Navigating liminal spaces

An examination of the impacts of youth group participation on young people’s social exclusion in rural Western Kenya

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Abstract

Global efforts to improve youth sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) increasingly place ‘participation’ at their heart. However evidence of the broader impact of youth participation is limited. Meanwhile, universalist rights-based approaches often fail to consider local interpretations of participation. This study explores participation in a youth group in rural western Kenya initiated in 2014 as part of a SRHR programme. Participatory methods were employed to (i) compare global and local conceptualisations of participation and (ii) explore how group participation has enabled 16-24-year-olds to address social, cultural, economic and political barriers to social inclusion. Results demonstrate significant differences between donor and local conceptualisations of participation. Opportunities for young people to act as decision-making change agents are limited by a cultural positioning as docile-bodied children until marriage. Youth group participation has provided platforms for civil participation and increased community respect for members. However young people occupy multiple liminal positions between “analogue” and “digital” eras and as ‘non-adults’, in ‘waithood’ between childhood and adulthood. With youth participation high on the global development and SRHR agenda, the research highlights challenges of local implementation. Programmatic recommendations for increasing systematic youth participation are provided and further research on SRHR services for ‘non-adults’ advised. The application of a social exclusion lens enables the analysis to go beyond SRHR-related programme outcomes, recognising the added value in terms of economic, political social and cultural inclusion.

Keywords: participation, meaningful youth participation, social exclusion, young people, transition to adulthood
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### Abbreviations and acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASK</td>
<td>Access, Services and Knowledge (sexual and reproductive health and rights programme)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHU</td>
<td>Community Health Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHV</td>
<td>Community Health Volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSE</td>
<td>Comprehensive sexuality education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLUK</td>
<td>Great Lakes University of Kisumu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAR</td>
<td>Participatory action research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDGs</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRH</td>
<td>Sexual and reproductive health</td>
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<tr>
<td>SRHR</td>
<td>Sexual and reproductive health and rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPE</td>
<td>Typology of Youth Participation and Empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>WSWM</td>
<td>The World Starts With Me (computer-based SRHR education programme)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YHV</td>
<td>Youth Health Volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YPAR</td>
<td>Youth participatory action research</td>
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### Explanation of local terms

- **Agement (n)**: People in the same age group, peers
- **Baraza (n)**: Community meeting convened and chaired by government appointed Chief or Assistant Chief
1. Introduction

"Just imagine what solutions might be found if young people are given the space and encouragement to participate and lead." (Kofi Annan, 2013)

Youth participation has the potential to empower young people and to achieve social change (Campbell et al. 2009; Morsillo & Prilleltensky, 2007; Wong et al. 2010). Global efforts to improve youth sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) increasingly place ‘participation’ at their heart, however evidence of the broader impact of youth participation is limited (Villa-Torres & Svanemyr, 2015). Meanwhile, the universalist stance of rights-based approaches often fails to consider local interpretations of participation. This study explores participation in a youth group in rural western Kenya initiated in 2014 as part of a participatory youth SRHR programme, Access Services and Knowledge (ASK). The research aims to look beyond the ‘narrow’ SRHR-related outcomes of the programme to explore the broader liberating potential of participatory approaches (Campbell et al., 2009; Morsillo & Prilleltensky, 2007), posing the research question: How does participation in the Litala youth group enable young people to address structural barriers to social inclusion?

This opening chapter aims to provide a backdrop for the research, opening by outlining the contextual topic of youth sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and describing ASK, the programme under study. The research aims and rationale are then identified before the chapter progresses to the empirical context, including geopolitical and selected societal factors particularly pertinent to the research, as well as a description of the research location. The chapter concludes with an outline of the thesis as a whole.

1.1. Background to research

1.1.1. Youth sexual and reproductive health and rights

Although the research centres on an SRHR programme, its focus is on experiences of participation and their impact on broader societal experiences rather than directly on SRHR itself. SRHR is covered in this section in order to provide a contextual introduction.
Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) concerns issues including pregnancy, childbirth, abortion, contraception, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV and AIDS and reproductive tract cancers. SRH is widely regarded as a human right, essential to human development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Kangas et al. 2014). Notions of human rights are hence deployed broadly in SRH-related policy, practice and academia under the term sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) (Miedema et al. 2015).

With half of the world’s population under 25, the health, especially SRH, of young people is central to achieving wider development goals including those relating to education, poverty alleviation and gender equality. Despite investments in sexuality education and increased knowledge of SRHR in most countries, many young people in developing countries still face significant barriers in accessing services to improve their sexual and reproductive health and rights and are hence at increased risk of sexually transmitted infections, early or unwanted pregnancies and child and maternal deaths (Simavi, 2015). The need for promotion of SRHR is particularly high in sub-Saharan Africa, where teenage pregnancies and unmet need for contraceptives remains high and SRH programmes have developed slowly, failing to reach enough disadvantaged women and adolescent girls, who are more vulnerable to poor health outcomes (Godia et al., 2013; Kangas et al., 2014; Villa-Torres & Svanemyr, 2015). Linked to such inequalities and as explored further in section 2.3, SRHR can hence be seen as a social justice issue in itself.

1.1.2. ASK programme in Kenya

The study was undertaken in partnership with the Great Lakes University of Kisumu, Kenya (GLUK) and focuses on a youth group established as part of youth SRHR programme, ASK (Access, Services and Knowledge). ASK was an initiative of the Youth Empowerment Alliance (YEA), which consists of NGOs Simavi, Rutgers WPF, Amref, CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality, dance4life, Stop Aids Now! and International Planned Parenthood Federation. ASK ran from 2012 to 2015 in 9 countries in partnership with 59 local partner organisations including GLUK in western Kenya (Simavi, 2015). The programme had youth participation at its core and aimed to “improve the SRHR of 13 million young people (10-24 years)
by increasing their uptake of SRH services, including access to contraceptives, safe abortion and antenatal care” (Simavi, 2015, Objectives, para. 1). ASK aimed to incorporate key elements of information and education, youth-targeted and youth-friendly services, and acceptance of young people’s sexuality.

Each of the 59 local partners took a different approach to the ASK programme, tailoring responses to local expertise and local context. Building on expertise in community health and rural communities, GLUK worked with Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) in nine districts of western Kenya to establish youth groups as vehicles for the ASK programme. A lead CHV in each area acted as a youth mentor and, with training and support from GLUK, established a youth group as a base for a programme of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE). Youth groups are integrated with Community Health Units (CHUs), aiming to involve young people as key stakeholders in health service delivery. Young people are elected as officials and appointed as Youth Health Volunteers, (YHVs) carrying out tasks of leadership, governance and community-based health service delivery. Youth group activities under the ASK programme included drama and sports activities incorporating CSE, youth outreaches with CHVs and involvement in local decision making structures including barazas (community meetings run by the government-appointed Chief or Assistant Chiefs) and Community Health Committees. Computers were provided to youth groups in order to deliver computer-based SRHR training programme, the World Starts With Me (WSWM). Youth groups also served as a referral point to local public health facilities, where GLUK advocated for the provision of youth-friendly services and provided training on youth-friendly service provision (Singh et al., 2016).
It is important to note the temporal context in which this research was undertaken. At the time of data collection, the ASK programme was drawing to a close and the successor programme, Get Up, Speak Out (GUSO) was being developed. Furthermore GLUK have only started working with young people in a participatory way relatively recently and the ASK programme was implemented quickly, limiting the amount GLUK were able to involve beneficiaries in the development of the programme (Singh et al., 2016).

The research arose from recommendations of operational research on youth participation in the GLUK ASK programme, calling for more understanding of the structural barriers to participation faced by young people (YEA, 2015). The research proposal was developed in consultation with both Simavi and GLUK.

1.2. Research aims and rationale

Applying a social exclusion lens, the research aims to look beyond narrow, SRHR-focused outcomes of the ASK programme to understand the broader impacts of youth participation (Campbell et al., 2009). This analysis is achieved through the application of a social exclusion lens (Kabeer, 1994; Khan, Combaz, & McAslan Fraser, 2015; Popay, 2010). Academically, this research responds to calls for greater understanding of the effectiveness and impact of involving young people in SRHR programmes and the assertion that “much work remains to be done in expanding our understandings of the psycho-social factors that are most likely to enable effective youth participation, and on how to promote the development of these factors from one situation to the next” (Campbell et al., 2009, p. 107; Cook, 2008; Robertson et al. 2015; Villa-Torres & Svanemyr, 2015). In order to

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**A note on ‘youth’**

There is no universal age-based definition of ‘youth’ or ‘young people’. The UN defines ‘young people’ as those between the ages of 10 and 24 (UNDESA, 2007), while the African Union defines ‘youth’ as 15-35 (African Union, 2006). The official Kenyan definition of ‘youth’ is ages 15-30 (Awiti & Scott, 2016). The ASK programme focuses on 'children and young people' aged 10-24 year olds, seeing 16-24 year olds as a separate upper age group of 'young people'. As outlined in section 3.7.1 the programmatic definition of young people as those aged 16-24 has been employed for this research. Wanting to focus on people in this age range as *people*, the term ‘young people’ is employed over ‘youth’.
understand this broader context, a social exclusion lens is employed, promoted as a useful framework to understand “the intersection of youth with other dimensions of disadvantage” (Khan et al., 2015, p. 20). To date, a social exclusion lens approach has not, to the best of my knowledge, been used to analyse (youth) participation, meaning this analysis may offer new insights.

Although not focusing directly on SRHR, the research takes place with the context of an SRHR programme and may therefore contribute to literature on youth SRHR. The research also intends to respond to Unnithan and Pigg's (2014) call for more understanding about social injustices that underlie sex and reproduction, drawing on concepts of social exclusion to build on successes of rights based approach.

Working closely with organisations in Kenya and the Netherlands, my research is already being used to contribute to future programme, providing a further programmatic rationale. Furthermore, in employing participatory methods, the research potentially offers insights into the possibilities of participatory research within a rural Kenyan context in a short timeframe, as explored further in section 6.1.3.

1.3. Empirical context

The following section sets out the context in which the research was undertaken, specifically the geopolitical environment, religion, HIV/AIDS, youth in Kenya, education and (un)employment. With space limitations, these have been selected as the most pertinent topics to the research. I am however aware that other potentially relevant issues such as women’s rights and public services have not been covered. The section concludes with a description of the study location bring us closer to the research itself.

1.3.1. Geopolitical context

Situated on the east coast of Africa, Kenya’s diverse topography and climate – from arid plains to tropical coastal areas – is matched by a kaleidoscopic ethnic mix including 42 different tribes, the most populous of which are the Kikuyu (22%), Luhya (14%), Luo (13%), Kalenjin (12%) and Kamba (11%) (CIA, 2016). Kenyan politics is deeply tribal and has historically been dominated by the
Kalenjin and Kikuyu (the tribe of the current president, Uhuru Kenyatta, who is the son of Kenya’s founding President Jomo Kenyatta) while others have been politically and economically sidelined. This marginalisation has particularly affected the Luo tribe, with neighbouring allies Luhya also disadvantaged. Tribal tensions boil up around elections and reached a head following the contested 2007 election when ethnic violence resulted in at least 1,300 people being killed and over 300,000 displaced. With elections on the horizon in 2017, fears of a repeat of post-election violence in 2007 were growing at the time of data collection (The Economist, 2016), and have been reaffirmed with violent protests in recent months (Daily Nation, 2016).

Despite high profile efforts to tackle corruption, ‘graft’ (as it is known locally) is a significant and ongoing challenge in Kenyan politics. The Corruptions Perceptions Index 2015 places Kenya 139th out of 168 countries, with a score of only 25/100 (Transparency International, 2016). The Kenya Youth Survey Report 2016 found that 30% of young Kenyans (aged 18-35) believe corruption is profitable while 35% would be willing to give or receive a bribe. Young people are seen as particularly at risk of political corruption; 40% of 18-35 year olds said they would only vote for a political candidate who bribed them (Awiti & Scott, 2016).

