2004?	How is the effectiveness of the Vigilante Group endeavor?	What are the perceived advantages of having the Vigilante Group, as conceived by you and expressed by the members of the community?
Answer	Around 2004/2005, and the main goals was security, self-help, and	Yes, the vigilante group, as you know has been very	It is my perception, as well as other members of the community the perception of other members of the community rate of criminal activity in the community has been reduced—There are no verbal

	assistance to the neighbors	effective	expressions, but membership has increased which suggest appreciation for its effectiveness. People sleep well at night because of the vigilante group
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Table C2. 2: About Out-of-school Youths and Crime (CL)

Question	Do you think every out-of-school youth would be willing to go to school if he/she has the financial means to do so?	In your experience as a Community Leader, what do you see as the relationship between idle youths and crime?	Do you think that there are some relationships between the “hire” business and crime rate in the community? If “yes”, what are some of the relationships?
Answer	Yes, most would like to go to school. A lower would not go to school because they are from homes where criminal	When youths are idle, there is nothing for them to do, and they do not really want to do the farm labor, yet they have no financial means to support	No, actually if there are more people doing the hire business there would be less crime. There are some changes, in that anyone who engages in the hire business must wear a uniform—that helps to identify any hire criminals

	activities are practiced	themselves	
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Table C2.3: Importance of NYEP for (CL)

Question	How do you see the NYEP in terms of empowering the youths in our community?	Do you perceive the NYEP as a long-term endeavor to reduce crime rate?	I have been thinking about asking you to be an on-site Director of the NYEP should we secure financial support from interested Donors, would you be interested? What are your reasons for interest/non interest?
Answer	I see NYEP as a very good development—because it has helped those who want to go to school to by JAMBE forms and those who want to do business have been helped	Definitely, in the long term NYEP will reduce crime rate as well. The more occupied people are, the less they would have time to conceive criminal activities	Very much interested. If I have the means I hope to help people in many ways. People need to be made aware of NYEP. I was wishing for such a program in the past, but there was none. Now there is so I will do my best to help



APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORM FOR YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

Stories of Hope: A Community Endeavor to Promote College Access With Rural Youths in Benue State of Nigeria

I. STUDY TEAM

Principal Investigator: Hillel Goelman

Contact Person: Miriam Orkar

Research Assistant: Ishimaya Orkar

This research is a Partial Requirement for the Fulfilment of a Doctoral Dissertation.

III. INVITATION AND STUDY PURPOSE

(Why should you take part in this study? Why are we doing this study?)

- You are being invited to take part in this research study because you are one of the participants of the NeboReach Youth Empowerment Project (NYEP).
- We want to know what you think of college education, and if you think the NYEP has been helpful to you in pursuing your educational your educational goals or not.
- We need some financial assistance from donor organizations for the NYEP, so it will help us to get feedback from people like you, who participated in the NYEP.
- You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty if for any reason you chose to do so.

IV. STUDY PROCEDURES

(What happens if you say “Yes, I want to be in the study”? What happens to you in the study? How is the study done?)

If you say “Yes” here is how we will do the study:

- First, all the youths who say “Yes” to this study will have a short meeting with the research Assistant and myself. We will talk about your experiences with the NYEP what you liked about and what you did not like about it and if it helped you towards your educational goals or not.
- Then you will write down a time-slot on a piece of paper, when you and I can meet for interviews. Some of the interview questions are about if you enjoy schooling or not, what occupation you are involved in, whether you think college education is necessary for success in life or not.
- Your responses to the interview questions will be tape-recorded, and later be transcribed and be included in a Thesis I am writing to get a PhD in the University of British Columbia, Canada.
- Every youth can budget 3 hours for the focus group and interviews during the month of May, and 30 minutes in the month of November, 2013 for member-check. Hence, the total time every youth can budget for this for study is 4.5-5 hours.
- You will receive an honorarium of \$20 (N3000 Naira) at the end of the study—a way of saying “thank you for participating” as well as to compensate for the time you have spent on the study.