In August 2010, Kenya adopted a new constitution, ushering in wide scale decentralisation to 47 county-level governments (Republic of Kenya, 2010). Slowly, historical disinvestment in the western regions (where politically marginalised Luo and Luhya predominately reside) is starting to be addressed with visible benefits including an improving road network. The constitution also introduced a bill of rights and paved the way for significant progress on gender equality, for example stipulating requirements for gender-balanced membership of public bodies. However, almost six years on from the ratification of the constitution, the process of decentralisation is still in the process of being implemented and much work remains to be done.
1.3.2. Religion

The predominant religion in Kenya is Christianity (82.5%), the second Islam (11.1%) (2009 Census, quoted in CIA, 2016). While little data is available on the extent of Kenyans’ religious devotion, my experience was of a devout country where almost everyone actively practices their religion and most regularly attend religious services. Islamic fundamentalist group Al-Shabab is active in Kenya and during the time of the research attacked Kenyan troops in an African Union base in Somalia. The north eastern part of Kenya is most at risk from attacks and recruitment for Al-Shabab but during my research several respondents reiterated fears of vulnerable young men being recruited to extremist groups.

1.3.3. HIV/AIDS

Kenya has the thirteenth highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the world at 5.3% of the population, a significant decrease from 7.2% in 2007. An estimated 1,366,900 people were living with HIV/AIDS in 2014 and young people are particularly vulnerable. Of an estimated 33,000 HIV/AIDS related deaths in 2014, approximately a quarter of which occurred among those under 19 (CIA, 2016). Adolescents aged 10-19 are the only age group where HIV/AIDS related deaths are not decreasing. Young women are particularly at risk; of an estimated 89,000 new HIV infections in 2014 in Kenya, 21% were women aged 15-24 and girls and young women are twice as likely as their male counterparts to be living with HIV. This gender disparity is attributed to relationships with older partners due to early marriage or financial or other material gains (Ministry of Health, 2015).

1.3.4. Youth in Kenya

With more than 60% of Kenya’s 46 million-strong population aged under 24 (CIA, 2016), much attention is placed on the opportunities and challenges facing young people. Although Kenya’s rate of population growth has slowed in recent years, fertility rates remain high, and the population is growing at a rate of 1.93% per year (CIA, 2016). The number of people in the 15-64 age cohort is predicted to continue to grow until about 2040 (UNDP, 2013, p. 9). Two key issues facing young people in Kenya: education and unemployment are herewith briefly explored.
1.3.5. Education

Education in Kenya follows an 8-4-4 system consisting of eight years of free, compulsory primary education followed by four years of secondary and four of tertiary. Enrolment rates in primary education are high at 83.5% for male students and 84.5% for females (net enrolment ratio 2008-12), but attendance rates are lower (72.4% and 84.5% respectively) (UNICEF, 2015). Although attendance at state primary schools is officially free, costs for uniform and those levied by parent teacher associations for items such as text books and school buildings make school unattainable for many, while others drop out due to early pregnancy or pressure to earn money for the family. Largely due to financial implications, secondary school net enrolment rates are much lower than primary, at 51.6% for boys and 48.4% for girls (UNICEF, 2015). The government subsidises secondary school fees but parents are expected to contribute and, as in primary school, children are sent home if arrears become too high, resulting in children repeating years or taking a long time to complete.

1.3.6. (Un)employment

At whichever point young Kenyans leave education finding employment is a major challenge. Although Kenya’s strong economic growth following the 2008 global financial crisis is now starting to slow, recent years has seen a steady increase in formal employment. However, this growth has not been sufficient to match mounting population demands, resulting a growing informal employment sector, particularly in urban areas. Meanwhile, in rural areas people have mainly continued to work in traditional agriculture (UNDP, 2013). Young people are bearing the brunt of a mismatch between job creation and population growth, and youth unemployment is high at 17.4% (2011-2015) (The World Bank, 2016). The unemployment challenge is more pronounced for those under 25; the highest rates are for those around 20 who have an unemployment rate of 35%. The challenge is also not felt evenly across the country. In rural areas, youth unemployment rates are 20-25% for 15-25 year olds compared with 35-60 % in urban areas (UNDP, 2013, p. 15). However rural areas have a greater volume of unemployed people, in part due to almost three quarters of the population living there (CIA, 2016). The lower rate of unemployment in rural areas can be
explained to an extent by young people in rural areas being involved in informal employment activities including traditional farming and more intensive engagement in miscellaneous and home-making activities. However the UN recognises that official figures are likely to underestimate unemployment in rural areas (UNDP, 2013).

1.4. Research location

With the research taking a case study approach (see section 3.6), the following subsection aims to provide detailed information about the specific location, contributing towards possible transferability of findings (Bryman, 2012). The research location has been anonymised to protect the identity of respondents. A fictional name of Litala has been allocated, meaning ‘village’ the local language Luhya. Litala is a sub-location, a rural area consisting of ten villages. The sub-location is situated in Kakamega County, an agricultural area of western Kenya (see map in Figure 1 below). The western region exhibits a high poverty level of 61% compared with the national 47%. Poverty reduction trends have been much slower than reported in other regions of the country, partly attributed to historic political marginalisation but also due to literacy levels and cultural practices in the region. The western region has a total fertility rate of over 5 births per women and a high level of teenage pregnancy, most commonly resulting in unsafe abortion (GLUK, 2014).

Litala itself has a population of around 5,000. Its ten villages are spread along a main, unpaved road bisecting the sub-location and joined by network of smaller roads and winding footpaths cutting through a lush, agricultural landscape. The nearest market town is around seven kilometres away. Most households carry out some kind of small-scale agriculture either as subsistence farming or for commercial purposes, for example growing sugar cane for sale to a large sugar manufacturer. The majority of inhabitants are of the Luhya tribe. The mother tongue for most residents is Luhya, while Swahili and English are learnt at school.

Families live in homesteads, generally consisting several buildings that are predominantly either ‘semi-permanent’, consisting of mud walls and a
corrugated iron roof or ‘temporary’ with a straw or grass roof rather than an iron roof. As younger generations migrate to work in urban areas and send money back home, an increasing number of families are constructing ‘permanent’ residences with concrete walls and metal or tiled roofs. Only some houses have electricity while water is accessed via communal water supplies and springs. Following a US AID initiative\(^1\), the majority of communal water sources have an adjacent chlorine dispenser enabling access to safe drinking water.

Litala has a large number of churches, representing a range of Christian denominations as well as at least two mosques. Polygamy has historically been practiced by Luhya people and a number of polygamous family units reside in the area. However respondents reported that the practice now seems to be dying out. On the occasion of a marriage, a groom’s family commonly pay the bride’s family a bride price, usually a combination of livestock and money. However, in claims I was unable to substantiate, some respondents suggested bride price payments are also starting to become less common.

\(^1\) See [http://www.poverty-action.org/study/chlorine-dispensers-safe-water-kenya](http://www.poverty-action.org/study/chlorine-dispensers-safe-water-kenya) for more information.
1.5. Thesis outline

The thesis is arranged over six chapters. Following this introductory chapter, a theoretical framework is proposed, drawing on academic theory on youth and the transition to adulthood, youth participation and social exclusion to provide an academic grounding for the work. The third chapter outlines the research design, setting out the questions guiding the research and explaining how major concepts have been conceptualised and operationalised on order to answer them. The author’s epistemological and personal positionality is outlined before moving on to methods for data collection and analysis, ethical considerations and limitations. Chapters four and five then set out the empirical findings of the research. Chapter four focuses on experiences and impact of participation in the youth group, outlining local interpretations of participation, exploring possibilities of shared decision making and the extent to which youth group participation has impacted on social exclusion. Chapter five segues into a more thematic approach outlining young people’s position as occupants of multiple liminal spaces: between ‘good’ and ‘bad’, public and private, ‘digital’ and ‘analogue’ and childhood and adulthood. The final chapter returns to the theory
set out in chapter two to analyse the findings from an academic perspective and offering a summative response the research question. The paper then concludes with a methodological reflection and recommendations for practice, policy and further research.
2. Theoretical Framework

The following chapter introduces the three major concepts around which the research is organised: youth, participation and social exclusion. Drawing on relevant academic and policy literature I explore key debates, analytical frameworks and research gaps for each concept and identify inter-theoretical synergies.

2.1. Youth and the transition to adulthood

Globally, there are more young people aged 10 to 24 than ever before and nine out of ten live in less developed countries where the youth population is growing fastest (UNFPA, 2014). However, children and young people are commonly placed at the margins of political, social, economic and cultural processes, spatially confined to the home and locality, and temporally defined as future citizens rather than current actors (Honwana & de Boeck, 2005; Miedema & Millei, 2015). International policy is increasingly recognising the importance of a youth-focus; of the 169 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets, 20 are youth-specific while 65 reference young people either explicitly or implicitly, focusing on youth empowerment, participation and/or well-being (United Nations, 2015).

As noted in the introduction above, international age-based definitions of youth vary to incorporate ages ranging from 15 to 35. However, Honwana and de Boeck (2005) propose that youth cannot be based solely on age or biology as it is a historically situated cultural and social construction, “a ‘social shifter: a relational concept situated in a dynamic context, a social landscape of power, knowledge, rights and cultural notions of agency and personhood” (p.4). Rather than age-specified definitions of youth, Honwana argues in favour of an understanding of youth as all those ‘waiting’ to make these transitions to social adulthood (Honwana, 2014).

Key transitional events marking the transition to adulthood include departure from education, entry to employment, leaving the family home, marriage, sexual debut and becoming a parent (Juárez & Gayet, 2014). The importance, timings and circumstances in which these transitions take place vary greatly between
contexts, for example in developing countries transition to residential independence away from the family home may not occur even after marriage and financial independence. Meanwhile young people may be working while still at school, meaning entry into the job market becomes less important for the transition to adulthood. Transitions are also highly gendered, with differing expectations and constraints affecting men and women’s transitions (Juárez & Gayet, 2014).

Across the world, the timeframe and manner of transitions to adulthood are changing as a result of processes of social change driven by globalization, failed economies, lack of jobs, social inequity and exclusion (Arnot & Swartz, 2012; Honwana, 2014; Juárez & Gayet, 2014). Opportunities and expectations are at once being broadened and narrowed; broadened by increased opportunities for global communications and connectivity, yet at the same time narrowed by a lack of basic resources and young adults becoming increasingly dependent on parents as they struggle to become financially independent (Honwana, 2014).

Honwana (2014) describes the period between childhood and adulthood as ‘waithood’, when young people are no longer children in need of care but, unable to access the basic resources needed for transition so cannot become independent adults. Waithood, Honwana argues, is a result of a broken social contract between state and citizens, often caused by poor economic policies, bad governance and corruption. The liminal position includes an inability to find work due to structural unemployment and limited opportunities for civic participation.

The concept of waithood was first used in reference to young people in the Middle East and North Africa (Dhillon & Yousef, 2009; Singerman, 2007). Honwana’s conceptualisation draws data from west, north and southern Africa (although notably not east Africa, on which this study focuses) but argues that it is globally relevant. In Africa, an extended waithood is “becoming the rule rather than the exception and waithood is gradually replacing conventional adulthood” (Honwana, 2014, pp. 21–22).
While Honwana focuses largely on economic and civic participation, an alternative liminal model from Kesby et al. (Kesby, Gwanzura-Ottemoller, & Chizororo, 2006) offers a more socio-cultural analysis of the transition to adulthood, focusing on sexuality. Drawing on research in Zimbabwe, Kesby et al. outline how, in contexts where marriage rather than age customarily defines entry to adulthood, trends towards later marriage mean childhoods are extended and young people may be legally adults but continue to be treated as children. Adolescent sexual activity is seen as problematic, meaning young people are poorly served by existing local concepts of childhood. The authors propose the notion of ‘non-adult’ to describe this transitory position.

The period of young adulthood is also seen as both a creative and a destructive period. As ‘makers’ young people are major players in processes of globalization and the definition of alternative local forms of modernity. While being shaped by structures, norms and rituals they also contribute to redefining and restructuring them. As ‘breakers’ they pose a risk to themselves through practices such as unsafe sex, but also challenge societal norms and conventions and sometimes break chains of oppression (Honwana & de Boeck, 2005).

Young people can hence be seen to occupy liminal spaces between not only childhood and adulthood but between local and global and ‘tradition’ and modernity, where they negotiate tensions on a daily basis. Experiences of participation in various spheres of political, economic and socio-cultural life define each of these liminal positions. The following section goes on to explore theory relating to youth participation.

**2.2. Youth participation**

After touching upon definitions and applications of participation in general and in relation to young people, this section describes key approaches to analysing types of youth participation. I then move onto debates in relation to participation as a right and gaps in research before a proposing links to social exclusion.

The participation of citizens in community matters has long been a foundation of development and participation continues to be a ‘buzzword’ in development research, policy and practice (Arnstein, 1969 & Price, 1990 as quoted in Wong et
Dictionary definitions specify participation as the act or process of taking part in something (Macmillan Dictionary, n.d.; Oxford Dictionaries, n.d.), however in a social policy context, participation is seen more broadly as “sharing decisions which affect one’s life and the life of the community in which one lives” (Hart, quoted in Villa-Torres & Svanemyr, 2015, p. 533). Participation has an important role from a post-colonial perspective in that it aims to disrupt hegemonic power structures and place power in the hands of end beneficiaries (Escobar, 1992). Participatory approaches are also increasing in importance in research, in particular in reference to children and young people (L. Young & Barrett, 2001).

For children, the right to participate in decisions about matters that affect their lives is enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (United Nations General Assembly, 1989). Although the CRC applies to under-18s, the global rhetoric emphasising youth participation extends to under-25s, for example the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development identified children and young people as a major group who should be part of participatory processes for sustainable development (Herbots & Put, 2015). Further to this constitutional role, the participation of children and young people is also widely seen as instrumentally important in meeting development goals (Herbots & Put, 2015; Villa-Torres & Svanemyr, 2015). However, there seems to be an academic gap when considering young people making the transition to adulthood. Youth participation literature (for example Skelton, 2007; Villa-Torres & Svanemyr, 2015; Wong et al., 2010) tends to draws on children’s right to participation without exploring how these rights evolve in adulthood.

Youth participation is not without its critics. The difficulties of achieving participation with young people have been widely discussed (Campbell et al., 2009; Morsillo & Prilleltensky, 2007). Youth participation may be limited by adults, who themselves are marginalised within the community of the programme and so do not want to cede the limited power they exercise over young people. Participatory approaches may also face resistance if their aims are deemed a threat to existing cultural norms and/or interpersonal relations (Campbell et al., 2009). Furthermore, the most common form of youth
participation in SRHR, engaging young people as peer educators, does not necessarily lead to improved programmatic outcomes (Villa-Torres & Svanemyr, 2015). Crucially to this study, there has been debate around the aims of participation in particular with regard to health promotion. Here, tensions are primarily between ‘narrow’ outcomes – participation in order to improve service delivery by responding to young people’s needs and concerns – and ‘broader’ outcomes which see youth participation as a potentially liberating tool for empowerment and tackling social exclusion (Campbell et al., 2009; Morsillo & Prilleltensky, 2007). In this study, the latter position is prioritised, seeing youth participation as an opportunity for empowerment within and beyond the programme in which it is enshrined.

Despite its criticisms youth participation has been of growing prominence in international SRH programmes over the last 20 years (Miedema et al. 2011; Villa-Torres & Svanemyr, 2015). The focus is increasingly on participation that is ‘meaningful,’ described as that which engages young people in issues that concern their lives, “in interactive ways that respect the human dignity of the participants and that seek to achieve a shared goal” (Chawla, 2001, p. 4), in other words “decision-making by young people that involves meaning, control, and connectedness” (Olivera et al. 2006). Meaningful youth participation can foster resilience in young people and “enhance a ... sense of connectedness, belonging and valued participation, and thereby impact on mental health and well-being” (Olivera et al., 2006, p. 34).

Multiple typologies are available to attempt to understand and categorise different approaches to participation and their level of ‘meaningfulness’. Hart’s (1992) seminal ‘Ladder of Participation’ builds on an earlier concept by Arnstein (1969) to acknowledge young people and adults’ differing experiences of societal power and control. Hart sets out a linear series of participation and non-participation types ranging from ‘manipulation’ to ‘child-initiated shared decisions with adults’, where the ‘highest’ types of participation are assumed to be the most desirable. Arguing that youth-driven participation may sometimes be inappropriate and therefore rejecting the hierarchical conception implied in the ladder form, Treseder’s ‘Degrees of Participation’ depicts five distinct but
equal forms of participation: (a) assigned, but informed, (b) consulted and informed (c) adult-initiated, shared decisions with children, (d) child-initiated and directed and (e) child-initiated, shared decisions with adults (Treseder, 1997, cited in Wong et al., 2010). For a framework specific to young people’s SRHR programmes, one must turn to practitioners rather than academics. The ‘Flower of Participation’ developed by CHOICE, a youth-led SRHR and meaningful youth participation organization directly adopts Treseder’s five degrees of participation as five ‘petals’, and reintroduces Hart’s three forms of non-participation; manipulation, decoration and tokenism as ‘leaves’ (see Figure 1). The model also crucially recognises that different forms of participation can and do exist within the same programme (CHOICE 2011).

Figure 2: CHOICE Flower of Participation
However, Wong et al. (2010) argue that both Hart’s hierarchical and Treseder’s neutral models underestimate the contribution adults can make to youth empowerment, for example through mobilising skills, experience and connections, and omit consideration of broader socio-political influences on young people. In response, they propose a ‘TYPE Pyramid: Typology of Youth Participation and Empowerment’, which identifies five participation types with varying levels of youth-adult input; two adult-driven types: Vessel and Symbolic; two youth driven types: Independent and Autonomous and a Pluralisic type, where control is shared.

Figure 3: Typology of Participation and Empowerment (TYPE) pyramid

Source: (Wong et al., 2010, p. 105)

The TYPE Pyramid is particularly pertinent to this research as it adopts a framework of empowerment, enabling consideration how broader societal power and control structures impact on each type of participation. Drawing on Freire (1970), Wong et al. argue that “youth empowerment ... requires adults to be actively involved in fostering conditions and opportunities for youth to develop critical consciousness”. (Wong et al., 2010, p. 106). The detail of this model provides a valuable framework that is applied in the discussion below (see section 6.1.2).
Despite the wealth of frameworks and literature supporting analysis of the ‘how’ of youth participation there is limited evidence of its impact (Cook, 2008; Robertson et al., 2015). This dearth extends to SRHR programmes, where the limited evidence of youth participation effectiveness focuses on peer education approaches. Consequently, scholars have called for more research on the adoption of innovative practices for involving youth in SRH programmes, in particular looking at participation as a right rather than solely looking at its effectiveness and impact (Villa-Torres & Svanemyr, 2015). Furthermore, in HIV- and AIDS- education, rhetorical use of ‘participation’ results in a focus on individual rights and entitlements without engagement with broader philosophical theories on rights or recognition of the importance of social relationships for people’s sense of wellbeing (Miedema et al., 2011).

The potential of meaningful youth participation as a liberating tool for empowerment and tackling social exclusion hence depends on wider forces, as outlined by Lund (in reference to children but applicable to young people):

“The way [children] can ‘empower’ through participation very much depends on social constraints, by parents and/or peers, by the local cultural context and norms, and by the wider, often global social and economic forces. Thus a new focus on the ‘participating child implies that the various structural, contextual and geopolitical factors at play will have to be deconstructed to understand the full significance of participation in creating a significant societal and cultural change for children.” (Lund, 2008)

This study therefore aims to look not only at the ‘how’ of participation but how contextual factors and experiences of participation impact on one another. While analytical frameworks for participation tend to look inward at types of participation within a programme, a social exclusion lens as outlined in the following chapter allows a broader examination of the context in which participation operates and its broader impact.

2.3. Social exclusion

Before examining social exclusion theory itself, I first focus briefly on the broader concept of social justice, a core principle underpinning social exclusion (Khan et al., 2015). As a principle seeing all people as of equal moral worth, social justice can be considered the heart of social policy, and the philosophy
underlies many development endeavours. Leading social justice scholar, Nancy Fraser defines social justice in its most general form as “parity of participation”, arguing that “justice requires social arrangements that permit all to participate as peers in social life. Overcoming injustice means dismantling institutionalized obstacles that prevent some people from participating on a par with others, as full partners in social interaction” (Fraser, 2005, p. 73). Seeing social justice as parity of participation, the concept is pertinent for understanding youth participatory approaches in themselves as well as the context in which participation operates and its broader impacts. The notion’s relevance to this study is further emphasised by seeing sexual reproductive health and rights as a social justice issue, concerned with enabling people to enact their rights as sexual citizens.

Social justice theory is closely aligned with the more practical model of social exclusion, defined by Mathieson et al. (2008) as:

“dynamic, multi-dimensional processes driven by unequal power relationships interacting across four main dimensions - economic, political, social and cultural - and at different levels including individual, household, group, community, country and global levels.” (p.2)

While social justice theory provides a broad, philosophical backdrop, social exclusion theory is prioritised in this research as it offers a more concrete, analytical tool that has been used more closely to analyse policy and programmes (Khan et al., 2015; Popay, 2010).

Social exclusion theory offers a heuristic device to understand the multi-dimensional power relations operating at different levels to impact on individuals, groups and communities (Mathieson et al. 2008). The term is rooted in northern social policy discourse, and largely defined in relation to welfare states and formal employment, both more common in northern societies. This northern-centricity presents challenges in applying the concept in a developing country context, with the risk of re-labelling or repeating poverty studies or promoting a tendency to view southern experiences through a northern lens (Kabeer, 1994, 2000). However, despite these drawbacks, scholars do see a value for the approach in development (Kabeer, 2000; Khan et al., 2015; Mathieson et
Mathieson et al. (2008) note an emerging body of academic work on the salience of social exclusion for sub-Saharan Africa, and draw on concepts of social exclusion to interrogate global health inequalities. However, despite its pertinence to the subjects, to the best of my knowledge, the approach has not been used widely (if at all) in relation to either SRHR or youth participation.

Social exclusion is described consistently in the literature reviewed as (i) multidimensional, (ii) relational and (iii) a process. The following explores each of these dimensions in turn before drawing back to the relevance of the concept to this study.

(i) **Multidimensional:** Social exclusion is inherently multidimensional. While impoverished people and communities are often marginalized, poverty is by no means the only cause of marginalization. Khan et al. (2015) identify four interconnected and overlapping dimensions to exclusion:

1. **Political:** denial of citizenship rights (political participation, the right to organize) and personal security (rule of law, freedom of expression, equality of opportunity).
2. **Economic:** lack of access to labour markets, credit or other ‘capital assets’.
3. **Social:** discrimination along a number of dimensions such as gender, ethnicity or age, which reduces opportunity for access to social services and limits labour market participation.
4. **Cultural:** extent to which diverse values, norms and ways of living are accepted and respected.

These four axes align closely with Nancy Fraser's (1995) framework for social justice, consisting of three interlinked axes crucial to enabling ‘parity of participation” (p.73) in social interaction: (i) Redistribution, equitable distribution of resources; (ii) recognition of cultural pluralism; and (iii) representation, focusing on political participation and social belonging; questions of who is included and excluded from making claims for redistribution and recognition and how these claims are played out and assessed. These three domains align with the (i) economic, (ii) social and cultural and (iii) political axes
of social exclusion above, hence aligning the concepts of social justice and social exclusion. Together, these dimensions enable an interrogation of not only the who and the what but also the how of social exclusion (Fraser, 1995).

(ii) Relational: Underlying and driving each dimension are unequal power relations operating at the level of individuals, communities, institutions, nation states and global regions that result in discrimination and ‘othering’ (Fraser, 1995; Khan et al., 2015; Mathieson et al., 2008). Echoing social justice arguments of Young (1990a) and Fraser (1998), Kabeer (2000) argues that disadvantage occurs when institutional mechanisms systematically deny the resources and recognition that would allow full participation in society by setting the ‘rules of the game’ which determine who is in or out of participation. The intersection of rules in multiple domains leads to “clusters of advantage and disadvantage, rather than in a simple dichotomy between inclusion and exclusion” (p.87). Young people are often noted as a group facing marginalization or social exclusion (Khan et al., 2015), while other domains of disadvantage include gender and rural/urban settings.

(iii) Process: Crucially, social exclusion is a process rather than a state; a process of the denial of rights or equal opportunity to participate on equal terms in economic, cultural or political arenas. As a result, social exclusion can be seen on a continuum from inclusion to exclusion, characterised by unequal access to resources and capabilities (Popay, 2010). Recognising this continuum, the terms inclusion and exclusion are used interchangeably in this research.