V. STUDY RESULTS

The results of this study will be reported in a graduate thesis and may also be published in journal articles and books.

The main study findings will be published in academic journal articles.

If there are some Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) who will be interested in supporting NYEP financially, they may also ask to read about some of the responses

of the participants to the interview questions so they can decide if they want to support NYEP or not.

- When the thesis is completed, I will send a copy by mail to the Community Leader (Mr. Simon Animiem), so that every participant can read it and most likely recognize their own response.

VI. POTENTIAL RISKS OF THE STUDY

(Is there any way being in the study could be bad for you?)

- We do not think there is anything in this study that could harm you or be bad for you, as you have been a participant of NYEP.
- Any possible risk for youth may come from other youths who had participated in the NYEP but did not meet the criteria for participating in the study. But these same risks would have been in your everyday experience as a participant of NYEP who stayed on the project long enough to reap its benefits.
- A strategy that can minimize this risk is to keep the discussion about the information on the study to participants, and not share it with other youths who may be envious of you. If other youths who are not participating in the project should ask you about the study, you can assure them that everyone who need help to go to college may benefit from the study if we get the means to enlarge the study, whether they participate in this study or not.
- Some of the questions we ask might upset you. Please let one of the study staff know if you have any worries.
- Some of the questions may seem sensitive or personal. You do not have to answer any question if you do not want to.

VII. POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

(Will being in the study help you in any way? What are the benefits of participating?)

- You may be helped for being in the study, if an NGO decides to support NYEP financially. This will mean more young people can join NYEP and NYEP might have enough money to continue its activities. NYEP may also purchase computers so that young people can learn and be computer literate.
- The greater help may be if you want to pursue any level of higher education. Since you have participated in NYEP you will be welcome to come and work with NYEP when on holidays, and NYEP will consider ways to help with your Tuition.
- If you have no plans to further your education, you may not benefit educationally in a direct way, but other family members might benefit, by enrolling in the NYEP and have their college tuition paid by NYEP.

VIII. CONFIDENTIALITY

(How will your identity be protected? How will your privacy be maintained? Measures to maintain confidentiality?)

- Your confidentiality will be respected. Information that discloses your identity will not be released without your consent unless required by law
- All documents will be identified only by code number and kept in a locked filing cabinet. Participants will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study.
- You will be asked to choose a nick name for yourself and keep it confidential. We might use these nick names to identify you in the data, although only you will know that it is you.

---NAME OF PARTICIPANT

-----SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT



APPENDIX E

CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS OF YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

Stories of Hope: A Community Endeavor to Promote College Access With Rural Youths in Benue State of Nigeria

I. STUDY TEAM

Principal Investigator: Hillel Goelman

Contact Person: Miriam Orkar

Research Assistant: Ishimaya Orkar

This research is a Partial Requirement for the Fulfilment of a Doctoral Dissertation.

III. INVITATION AND STUDY PURPOSE

(Why should you take part in this study? Why are we doing this study?)

- You are being invited to take part in this research study because one of your children (name of child) took part in the NeboReach Youth Empowerment Project (NYEP) which was initiated to help our youth access college education.
- We want to know what you think about the NYEP, and whether it has helped your child in any way.
- We need some financial assistance from donor organizations, so it will help to get feedback from parents like you, whose child participated in the NYEP.
- You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty if for any reason you chose to do so.

IV. STUDY PROCEEDURES

(What happens if you say “Yes, I want to be in the study”? What happens to you in the study? How is the study done?)