The multidimensional, relational processes of social exclusion can occur at various levels, including within and between households, villages, cities, states, and globally (Khan et al., 2015).

Popay (2010) describes the process of social exclusion as offering a heuristic device to interpret exclusionary processes. The author proposes the model set out in Figure 4 below to highlight relationships between these processes and health inequalities as well as providing a framework for developing recommendations on how to intervene in and improve these dynamics. My research applies this framework to a participatory youth SRHR
programme, seeking explore parity of participation in a broader societal context. In the discussion below (section 6.1.3) I use an adapted version of Mathieson et al.’s model to illustrate conclusions on social exclusion in the context of this research.

**Figure 4: The Social Exclusion Knowledge Network Model of Social Exclusion**

(Source: Mathieson et al., 2008, p. 38)

**2.4. Concluding remarks**

This chapter opened by outlining academic theory on youth and the transition to adulthood, highlighting young people’s multiple liminal positionalities. Youth theory provides a backdrop, against which to draw together concepts of youth participation and social exclusion. The ‘how’ of youth participation, an increasingly prominent component of youth SRHR policy and practice, can be analysed through the TYPE pyramid (Wong et al., 2010). Recognising the importance of social, contextual and geopolitical factors on the extent to which youth participation is meaningful and liberating, a framework of social exclusion is proposed in order to understand the ‘broader’ outcomes of participatory approaches (Campbell et al., 2009).
3. Research design

Having set the contextual and theoretical scene in preceding sections, the following chapter outlines the questions guiding my research, the methodology and methods employed to answer these questions. The conceptual scheme, epistemological stance, positionality, ethical considerations and limitations are also included. Quality of credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and authenticity (Bryman, 2012) have been considered throughout the design. These principles are particularly explored in the limitation (3.10) but are also referenced in relation to operationalisation (3.3) positionality (3.5), sampling (3.6) and methods (3.7).

3.1. Research question and sub-questions

The principal question guiding this research is:

*How does participation in the Litala youth group enable young people to address structural barriers to social inclusion?*

In order to answer this main question, three sub-questions have been developed:

1. *What do participation and social inclusion mean to members of the Litala youth group?*
2. *What structural barriers to social inclusion do young people in Litala face?*
3. *How have young people’s experiences of these barriers changed since participating in the Litala youth group?*

Responses to these questions are woven throughout the thesis, and the final chapter returns to them directly, drawing on empirical findings and theoretical reflections to provide summative answers.

3.2. Conceptual framework

The scheme below illustrates the key concepts on which my study is based and the links between them. The research takes place in the context of young people 16-24 year olds rural Kenya (purple box). The Litala youth group is represented by the orange oval. The group aims to promote SRHR amongst participants and the community, indicated by the white oval. SRHR is in white to indicate it is not
the main subject of the study. This research looks beyond the impact of the youth group on SRHR itself how experiences of participation in the youth group (bidirectional yellow arrow) impacts on experiences of social exclusion (blue box). Social inclusion is seen as a continuum from inclusion to exclusion, consisting of four interlined dimensions: political, economic, social and cultural. Social justice, which can be seen as a background factor, a core principle of social inclusion but also inherently linked to participation (through Fraser’s definition of social justice as parity of participation) and SRHR, being an issue of social justice in itself. Finally, the youth group is informed by global ideals of MYP as indicated by the single direction yellow arrow.

Figure 5: Conceptual scheme
3.3. Operationalisation

The operationalisation table below (Table 1) sets out the dimensions, variables and indicators used to understand and measure the two principle concepts included in the research questions: participation and social inclusion. (Note that inclusion and exclusion are used interchangeably as explained in section 2.3 Social exclusion.)

I had originally operationalised participation and social inclusion in a much more detailed matter (see Appendix 1), drawing on academic and programmatic literature and own experience with participatory programmes in the UK (see section 3.5). However, on arrival in the field I concluded my original operationalisation was overly detailed and too closely aligned with the (largely western) theoretical literature examined prior to departure.

I had always intended to incorporate some element of grounded enquiry to understand social inclusion locally. However it quickly became clear that the concept of participation itself also needed to be deconstructed and understood from a local perspective. I therefore revised my operationalisation of both participation and social inclusion to reflect themes arising from initial data collection, combined with the most pertinent points from theoretical literature. In the case of social inclusion, the social and cultural axes have been combined to avoid duplication of indicators. The four axes are returned to in the final summary of findings in section 6.2).

The decision to take a more grounded approach provided both challenges and opportunities to my analysis and hence my conclusions. I have retained links to the theoretical literature by incorporating decision-making into participation and retaining the dimensions of social exclusion identified in the literature. However the simplified operationalisation may decrease the alignment of dimensions with theoretical models and hence reduce the ease and/or accuracy with which models can be applied, decreasing the generalizability of my conclusions and their application to the academic world. Furthermore, I may have missed out on details that may have shed interesting light on my findings.
However, I believe that the benefits of taking a more grounded approach outweigh these challenges. With an interrogation of what these concepts mean in a local context, I hope to challenge the validity of the concepts and models in the specific context of my research and hence add to the academic debate in a different way. As both the concepts are in essence western constructs, I hope to demonstrate how the extent to which western conceptualisations align with interpretations in rural western Kenya and what the implications are of this (mis)alignment for academia, policy and practice.

Table 1: Operationalisation table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>What is done</td>
<td>Activities undertaken</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Roles taken within activities</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Who does activities</td>
<td>Age and gender of activity/role participants</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Decision-making</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Who comes up with ideas for activities</td>
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<td>Who makes the decision on when and where activities will take place</td>
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<td>Governance</td>
<td>Leadership roles held by young people</td>
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<td>Views on aims and suitability of youth participation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Opportunity to participate in</td>
<td>Examples of incorporation of YP views in programme</td>
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<td>public life</td>
<td>Opportunities to express interests in community fora</td>
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<td>Views on job prospects</td>
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<td>Reported experiences of discrimination</td>
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3.4. Epistemological and methodological approach

Seeing theories of youth, participation and social exclusion as normative concepts originating in the global north, the research attempts to deconstruct these terms. Aiming to identify local intersubjective meanings of each concept, my research design was informed by a post-positivist, critical realist approach recognising the multiple lived realities of young people and wider community stakeholders (Bhaskar, 1989).

With participation a central concept in the theoretical framework to this research and the programme being studied, I was keen to incorporate participatory methods in my research design. Participatory Action Research (PAR) reframes research expertise as lying with the participant (or participant-researcher) rather than (solely) with the researcher, and aims to produce research findings that “become launching pads for ideas, actions, plans and strategies to initiate social change” (Cammarota & Fine, 2008, p. 6). While recognising that I was not able to implement full Participatory Action Research (PAR) within the limited time available to me, I was able to incorporate elements of the approach, particularly in designing the ‘volunteer research team’ approach and the choice of methods as outlined below. A reflection on participatory methods in the research is provided in the final chapter in section 6.3.

3.5. Positionality

My professional and personal background has driven me to undertake this study and has undoubtedly impacted on how I designed and carried out the research and reached conclusions. I come to this research from a background of ten years working in NGOs and government in the UK, focusing on domestic social
exclusion issues including homelessness, mental health and criminal justice including work with young adult offenders. My work consistently involved a strong focus on participation, involving end beneficiaries in research, advocacy and service design and delivery. I learned that involving service users ethically and meaningfully is not easy in any context, but that, if done properly, service user involvement can be an enormously empowering process for all involved and can make an important contribution towards social inclusion (CLINKS & Revolving Doors Agency, 2016; Fleming et al., 2014; Gregson, 2003). Drawing on this experience, as outlined in section 3.4, I attempted to incorporate a strong participatory element throughout the research process and link the research to service improvement. My strong personal interest in user involvement may have led to an over emphasis on participatory approaches. This possibility and other challenges and learning encountered in implementing a participatory approach are outlined further in section 6.1.3.

My personal background also had an important impact on the whole research process. I am a Caucasian, atheist woman in her mid-30s, born and raised in an urban context in the global north, who has attended university and has had little experience of unemployment. These characteristics place me in a position of privilege in multiple domains, ‘other’ on almost every dimension to the young people with whom I worked. While I sought to minimise the influence of my personal values on my research, retaining objectivity was often the biggest challenge. Respondents’ attitudes were times in conflict with my own values, especially regarding the role and position of young people in the community. My research diary was a valuable outlet for these differences, while I was able to discuss cultural differences confidentially with my local supervisor and research assistant who acted as auditors.

3.6. Unit of analysis and sampling

The unit of analysis for the research is members of the Litala youth group. Recognising that understanding multiple realities would require extensive trust building and in depth understanding, I elected to take a case study approach. As part of the ASK programme delivered by GLUK, youth groups were established in communities across Kenya’s western Region. The case study of the Litala youth
group was proposed by GLUK colleagues as an extreme sample case (Bryman, 2012), the youth group which had undertaken the most activities, became the most established and had the most significant impact in the local community. As I was seeking to understand how participation in a youth group had had wider impacts on the community, this case seemed to allow the deepest level of analysis.

As indicated in Figure 6 below, sampling of respondents took place at multiple levels in order to provide an understanding of the experience of participation in the youth group and how these experiences had impacted on members and the wider community (Bryman, 2012). Further details of sampling are explained under each method.

*Figure 6: Spheres of sampling*
3.7. Methods

3.7.1. Participatory group sessions

The central method was a series of seven participatory group sessions with young people aged 16-24 who been members of the Litala youth group for more than six consecutive months in 2015. I elected to work with the same group of young people in-depth rather than meet a greater number of participants fewer times as I was able to develop a deeper understanding of their complex experiences. Respondents provided more in-depth, personal information as our relationship developed, enabling me to unearth inconsistencies, contributing to research credibility. For example, one young woman referred to a young man as “just a friend” during one exercise but later revealed that he was in fact her fiancée.

Although the youth group is open to 10-24 year olds, I elected to work with those over 16 in order to focus more deeply on the transition to adulthood phase and to work with young people who I believed would have a deeper understanding of the different power relations they negotiated on a daily basis. Seeking a gender balance in respondents, I requested that the youth group mentor, my main gatekeeper, recruited six male members and six female members to take part in the research. Recognising how gendered performances can affect group data (Phoenix et al. 2013) four sessions were single sex (two male only, two female only), while the remaining three were mixed.

Over the course of the seven meetings, a total of 16 different members took part, however a core group of eight attended the majority of meetings, forming what we mutually agreed to call a ‘volunteer research team’. As four of the seven meetings were single sex (two male-only, two female-only, the maximum number of meeting any one participant attended was five. All eight members of the volunteer research team attended between three and five meetings each. In the chapters below, quotes from group meetings are marked by YG1, YG2, YG2 and so on. A list of attendees at each session is provided in Appendix 2, all respondents have been given pseudonyms to protect their identities.
Meetings lasted between one and 2.5 hours and were co-facilitated by a research assistant who also acted as an interpreter when required. The sessions were conducted in a combination of English, Swahili and Luhya, participants were encouraged to speak whichever language they felt most comfortable in. I have termed these meetings group sessions, rather than focus groups as they were less formal than a focus group and covered a range of matters (Bryman, 2012).

Over the seven sessions I employed a range of participatory methods including power mapping, diagramming, games, social network mapping, storytelling and drama. As others before me, I found these methods were effective in enthusing young people to take part, being fun, promoting self-understanding and promoting expression and focus in follow-up discussion (Drew et al. 2010; Zenkov et al., 2014). Each method was selected with a specific enquiry in mind, drawing from either research questions (e.g. power mapping of community relationships to understand social inclusion) or designed to interrogate emergent issues (e.g. storytelling about a young couple’s relationship to understand what young people tell their parents about relationships).

3.7.2. Interviews and group discussions

I also held semi-structured interviews with three current members of the youth group not included in the participatory group sessions, 10 young people who are not youth group members (hence referred to as ‘non-members’), three former members, nine community stakeholders and eight people involved in similar youth groups in other areas. I also held two group discussions, one with a group of CHVs and one with a local women’s group. Appendices 3 and 4 list all interviews and group discussions held. All respondents have been given pseudonyms to protect their identities. In the chapters below, quotes from interviews are marked by I followed by the interview number, for example I1, I2, I3. Group discussions are marked G1, G2 or G3. I was not able to distinguish the input of different respondents in G1, so quotes from this session are marked ‘women’s group’.

Outline interview schedules were developed for each group of respondents, but were iteratively adapted to incorporate emerging findings, allowing opportunity
for triangulation and verification of findings. Interviews and group discussions were conducted in either English or Swahili, or in the case of some non-members in Luhya, whichever participants felt most comfortable in. Where Swahili or Luhya was preferred a research assistant or translator provided translation during interviews or group discussions. Further translation was provided from audio recordings at a later date if necessary.

Current and former members of the youth group were selected through snowball sampling from members of the volunteer youth research team. ‘Non-members’ were selected by purposive sampling using data from initial interviews suggesting groups that may not have been reached by the youth group. Frequently cited characteristics included orphans, young people who used drugs and/or alcohol and ‘needy’ young people, meaning those who were particularly impoverished and/or lacked access to basic resources. These criteria were given to the main gatekeeper who recruited participants through his network of CHVs. Purposive sampling was used to recruit for the group discussions and community stakeholder interviews. The latter included one religious leader, two administrative leaders, two head teachers, the youth group mentor, the patron of the youth group, a nurse at the local health centre and a CHV. In order to verify findings and contribute towards transferability of findings, participants who had been involved in youth groups in other areas were sampled through convenience sampling during a meeting organised by GLUK bringing together stakeholders from across the region involved in the same SRHR programme.

3.7.3. Observations, notes and secondary data

The principle methods of participatory group sessions, interviews and group discussions were supplemented by observations, including observing young people using computers at the youth group centre and shadowing a group of CHVs during an outreach session. I also attended two events external to the research location; a day event at GLUK presenting the evaluation of the preceding SRHR programme, and an event in Nairobi attended by Dutch and Kenyan NGOs planning Get Up, Speak Out, the successor SRHR programme to ASK. These observations enabled me to develop an understanding of the context of the programme and the wider situation. I kept extensive notes during these
observations and a research diary throughout the process. I also gathered a range of secondary data including programme information such as proposals, donor reports, training materials, attendance and activity records, operational research and context reports. While not all directly referenced, this material provided valuable background information to the research.

During the period of data collection, several respondents involved in this research also participated in another research project (Singh et al., 2016), commissioned by the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Alliance Kenya, reviewing meaningful youth participation in five Kenyan organisations delivering the ASK programme. I was able to observe the sessions held for this research and respondents gave permission for me to use the same data in my own research.

3.8. Data analysis

With the exception of seven interviews where recording was not possible or participants refused permission, all interviews and group discussions were audio-recorded. A final community feedback event was video-recorded. Recordings were either transcribed verbatim or detailed notes and quotations were recorded. All qualitative data, including transcripts from group discussions and interviews, visual outputs of participatory and secondary data were inputted to Atlas.ti for analysis. Open coding was used to identify initial concepts and categories followed by hierarchical axial coding to group and produce new sub-codes.

3.9. Ethical considerations

Ethical concerns were encountered regularly throughout my research process. The following is not exhaustive but sets out the most pertinent concerns.

Aiming to ensure informed consent from all participants, I initially started each interview, session or discussion by going through a consent form with participants, setting out what taking part would involve, principles of confidentiality and so on. Although I had designed the form to be simple and accessible, it proved to be a significant barrier to building trust with participants.
and several almost refused to take part. I therefore quickly switched to presenting the information from the form verbally and acquiring verbal consent for participation.

I had intended to gain consent from a parent or guardian from any respondent under 18. I was unable to find out the age of some youth group member respondents. For those whose ages I knew, I interviewed three people under 18, one aged 15 and two aged 16, but gaining parental/guardian consent was only possible for one who attended the interview with his guardian. One of the other two respondents was an orphan who lived alone while the other lived with a guardian who was not present at the time of the interview. I was careful to take extra care in ensuring that these young people (and those whose age I did not know) fully understood the content and implications of the interview before starting the interview.

Considering potential harm to participants, I recognized that my research involved an interrogation of power dynamics and had the potential to draw new awareness to difficult issues. While there may have been benefits from this approach in terms of increased agency, there were also potentially damaging impacts that I had to carefully consider (Starkey et al. 2014). I was particularly aware of this challenge when using visual and participatory methods and was careful to repeat messages about confidentiality and participants being able to stop sessions at any time before and during sessions.

I made it clear to participants that data collected is treated as confidential, with the exception of data suggesting risk of harm, such as a disclosure of abuse. I identified locally appropriate escalation procedures and support routes through my local supervisor and the youth group.

Finally, my research is underpinned by an ethical commitment to undertaking research that seeks to achieve social change, of which dissemination is a vital part (Hunt & Godard, 2013). I held two events to share findings with participants before leaving the field and will produce a final summary reports to be disseminated to participants following completion of my thesis.
### 3.10. Limitations

The following outlines the most prominent limitations to my research, specifically scale and transferability, timing and language and possible selection bias. I recognise that this selection is not an exhaustive list.

Firstly, taking a case study design, the transferability of my findings is somewhat limited as they reflect the situation in a unique time and place. I sought to broaden validity by interviewing former members and people involved in similar groups in other areas. I also developed thick descriptions and gathered detailed contextual information through media reports, personal accounts, maps and programme documentation.

Secondly, I was limited by the timing of the research, which took place after the ASK programme had ended and its successor was still in development. While some activities such as the use of the computer centre continued, the timing meant I was unable to observe the youth group in full functioning capacity and had to rely on secondary reports of its activities. However the timing did have two advantages, firstly that youth group members had more time available to be involved in the research and secondly that my findings have been used iteratively to contribute to the development of the successor programme.

Thirdly, although I was able to build trust and intersubjective understanding with the volunteer research team over the seven sessions held, the research period remained brief, limiting the depth of my understanding. A brief research period can produce considerable information, particularly notions, ideals and vocabularies, but understanding how these are lived out on a daily basis is limited by a short-term approach (Oxlund, 2011).

Fourthly, my research was largely undertaken in English. Although I was with a translator for the large majority of my data collection, respondents (especially young men) were insistent on speaking in English despite my encouragement to speak in whatever language they felt most comfortable in. The choice of language is likely to have limited the detail given in some responses and may have led to inaccuracies.
Fifthly, I had originally intended to include a gendered element to the research, interrogating how young men and women’s experiences of participation and social exclusion differed. However with the breadth of the research question I was not able to cover this issue in as much detail as I had hoped. A more detailed gendered examination is recommended as an area for further research.

Finally, my contact with the community was facilitated through one main gatekeeper. This route was advantageous as the person was well networked in the community and I was able to work with a wide range of respondents. However the approach may have also introduced some selection bias. For example, I spoke to more male community stakeholders than women. This distribution could have been due to less women holding positions as ‘key community stakeholders’ but the approach likely served to limit the input from a woman’s perspective.

3.11. Concluding remarks

This chapter has set out how the research was designed and how data was collected and analysed, specifically identifying the questions, concepts, epistemological standpoint, positionality, methods, ethical considerations and limitations. The thesis now moves on to outline the empirical findings arising from the research. These are organized over two chapters, the first focusing on understandings and experiences of participation and how these have impacted on social inclusion. The second takes a more thematic approach, exploring the multiple liminal positions occupied by young adults in the study area.
4. Youth group participation: towards social inclusion?

4.1. Introduction

Meaningful youth participation (MYP) is increasingly seen as a vital part of the global response to SRHR (Villa-Torres & Svanemyr, 2015). The Litala youth group was established as part of ASK, an SRHR programme which places MYP at the heart of its approach. However, recognising that the concept of MYP originates in the global north, I was keen to first explore local constructions of participation, understand how the notion is experienced locally and interrogate the suitability of the concept in a rural Southern context. The following chapter outlines the local meanings of participation that I uncovered through my research. Possibilities for shared decision making are then explored before consideration of how youth group participation has impacted on members' experiences of social in- and exclusion.

4.2. Local interpretations of participation

The following section sets out the two dimensions of local interpretations of participation as ‘taking part’ and ‘being part’. These arose from a grounded approach to understanding local interpretations of participation. These are contrasted with definitions of meaningful youth participation as shared decision-making in the next section.

4.2.1. Participation as ‘taking part’

When describing the youth group, members focused most prominently on the activities in which they had taken part. This passive notion of participation as simply ‘doing’ was corroborated by one respondent who defined participation as “taking part in any activity” (David, older adult, I31). Naturally, activities identified included those established as part of the ASK programme such as computer-based SRHR education, community outreaches and sports tournaments. However, with the support of another NGO, activities have expanded to incorporate agricultural training and traditional dance activities. Members also spoke about community service activities such as clearing rubbish. The most commonly mentioned activities related to using computers and learning IT skills. Although the computers were originally provided for
While both male and female members talked extensively about learning computer, agriculture and dance skills, young women gave much greater prominence to peer-education and outreach while the young men focused more on speaking at barazas (community meetings), traditional dance and ‘tourism’ – referring to exchange visits to other youth groups. Notably, female members particularly focused on activities that involved sharing information with other young people while male members focused more on activities involving interaction with senior community members. These findings reflect research on another part of the ASK programme in Uganda where boys seemed more proactive than girls in talking to people outside their direct environment (Evelo, 2016).

Further to the primary, passive definition of youth group participation as ‘taking part’, member responses also suggested a second dimension: ‘being part’, as outlined in the next subsection.

### 4.2.2. Participation as ‘being part’

Participating in the youth group seems to be about ‘being part’ as well as ‘taking part’. Members spoke frequently about spending time with people in the same age group - their ‘age mates’, ‘sharing ideas’ and providing each other with emotional and practical support, “help[ing] each other along the way” (Kelvin, youth group member, YG4). The exchange of views, problems and experiences was particularly valued in understanding bodily changes.

[I] “feel encouraged because youths are now able to share the problems that they encounter e.g. adolescents are now able to understand the changes in their bodies so by sharing this problems awareness is created in them.” (Written response by Mercy, 20, member describing the youth group, YG1)

Mercy’s use of ‘now’ indicates that this kind of support was not previously available. This quote reflects an increasing recognition within sexuality education of the importance of spaces where young people can talk with peers about “new and alien information if they are to integrate it into their everyday lives and act on it” (Campbell et al., 2009, p. 99).
Members also spoke about the group as a place where talents are nurtured, with both young men and women talking about how participation in the group had supported the development of talents in agriculture, dance, computer skills, ‘tourism’ and football. These assertions cast the youth group as a form of “social ‘[theatre]’ in which moments, points and places of renewed identify formation and reintegrating rites of passage are being shaped.” (Honwana & de Boeck, 2005, p. 2).

Members also revealed a strong sense of duty towards their fellow group members, talking about the importance of respecting other group members, “to promote unity”, “help[ing] each other towards our efforts” and being “social and equal to everyone” (Written response by Esther, 22, member, describing the youth group, YG1).

Participation in the youth group hence appears to have an important dimension of ‘being part’ of something, a space in which members feel valued and supported. The youth group offers opportunities for group social interactions where different identities can be experimented and merged (Wong et al., 2010) and hence provides an important emotional and physical space where members can develop a sense of self.

4.3. Participation as shared decision making?
Defining participation as “sharing decisions which affect one’s life and the life of the community in which one lives” (Hart, 1992, p.5 cited in Skelton, 2007, p. 174), I was keen to understand how and to what extent youth-led decision-making operated in the youth group, even though it was not prioritised in respondent-generated definitions. First, young people’s assertion that they are in control of the youth group is explored. I then contrast this feedback from older adults which calls into question the extent of young people’s decision-making power, before turning to cultural norms setting expectations of respect and obedience which underlie these contradictions.

4.3.1. Young people feel in control
Young people widely asserted that decisions about the youth group are made by its members.
“Anything that is happening to the group at this centre … we are the one who make it [the decision]. There is nobody who can come from outside and decides what will be done in this group.” (Kelvin, member, 22, YG2)

Here, the respondent clearly states his feeling that all youth group activities are made solely by people within the group. Members said they had been involved in setting the rules of the group when it was established and ongoing planning of group activities through brainstorming activities and group discussions. For example, in response to my question about how a poster of planned activities had been drawn up, one member said: “We had a meeting with the mentor and all the youth members and we decided.” (Lillian, 20, member, YG7).

Young people also hold leadership roles, to which they are elected annually. Research respondents included current or former holders of Chair, Secretary, Centre Manager and IT instructor. Those elected to be leaders are generally the ‘serious ones’, who are committed to the youth group and regularly attend.

“Some of the youth have a cycle of frequency coming, the others something like wasting their time. So [we] pick those seriously coming, come and make a committee.” (Patrick, 20, former member, I10)

‘Serious’ young people seemed to also refer to those who exhibit ‘moral behaviour’ (see section 4.4.2) and are ‘good’ young people, bringing into question the extent to which less ‘good’ and potentially more disadvantaged young people are able to participate in this way.

4.3.2. Older adults in day-to-day control

Despite the strong assertion from young people that they lead decision-making in the youth group, other data led me to question the extent of their decision-making power. Throughout my research, I observed the frequent use by people of all ages of words such as ‘tell’ ‘direct’ and ‘instruct’ in reference to young people and youth group activities, for example: “Attending local barazas, we normally tell them and they attend, it’s very important” (David, older adult, I2). Here young people’s participation seems to be recognised as important, but the young people are ‘told’ to attend rather than being invited or mutually deciding to take part.
This authoritative language was also used by young people, for example I asked one former member how decisions about when young people would take part in outreach activities were made. He responded: *“We were told to go, we could join in with anything, but we were not the one to plan for it”* (Patrick, 20, former member, I10). The use of ‘told’ here illustrates how young people are instructed by older adults to attend activities. The statement that he can “join in with anything” but that members are not “the one[s] to plan for it” demonstrates the contradiction between young people feeling in control while also being closely instructed. These findings echo Ahmed’s (2011) conclusions that in Kenyan society which values obedience and respect, parents and teachers rely on external pressures – using principles of repetition and discipline – to instil desired behaviours in young people, rather than developing internal reasoning, as western societies may prioritise.

I asked an older adult about the seeming inconsistency between young people feeling like they make the decisions but also being instructed. To David, this discrepancy was not a contradiction. He responded: “*I can instruct you to do that but sometimes in return you can … rethink and then you take your decision*” (David, older adult, I31). He seemed to suggest that directing young people does not preclude them making a decision for themselves. I also got the impression from young people that feeling like they were in control yet also being directed was not, in their eyes, a contradiction. One member explained matter-of-factly: “*You see, we wait for instructions, and sometimes we also just [decide] things ourselves.*” (Maurice, age unknown, member, YG7)

This contradiction can in part be explained by the cultural norm of respect for, and obedience to, elders as explored in the following section.

**4.3.3. Respect and obedience: space for shared decision-making?**

The authoritative role held by adults is underlain by the principle of respect to elders, an important cultural norm for people of all ages, which for children and young people is reinforced by an expectation of strict obedience and discipline (Ahmed, 2011). This discourse brings into question the extent to which young people are able to participate in shared decision-making.
Reflecting a wider societal value of respect to elders, young people are expected to cooperate and provide support to older generations. One female member described what it means to ‘be a good girl’: “To respect others, to obey them, and to follow what they say” (Jane, 20, member, YG5).

Instances of young people disobeying or standing up to their parents and/or elders were presented as highly immoral. For example, recounting a story of a female student who ran away from home and moved in with a “male friend”, older adult Joseph reflected “You wonder where has she gotten now all this courage and authority. She is wrong but she is not seeing that.” (Joseph, older adult, I6). This statement reflects a hegemonic discourse limiting the agency of young people, reflecting Foucault’s concept of docile bodies, through which knowledge is constructed and heteronormative moral subjects are disciplined (Foucault, 1977 cited in Robinson & Davies, 2008).

The limitations on young people’s agency were underlined by the frequent portrayal of young people as needing the assistance of older adults. One older adult explained that “without the initiation of we, some advanced people, these youth cannot move” (David, older adult, I2). This language also reflected by young people themselves: “We as youth need some advices” (Patrick, 20, former member, I10). This quote suggests that young people’s ability to participate as social agents is highly qualified. The assumption of young people needing help is reflective of May’s concept of nutrient power in adult-dominated interactions between adults and young people, common examples of which include parent-child and teacher-student relationships where one possess power over the other. A form of power over, nutrient power implies a “helping relationship” (May, 1970 cited in Wong et al., 2010, p. 109) and has the potential to weaken initial intentions to empower young people.

Inquiring about this apparent assumption of young people ‘needing help’, I was told that in the Luhya culture, “a child is brought up in that manner of being instructed” (David, older adult, I31). Again, echoing Ahmed (2011) the discourse relying on external pressures is reinforced at school. The youth group centre is situated in a primary school, so my observations included many indirect
observations of teaching methods. Clearly, respect and discipline were core values in schooling and the role of the teacher was highly authoritarian. The reliance on external is reflected in the following quote: “In class, people are not creative, they wait for instruction from the teacher” (David, older adult, I31). Reflecting the pedagogical relationship described by Freire (1970) as banking education, where pupils are seen as empty vessels to be filled with information as narrated by the teacher, learning seemed to be primarily by rote and there is little focus on critical thinking. This hegemonic approach can limit the potential for critical epistemic reflection, and hence for youth empowerment (Hart et al. 1997; Wong et al., 2010).

Young people are expected to be respectful of and obedient to their elders, a value reinforced at school and at home. Young people are not used to being involved in decision-making and are even reprimanded for taking their own initiative. While young people feel in control and have adopted the language of shared decision-making, cultural norms place young people in a subservient position. However, despite these limitations the youth group has in many ways had a positive impact on its members and was widely described positively by respondents. The following section outlines the impact of the youth group, considering the impact in economic, political and socio-cultural axes of social inclusion.

4.4. Role of the youth group in tackling social exclusion

Seeing youth participation in its ‘broad’ sense as an opportunity for empowerment and collective action to tackle social exclusion, the following section reviews how participation in the youth group has impacted on young people’s lives beyond the youth group itself (Campbell et al., 2009; Morsillo & Prilleltensky, 2007). The impacts are grouped into three themes, roughly corresponding with (i) economic, (ii) political and (iii) social and cultural spheres of inclusion, although factors facilitating and hindering inclusion are relevant across several axes. Firstly, the acquisition of computing and agricultural skills can be seen to contribute in some part toward economic inclusion. Secondly, the youth group has created opportunities for political participation, although the depth of these opportunities is called into question by
the narrow platform afforded to young people. Finally, the acquisition of skills and greater presence in the community has increased young people’s inclusion on a socio-cultural axis through increasing their standing within the community, however cultural norms again limit this impact.

4.4.1. Computing and agricultural skills: towards economic inclusion?

The youth group was established in 2014 with the creation of a ‘computer centre’ where three computers were provided to deliver computer-based SRHR programme, the World Starts With Me (WSWM). At the time of data collection, WSWM sessions had ended, but peer-to-peer computer training and daily opportunities to use the computers continued. Many youth group members had not used a computer before, but now describe themselves as computer literate. John spoke about using a computer at the youth group centre:

“By the time I finished fourth form [last year of secondary school] I was just hearing … a computer is an electronic device that you use to do what. But now when I got to that group … I now had the opportunity … to operate the computer, to boot it, and do … some other things” (John, 25, former member, I3).

We see here that prior to youth group attendance he had only heard about a computer, rather than using one. With computer skills increasingly requisite in a ‘digital age’, members saw acquiring such skills as an important step towards employability. “We have formed comp[uter] lessons that enable us to enhance our life as we do a living” (Esther, 22, member, YG1, written response). The importance placed on computer skills is emphasised by the citation of opportunities for computer use as the main reason for youth group attendance and learning computer skills as the primary benefit of youth group participation.

Through the support of a separate NGO, the youth group’s activities have expanded beyond SRHR to include an agriculture project, which has enabled the development of further skills seen as useful toward sustenance and future employment. One male member said farming had helped him “to learn more on how to grow various crops thus making it easy to have more food harvested” (Kelvin, 22, member, YG2, written response).

The development of computing and agricultural skills is hence seen by young people themselves as taking them towards employment and hence economic
inclusion. This advancement has also served a role in socio-cultural inclusion as it has created respect from elders who praise young people's ‘digital’ skills (see section 5.4). However, despite these benefits, as outlined in section 5.6, global forces of poverty and unemployment serve as a major limiting factor.

**4.4.2. ‘Improved moral behaviour’**

A principal benefit of the youth group was widely described as a desistance from ‘immoral behaviours’, as indicated by statements such as: *“since I joined the group the immoral behaviours have stopped as compared to the times I was not involved”* (Peter, 22, YG2, written response). ‘Immoral behaviour’ principally refers to engaging in premarital sex and use of drugs and alcohol. Young people are at particular risk of immoral behaviour during the *“dangerous stage”* (women’s group, G1) of adolescence when sexual desires, which emerge *“in the heart”* (Patrick, 20, former member, I10). The risk associated with ‘the stage’ echoes Miedema’s description of adolescence as period of ‘Sturm und Drang’ (Miedema, 2013, p. 362).

Burgeoning sexual desires are seen by older adults and young people alike as needing to be ‘controlled’. As reflected in Peter’s quote below, learning ‘self-control’ is seen as a key benefit of the youth group.

*“The adolescent stage is a very powerful stage where you’re not controlled. So from this group I have been able to control.”* (Peter, 22, member, YG2)

Learning ‘to control’ has had a key role in improving perceptions of young people as ‘good’ in the eyes of older adults in the community. In a group discussion, older adults explained:

*“Some youths are always having some bad characters, but when they join the groups they reform. But the other [young people] that are not in the groups they are still having funny characters they are not behaving well. Some gamble, some drink alcohol, they use drugs. When there is work in the community, ... they find that the youths they are running away, they don’t want to work, they go for dancing in nearby villages instead of working.”* (women’s group, G1)

The perception, reflected in the above quote, that being a youth group member ‘reforms’ young people has played an important role in improving older adult perceptions of young people, as explored further in section 4.4.4.
Improvement in ‘moral behaviour’ is closely linked with the prominence given to messages of abstinence. The ASK programme aims to be take a comprehensive approach to sexuality education, seeing abstinence as one option, but not the only or best option. However, it was clear from members’ feedback that abstinence was seen as the first choice with messages of safe sex being presented for ‘those who cannot abstain’. This prioritisation reflects a “motto for prevention” of HIV/AIDS promoted by teachers in Nairobi “ABC, or Abstinence, Be Faithful, use Condoms” where abstinence is prioritised (Ahmed, 2011, p. 136).

Reflecting this hierarchy, young people’s sexuality is construed highly negatively, as illustrated by Elijah’s quote below:

“In our community, we have the church that is preaching against [sexual desires], that’s morals, they are discouraging that … we need to engage [young people] fully so that they have no room for those desires.” (Elijah, older adult, I9)

This statement reveals the religious roots of negative views towards sexuality as well as the drive to occupy young people in order to suppress sexuality. David’s quote reveals how some go as far as to describe those seeking sexual desire as abnormal:

“Some boys engage in drugs to get more sexual desire, it’s very wrong, if you use to engage in energy in the body, you will become abnormal instead of moral” – (David, older adult, I2)

This quote illustrates how young people’s sexuality is pathologised, pointing towards conclusions from Kesby et al. (2006) that in prioritising abstinence, young people are denied status as sexual citizens.

The ABC hierarchy means that young people receive complex and often contradictory messages of abstinence and safe sex, as illustrated in

Figure 7 below, a written response from Lillian (20, member) on what the youth group means to her.
Figure 7: Illustration of what the youth group means

(Lillian, 20, member)

The cartoon depicts a man, John, asking a woman, Mary to “please come on Sunday, I wish us to have sexual intercourse”. Mary responds saying “No! No! John sex before marriage is very risky I can’t accept.” Lillian goes on to explain that:

“As a youth you should not involve yourself in sex before marriage because it has many outcomes that are negative towards our life i.e. unwanted pregnancies, HIV/AIDS and STIs, school drop outs.”

(Lillian, 20, member, YG1, written answer as shown in

Figure 7.)
Alongside these words, in bold capitalised text and boxed is a statement that “I encourage safe sex for those who can’t abstain.” This sentence reflects how young people seem to have internalised messages of abstinence being the ‘best option’ but conceding that if you ‘must,’ then be safe. In another exercise, Lillian explained the different messages about sex she hears from her mother and her friend.