If you say “Yes” here is how we will do the study:

- First, I will visit your home and ask you what date you will be free for me to come and have the interview conversation with you. I would like father’s interview time to be different from mother’s interview time so that I can hear your opinions separately, except if you will prefer to be interviewed together.
- Some of the interview questions are how many children you have, whether you think college education is necessary for success in life or not, and if you think NYEP should continue and expand.
- Your responses to the interview questions will be tape-recorded, and later be transcribed and used in a Thesis I am writing to get a PhD in the University of British Columbia, Canada.
- Parents’ interviews will be in the month of October, 2013. Please budget 2 hours for interview time in October, plus 30 minutes member-check time in November, 2013.
- For parents who are non- English speakers, Mr. Abul Nege, the community leader will be our interpreter. For parent who can speak English, I will interview you in English.

You will receive an honorarium of \$10 (N150 Naira) at the end of the study—a way of saying “thank you for participating” as well as to compensate for the time you have spent on the study.

V. STUDY RESULTS

- The results of this study will be reported in a graduate thesis and may also be published in journal articles and books.

The main study findings will be published in academic journal articles.

If there are some Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) who will be interested in supporting NYEP financially, they may also ask to read about some of the responses of the participants to the interview questions so they can decide if they want to support NYEP or not.

- When the thesis is completed, I will send a copy by mail to the Community Leader (Mr. Abul Nege), so that he will tell you about the results of this study

VI. POTENTIAL RISKS OF THE STUDY

(Is there any way being in the study could be bad for you?)

- We do not think there is anything in this study that could harm you or be bad for you.
-
- Possible risks to parents may be similar to the risks you may have encountered by allowing your youth to participate in the NYEP, if you had any risks at all then you can mention it so we can help to minimize it.
- There is a strategy minimize any risk, and that is, to keep the discussion about the information on the study between participants only.
- In case other families who are not participating in the project should ask you about the study, you can ensure them that everyone who need help for his/her children to access college may benefit from the study if we get the means to enlarge the NYEP, whether they participate in this study or not.
- Some of the questions we ask might upset you. Please let one of the study staff know if you have any worries.
- Some of the questions may seem sensitive or personal. You do not have to answer any question if you do not want to.

VII. POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

(Will being in the study help you in any way? What are the benefits of participating?)

- Your children may be helped by the study, if an NGO decides to support NYEP financially. This will mean more young people can join NYEP. NYEP might have enough resources to get computers and generators, and people who will train our children to know how to use computers.
- The greater help may be if you want some of your children to go to college or any level of higher education. As many children as you wish can join NYEP for a period of one year, and NYEP will find ways to help with their tuition.
- If you have no more children who to plan to further their education, you may not benefit educationally, but other family members might benefit, but the whole community may better when most of our youth have college education, so they can find office jobs.
- If every youth in the community have access to college/university education, the community will improve in terms of the safety of the neighborhood, and economic viability, at least that is what I believe, and that was one of the important motivational factors for keeping the project alive.

VIII. CONFIDENTIALITY

(How will your identity be protected? How will your privacy be maintained? Measures to maintain confidentiality)

- Your confidentiality will be respected. Information that discloses your identity will not be released without your consent unless required by law.
- All documents will be identified only by code number and kept in a locked filling cabinet. Participants will not be identified by name in any of the reports of the completed study.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT

DATE



APPENDIX F

CONSENT FORM FOR COMMUNITY LEADER

Stories of Hope: A Community Endeavor to Promote College Access With Rural Youths in Benue State of Nigeria

I. STUDY TEAM

Principal Investigator: Hillel Goelman

Contact Person: Miriam Orkar

Research Assistant: Ishimaya Orkar

This research is a Partial Requirement for the Fulfilment of a Doctoral Dissertation.

III. INVITATION AND STUDY PURPOSE

(Why should you take part in this study? Why are we doing this study?)

- You are being invited to take part in this research study because you are the Chairman of College Neighborhood Association (CNA) and most people look at you as the leader of this community. You are also in charge of the Vigilante Group which had helped to reduce crime rates in our neighborhood.
- NeboReach Youth Empowerment Project (NYEP) was initiated in our community with the goal to promote college access for youths who want to pursue college education. Your consent for me to use your name as one of the team members for the University of British Columbia International Development Research Network (UBC/IDRN) competition was supportive, and since then I have continued to look for sources of financial support for the NYEP.
- We want to know what you think of college education, and if you think the NYEP has the potential to help youths in our community with their educational goals.