**Figure 8: Extract from map of social network and messages**

(Lillian, 20, member)

*Mum: My daughter, sex before marriage is dangerous*

*Friend: Sex before marriage is dangerous but most youths can’t do without it so when you engage into sexual activities just remember to use condoms.*

Discussing the statements, Lillian explained: “*Mum is telling me not to engage in sex but my friend here is telling me that it is dangerous yes, but .. most youths ... use condoms*” (Lillian, 20, member, YG5). These conflicting messages are important in terms of young people’s multiple liminal positions, as explored further in chapter five.

As this section has illustrated, the youth group is seen to have improved the moral behaviour of its members and hence contributed to the respect they are given within the community. Young people received mixed messages with regard to abstinence versus safe sex. Stemming from religious and societal teachings, local interpretations have skewed the SRHR content of the ASK programme in
favour of abstinence, which is not the original aim of the programme. While messages of safe sex are adopted, they are very much seen as a concession for ‘those who cannot abstain’, serving to pathologise youth sexual activity (Kesby et al., 2006). The next section moves onto opportunities for community participation.

4.4.3. Creating (qualified) spaces for community participation

Much of the work of the youth group involves interaction with the community. These activities offer members a more prominent public role than normally afforded to young people who, under societal norms, are not generally considered active citizens. The group seems to have created three platforms for community participation. Firstly, youth group members were appointed as ‘Youth Health Volunteers’ (YHVs), accompanying older adult Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) on community outreaches providing peer-to-peer advice on SRHR issues. Secondly, young people were engaged in barazas (community meetings) where they were invited to “share their lives” (David, older adult, I31), promote SRHR messages and encouraging parents in the community to allow their children to get involved in youth group. Thirdly, young people acted as peer-educators in community activities used as a vehicle for SRHR training such as sports tournaments and drama.

Considering expectations for young people to be compliant and submissive (see also section 4.3.3), the opportunity to participate in community fora seems to have had a notable personal effect on young people, instilling confidence and boosting self-esteem. One former member explained that speaking at the barazas “was something new, my first time. The first time it was very hard, but later I enjoyed it, as now I have ... the courage” (Patrick, 20, former member, I10).

Members were also proud of their interaction with others. Mercy described how the youth group’s activities made her feel: “I feel grate [sic] because almost all youths have known how to interact with people in the society e.g. during outreaches” (Mercy, 20, member, YG1, written response). Members were proud of their knowledge-sharing role and the resultant changes they had seen in
others. John explained how he felt when he remembered participating in peer-
education activities:

“You feel like you were a teacher somewhere, I taught people some things, whether
they have used them or they have not, but you know, you, you are like a shepherd,
you used to, to teach people how to move or go around about or something and
protect themselves.” (John, 25, former member, I3)

Here John illustrates the value young people place on guiding others in what they
see as ‘moral behaviour’ (see section 4.4.2). His reference to ‘teacher’ and
‘shepherd’ illustrates the empowering aspect of peer-education activities. Older
adults also spoke positively of the ripple effect of youth group activities. David’s
comment that since young people had spoken at barazas, “the youths who are
having bad behaviours in the community they change” (David, older adult, I31)
indicates a view that member’s addresses in barazas had impacted on the
behaviour of other young people in the community.

These three platforms for community participation can be seen to contributing
to political inclusion in terms of giving the young people a voice and in the
community, and to political inclusion by positioning them as active citizens with
a role in the in the community (Khan et al., 2015). However the extent of this
inclusion seems to be limited. Firstly, rather than being an integral part of
barazas or community outreach, young people’s involvement is only occasional.
They are only offered the opportunity to participate at specified times. Secondly,
opportunities to participate are adult-initiated. As outlined in section 4.3.2
above, young people wait to be invited and instructed. Thirdly, adults seem to
have a strong sense of ownership over their roles, and seem unwilling to cede
control to the younger generation.

However the most striking limitation to inclusion comes from the discourse
young people employ during these opportunities for community participation.
Young people seem largely to be repeating the abstinence-focused messages they
have learnt at the youth group, even if this discourse does not reflect their actual
behaviour (see section 5.3 for more detail). This incongruity was particularly
emphasised in performances prepared by members of the volunteer research
team for a community event to feedback research findings. In preparing for the
event, we held a final group session reviewing the research findings. Members independently identified issues including “the problems that youths face” (Lillian, 20, member) and “the position of youths in the community” (James, 22, member) as areas we had discussed, suggesting they had engaged with the research topic. However, when asked what they would like to feed back to the community, they elected to prepare a drama and speech directly replicating messages learnt in the youth group, emphasising abstinence from drugs, alcohol and premarital sex in a rote-like manner.

Reflecting findings from Ahmed (2011), this rote-like repetition of messages suggests young people are striving to meet community expectations of being respectful, obedient, disciplined and abstinent from drugs, alcohol and premarital sex. By repeating these messages, rather than having space to explore their own sexuality and understandings of moral behaviour (see section 5.3), they are limited in their ability to participate on their own terms. Seeing cultural inclusion as the extent to which diverse values, norms and ways of living are accepted and respected (Khan et al., 2015) suggests young people’s cultural inclusion is limited by the repetition of learnt discourse which is at odds with their daily lives. The repetition also reflects Butler’s theory on constructions of identities, which proposes that the masculine and feminine subjects are created through performances of the self, which, through repetition come to seem natural and real (Butler 1990, 1993, 2004, cited in Robinson & Davies, 2008, p. 11). Robinson and Davies (2008) have applied this theory to sexuality education arguing that repetition and imitation serve to reify past values and behaviours, an application that I propose holds true in the context of youth participation.

In conclusion, the youth group has created spaces for community participation that are highly valued by its members. However, opportunities for participation are limited by cultural norms limiting the agency of young people and the platform afforded to young people is limited to repetition of moral and religious norms (Braeken & Cardinal, 2008).
4.4.4. Youth group enabling “good views towards me”

As outlined in section 5.2 below, negative perceptions of young people as idle and immoral often outweigh more positive assessments promoting young people as asset to the community. Youth group participation has changed older adults opinions of members, challenging negative views, as illustrated by Patrick’s quote:

“Before we initiated the [youth] group ... actually we [young people] were the worst people in ... the community ... but as we initiated the group... people really changed. (Patrick, 20, former member, I10)

Another member explained that being in the youth group had “enabled our community to have good views towards me” (Esther, 22, member, YG1, written response).

This change in perceptions seems to be attributable to the benefits of the youth group described earlier in this section: acquiring ‘digital’ skills and becoming advocates of ‘moral behaviour’. “They become role models in the community, because they teach them how to become good people” (women's group, G1). The group has also crucially given young people ‘something to do’, tackling the problem of idleness. One young man described the difference the youth group had made:

“We were just staying at home without coming together ... we were not heading anywhere. But now as we have come together we go somewhere and do something constructive” (Kelvin, 22, member, YG2).

This quote suggests the youth group has not only given young people something to do but also direction in life, which Kelvin implies was previously lacking.

The change in older adults’ perceptions seems to have had positive implications for young people’s self-esteem. Members expressed pride in feeling helpful in the community “I just remember that I did something somewhere” (Elizabeth, 19, member, YG1, written answer), and feel respected in the community, while one young woman asserted that being a member of the youth group “make[s] me to be respected outside there whenever I walk” (Esther, 22, member, YG1, written answer). These quotes illustrate an important positive impact of the youth group
on young people’s internal self-esteem and on how they are perceived externally within the community.

4.5. Concluding remarks
Summing up this first chapter of empirical findings, to its members and community stakeholders, participation in the youth group has a dual meaning of ‘taking part’ and ‘being part’. The group provides a valued space of mutual support and the development of new identities. Young people feel that they are in control of the youth group, but findings suggest that their agency is limited by cultural norms placing young people as docile bodies and limiting opportunities for meaningful youth participation as defined by western scholars. This is not to say that there have not been any positive impacts of the youth group. As youth group members, young people have acquired new skills, been occupied and become role models in the community. In doing so they have negated negative attitudes of young people as idle and immoral. However, as outlined in the next chapter, even these benefits are replete with contradictions and competing tensions.
5. Young people: occupants of liminal spaces

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter has outlined how youth group participation serves to both empower young people – providing skills towards employment and increasing their confidence and standing in the community – and to reinforce hegemonic power structures where young people’s agency is limited by existing cultural norms. The following chapter proposes that this contradictory position is repeated in several other spheres. Negotiating these contradictory forces, young people navigate daily between ‘good’ and ‘bad’, public and private moral codes, childhood and adulthood, and ‘analogue’ and ‘digital’. Unable to fully participate in either bivalent sphere, young people occupy multiple liminal positions, which are shaped by frequently contradictory forces of globalisation and cultural norms (Honwana, 2014). The following chapter reviews four such liminal spaces before outlining the broader context of marginalisation in which these spaces are situated.

5.2. Between ‘good’ and ‘bad’: Youth as both an asset and a challenge

Firstly, young people occupy a space between ‘good’ and ‘bad’, in that they are perceived dualistically as both an asset in which to invest and a challenge to be managed. On a positive note, young people are seen as “vibrant ... people who want action” (Joseph, older adult, I6) and as “energetic [and] learned” (Isabel, 21, member, I8). Respondents spoke positively about ‘investing’ in young people’s education, ‘struggling’ to find necessary fees despite financial hardship. Young people are seen as crucial to the future development of the community, as illustrated by the following quote:

“For you to develop it begins with the young people, they are the ones who are energetic ... not [people] who have [been] weighed down by the ideologies of the past things, so we heavily depend on them.” (Samuel, older adult, I7)

Samuel’s words suggest a view of young people as central to breaking free from ‘past things’, in a drive towards modernity.

However, the continuation of the above quote illustrates the duality of views towards young people. Samuel, a community leader, went on to say:
“...My role [is] to mobilise the youths, direct them in the activities which can make them occupied, not to deviate them to indulge in, let's say, drug abuse, alcohol and the rest, which is also a threat to the community and social economic development.” (Samuel, older adult, 17)

Here, Samuel reveals an alternative view of young people as inherently idle (reflected in young people needing to be occupied) and at risk of immoral behaviour (drug and alcohol abuse and, as insinuated by ‘and the rest’, sexual promiscuity). ‘Idleness’, regarded a key social ill in the local community, is closely linked with unemployment, school drop-out, poverty, crime and religious deviance.

"Youths who are idle, end up in crime so that they can keep themselves busy or they can get something to eat.” (Patrick, 20, former member, I10)

"When you drop out of school that is an idle mind, and an idle mind is usually a devil’s worship." (Samuel, older adult, 17)

Idleness was frequently linked to a cycle of unemployment – idleness – immoral behaviour. As Martin described: “... a lack of being focused, leads to idleness, leads to not being moral” (Martin, older adult, I5). Older adults see young people as needing to be occupied to prevent idleness and therefore prevent immoral behaviour.

Returning to Samuel's reference above to threats to “community and social economic development”, immoral behaviour is seen as not (only) as a risk to the young people themselves but to the community and broader socio-economic development. Immoral behaviour is also a risk to nationhood, as illustrated by David who, when talking about the importance of moral behaviour, concluded that “as a parent you always need to have good people, good children, good youths, good nation” (David, older adult, I2). Here the link between ‘good people’ and ‘good nation’ echoes findings on HIV and AIDS education in Mozambique, where young people are also seen as a danger not only to themselves but to the community and to valued efforts of nation building (Miedema, 2013).

Cast as a danger on many fronts, young people are seen as a challenge to be managed, as illustrated by Peter’s quote below.

"When you are young you are energetic, you have the brains, but when these brains and energy are well managed, they can as well be used to do some bad things, so
idleness amongst the youths is rampant. That implies the use of drugs, involving in criminal activities, in theft, because they are not engaged.” (Peter, older adult, 17)

To some older adults, the youth group seems to have provided a space to enact the necessary management and control.

“It has controlled them, now ... they have a common theme, they assist each other, they learn together, then we find that it is very easy to manage them.” (David, older adult, 12)

Young people are hence cast as both an investment-worth asset yet at the same time an inherent danger to themselves, the community and the nation that must be strictly managed. This contradiction results in daily negotiations between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ identities, placing young people in a liminal position. Each liminal position serves to disrupt young people’s identity formation as they are pulled in multiple directions. With social inclusion incorporating of acceptance of identity and way of living, these tensions have important implications for young people’s inclusion-exclusion.

5.3. Between public and private moral codes

A second liminal space occurs between public promotion of hegemonic moral codes and private enactments of an alternative morality. Reflecting community expectations of ‘moral behaviour’, members spoke extensively about the youth group helping them to ‘control themselves’ to avoid ‘immoral behaviours’ (see section 4.4.2). Messages of abstinence are also promoted to their peers through barazas and community outreaches (see section 4.4.3). However, as I got to know young people better, they started to speak proudly of their sexual activity, contradicting their own previous statements giving the impression of abstinence. Those who were not sexually active wanted to be. In one mixed group discussion, respondents said their parents didn’t allow them to do some things. My question of “what kind of things would you like to do?” was unanimously responded to as “To engage into sex” (Lillian, 20, member, translating for several other group members, YG7).

Despite the abstinence messages they conveyed themselves, young people did not seem ashamed of their sexual activity, in fact some described it as a good
thing, “because it shows that you are normal” (Kelvin, 22, member, YG7). This quote reflects findings from elsewhere in Kenya, sexual activity appeared to be a common yet “covert activity” which “violate[s] the widely accepted moral precepts of pre-marital abstinence [but is] itself normative by virtue of its repetition” (Ahmed, 2011, p. 140)

Young people saw sex as a potentially pleasurable activity. In an exercise anonymously listing reasons why people have sex, a female group (YG5) cited the most important reason as “just for enjoyment, for leisure”. A male group (YG6) did not prioritise the reasons, but included “Enjoying themselves in fucking” and “To enjoy that good of having somebody’s body” in the list of reasons. These statements perhaps reflects the computer-based CSE training these young people had taken part in, The World Starts With Me, which emphasises the function of sex for pleasure.

The tension between public discourse and private behaviour is illustrated by generationally-differentiated definitions of self-control. I initially assumed self-control referred to abstinence from pre-marital sex. However a chance conversation towards the end of my research revealed divergent meanings. Older adults generally saw self-control as abstinence from pre-marital sex, as illustrated in the following quote:

“Traditionally, we believe there is a good time for that [sex] is when she has left school, is old enough, gets married. But just having sex anyhow, that’s a lack of discipline, they don’t have self-control” (David, older adult, I31).

Here, David suggests a view that people who ‘give in’ to ‘urges’ have no self-control. Young people on the other hand defined self-control as using contraception and/or being faithful to one partner. Although I was unable to substantiate this observation within the limited timeframe, contrasting feedback suggested gendered differences in self-control: young women’s explanations focused often on fidelity, while young men focused more on using condoms. “I can use different ladies, but by using protective measures” (James, 22, member, YG6).
Creating an alternative local form of modernity, young people promote and are shaped by existing moral codes, structures and norms while at the same time to redefining and restructuring them (Honwana & de Boeck, 2005). This disjuncture between public discourse and private behaviour has implications for social inclusion as it means young people negotiate between multiple identities, limiting their ability to express themselves and the extent to which their way of living is accepted.

5.4. Between ‘analogue’ and ‘digital’

Young people are furthermore situated between the ‘analogue’ (referring to the way of life the older generation grew up with) and the ‘digital’ (referring to ‘modern times’.) These were terms used by respondents of all ages throughout my research. The ‘digital age’ is seen in many ways as a good thing, referring to a time when everyone can use a computer, “everything is accessible now in the internet” (David, older adult, I31), everyone is educated, people get married later and social ills are addressed. Elijah felt the move was positive:

“They [youth group members] are becoming role models, [we] say they have left the analogue life and gone to digital. They are inspiring even the old, the modern way of life. (Elijah, older adult, I9)

Not only are the young people learning ‘modern’ ways; they are bringing older generations along with them. However, modernity is also seen as a threat to the moral values held by older adults, particularly when it comes to pornography and the internet.

“The world is very competitive, not the world we had before. So many inventions, in a ‘digital world’ where a child is using these phones, everything in the phone, can access everything. Youths want to practice what they see, like porn on the internet, they see the sex and styles. ... If you just leave them, not instructing them, directing them, they will be spoilt at an early age.”(David, older adult, I31)

Here, a fear of modernity is revealed, not just of pornography, but also of a move towards capitalism more generally, as indicated by the opening words, “the world is very competitive”.

A further contradiction occurs in older adults’ understanding of what moral behaviour looks like in a ‘digital’ world. There seems to be consensus that moral behaviour will have ‘improved’ in a ‘digital’ world, but this ‘improvement’
appears to mean meeting older generations’ – and therefore ‘analogue’ - expectations of moral behaviour, i.e. abstinence. For example, older adult, Elijah, said that in a ‘digital’ world, “ideally [moral behaviours] will have improved” (I9). Elijah’s previous statements suggested that ‘improvement’ means adhering to cultural norms of abstinence rather than young people’s view of premarital sex as an acceptable reality. Hence older adults’ vision of morality in a ‘digital world’ is contradictory as it includes the ‘analogue’ moral code of older generations rather than the ‘updated’ moral code of young people which prioritise ‘modern’ values of monogamy and fidelity (Miedema, 2013).

The introduction of meaningful youth participation (MYP) though ASK and subsequent programmes potentially adds another dimension to the tension between ‘analogue’ and ‘digital’. Promoting values of empowerment and agency, MYP offers a ‘more equal’ approach that community members seem to welcome. These principles can be seen as ‘digital’ in that they are moving away from the existing cultural norm where young people are not seen to play such an active role. A tension is hence created between the ‘analogue’ view of young people as docile bodies and the ‘digital’ view of young people as active citizens. The introduction of ‘modern’ SRHR education through ASK and other programmes can also be seen as pointing towards ‘digital.

While the ‘analogue’ world was generally presented as something to move on from – older adults referred to themselves as ‘analogue’ in a joking way but which implied that ‘digital’ was better – a great deal of positivity was also expressed for what was described as ‘tradition’. Youth group members were very proud of the traditional dance skills they had learnt, and older adults praised these widely.

Hence young people are being encouraged towards the ‘digital’. However, the ‘analogue’-‘digital’ divide is unclear and contradictory. ‘Digital’ is seen as both a modern aspiration towards globalised ideals but is also presented as dangerous. ‘Analogue’ is seen as backward, but ties with ‘tradition’ are also valued. Reflecting hybridised notions of ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ (Miedema, 2013), young people have a foot in each camp and are being pulled in both directions by
their elders and own aspirations and connections. Contradictory tensions between ‘analogue’ and ‘digital’ impact on young people’s identity development and the extent to which their way of living is accepted hence have important implications for social exclusion.

5.5. Between childhood and adulthood: “It’s only at marriage that people really grow up”

A fourth, final and perhaps most important liminal space is that between childhood and adulthood created by a trend towards later marriage. Reflecting findings from elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa by (Kesby et al., 2006), marriage is the key transition to adulthood in the Luhya community.

“You find someone is 34 and still feels like a kid. I felt the same even when I was 25. Until I said no, it’s time to take up responsibility as a man. Actually it’s only at marriage that people really grow up.” (Nelson, older adult, I20)

Nelson’s comment reflects how, regardless of age, young people are seen as children until they are married. He himself ‘felt like a kid’ until he was married. However, respondents reflected a growing community rejection of early marriage (referring to marriage of under-18s). Instead, young people are encouraged to postpone marriage until after education, which may be in their late 20s or early 30s. This discourse is illustrated in Figure 9 below showing the message Elizabeth receives from her mother about marriage.

Figure 9: Message received by young woman about marriage

Mum: “After the education is when you get marriage” (Elizabeth, 19, member, YG5)

Young people themselves are also keen to delay marriage. For example, Isabel explained she did not want to get married now because “I want to learn”, she wanted to get married “at about 32 years” (Isabel, 21, member, I8).
Later marriage serves to delay young people’s transition to adulthood, leaving young people in an extended ‘waithood’ (Honwana, 2014). One respondent explained: “In our culture a child always remains a child until they are married. But according to the constitution, they are an adult when they are 18” (David, older adult, I31). All the current members of the youth group I spoke to were unmarried and living with their parents, even though most were over 18. Legally adults, but unmarried so treated as children hence expected to be obedient docile bodies (see section 4.3.3) who not seen as active sexual or civil citizens (see sections 4.4.2 and 4.4.3 respectively).

Community rejection of early marriage has been accelerated by multiple NGO and state campaigns locally and nationally and Kenyan legislation in 2014 setting 18 as the uniform minimum age of marriage (The Law Library of Congress, 2014). However, messages received by young people reveal other dimensions encouraging later marriage. Figure 10 below illustrates the messages Peter receives from a religious leader about marriage.

![Figure 10: Message received by young man about marriage](image)

Reverend: I should sit down first and measure myself in terms of income generation so that I can get a partner.
(Peter, 22, member, YG6)

Here, being financially stable is seen as a prerequisite for Peter to ‘get a partner’ to marry and hence become an adult. While a context of poverty contributes to this message (see section 5.6), the custom of bride prices should also be borne in mind.

In Litala, the practice of the groom’s family paying a bride price – usually a combination of money and livestock – to the bride’s family on marriage, is very much “still there” in (David, older adult, I31). Esther explained: “when girls get married, to the lady’s home they bring cows and some money” (Esther, 22, member, YG5). With global expectations driving up education standards, there is
an increasing focus on education for all children. A better-educated woman demands a higher bride price, raising the stakes for young men. Yet opportunities to become financially independent are limited by national and global forces of unemployment and poverty. These contradictory forces are hence serving to expand expanding waithood (Honwana, 2014; Juárez & Gayet, 2014). This liminal position between childhood and adulthood is central to experiences of both participation and social exclusion explored in this research. As marriage is delayed, unmarried young people are treated as children and hence limited in their ability to take part in adult spheres consisting of political, economic, social, and cultural participation.

5.6. Liminal spaces in a context of marginalisation

This important epilogue to the chapter highlights the context of marginalisation at a national and global level in which these liminal spaces are situated. The Litala community as a whole is marginalised due to poverty, political and economic disinvestment, and rurality. Samuel’s comment that “when you walk around the lifestyle of the people, it is all lingering about poverty” (Samuel, older adult, 17) reflects a theme of poverty that pervaded the data collected. When asked about the main challenges facing young people, respondents often cited “basic needs like food, shelter, clothes, education” (Winnie, older adult, 112).

As outlined in section 1.3.1, this poverty is exacerbated by historic disinvestment and politico-economic marginalisation in the region. This disadvantage is exacerbated by a geographical situation within a ‘developing country’ in the global south. This poverty is itself a social injustice, affecting the whole community. This regional poverty and marginalisation is important for the participation debate. Adults’ own marginalisation (for example due to poverty) can lead to a more authoritative role over young people as ‘participatory’ activities may be one of the few situations in which they can assert authority (Campbell et al., 2009).

Poverty is closely linked with two further systemic dimensions particularly affecting young people and affecting the spheres of liminality above: education and unemployment. As David observed, “poverty is a cause of lack of education as
*education is expensive*” (David, older adult, I31). Some of the young people I met had left school as they were unable to pay fees (see 1.3.5 on education in Kenya). Others had completed the full four years of secondary school and aspired to go on to college or university but were struggling to raise funds. A lack of access to education is a form of social exclusion in itself and has important implications for several of the liminal spaces identified above. Being out of school is seen to increase the risk of ‘bad’ behaviours while education is part of the ‘digital world’ and is increasingly seen as a prerequisite to marriage, and hence the transition to adulthood.

At whichever point young people exit the education system, transition to the world of work means facing up to the “*national disaster*” (David, older adult, I31) of youth unemployment (see 1.3.6 on (un)employment in Kenya). None of the core volunteer research team had a formal job, but members often spoke of the constant battle to ‘get something small’, often through daily efforts of ‘hustling’, meaning casual work doing small jobs such as digging fields or running errands. These activities reflects Honwana’s description of young people in waithood struggling to make a living by resorting to “*improvised forms of livelihood in the informal economy*” (Honwana, 2014, p. 23). An inability to become financially independent