- We need some financial assistance from donor organizations, so it will help us to get some feedback from people like you, who have vested interest in the progress of the community. We are hoping that the NYEP can financially considerably support the youths in our community considerably in the future.
- You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty if for any reason you chose to do so.

IV. STUDY PROCEEDURES

(What happens if you say “Yes, I want to be in the study”? What happens to you in the study? How is the study done?)

If you say “Yes” here is how we will do the study:

- First, I will visit you at home so you can find time in your busy schedule to when we can have this interview conversation.
- Then I will come to your home or you can come to my home (whichever is more convenient for you) for the interviews.
- Some of the interview questions are about why you put the Vigilante Group in place, what you think about the potential of the NYEP to help our youth, access college and whether you think college education is necessary for success in life or not.
- Your responses to the interview questions will be tape-recorded, and later be transcribed and used in a Thesis I am writing to get a PhD in the University of British Columbia, Canada.
- Community leader will be interviewed last. Estimated time of interview with community leader is 2 hours.
- Please budget 2 hours interview time in October, plus 30 minutes member-check time in November. Besides the 2 hours interview time and thirty minutes member-check

- time, we will need you to be a resource person also. This is estimated at 3-4 hours over the entire research period.
- You will receive an honorarium of \$54 at the end of the study—a way of saying “thank you for participating” as well as to compensate for the time you have spent on the study—which include the time for your own interviews, interpretation during member-check for 6 parents and other resource time you have spent on the study.
 - I will need you to interpret the interviews of 6 parents at 2 hours each at the rate of \$12 per hour which totals up to \$144 as this is a salaried position. Your honorarium totals up to \$200 (N30000 Naira).

V. STUDY RESULTS

- The results of this study will be reported in a graduate thesis and may also be published in journal articles and books.
- The main study findings will be published in academic journal articles.
- If there are some Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) who will be interested in supporting NYEP financially, they may also ask to read about some of the responses of the participants to the interview questions so they can decide if they want to support NYEP or not.
- When the thesis is completed, I will send a copy by mail to you as the Community Leader, so that participant that can read can find their own responses. Participant who cannot read, may request for you to read parts of the thesis that interest them.

VI. POTENTIAL RISKS OF THE STUDY

(Is there any way being in the study could be bad for you?)

- We do not think there is anything in this study that could harm you or be bad for you. Rather I think the community may respect you even more for protecting their interests.

- Some of the questions may upset you. Please let one of the study staff know if you have any worries.
- Some of the questions may seem sensitive or personal. You do not have to answer any question if you do not want to.

VII. POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

(Will being in the study help you in any way? What are the benefits of participating?)

- The community as a whole will be helped by the study, if an NGO decides to support NYEP financially. This will mean more young people can join NYEP.
- NYEP can also have computers so that young people can learn and be computer literate. If most of the youth are occupied productively, the work of the Vigilante Group may drastically reduce.
- The greater help may be if any of grandchildren want to pursue any level of higher education they will be welcome to come and work with NYEP when on holidays, and NYEP will consider ways to help with their tuition.
- If you no one in your family plans to further their education, you may not benefit directly, however, other family members will, by enrolling in the NYEP and have their college tuition paid by NYEP. I believe this will make you happy and proud as the community leader.
- If every youth in the community have access to college/university education, the community will improve in terms of the safety of the neighborhood, and economic viability, at least that is what I believe, and that was one of the important motivational factors for keeping the project alive.

VIII. CONFIDENTIALITY

(How will your identity be protected? How will your privacy be maintained? Measures to maintain confidentiality)

- Your confidentiality will be respected. Information that discloses your identity will not be released without your consent unless required by law.
- All documents will be identified only by code number and kept in a locked filing cabinet. Participants will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

 SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT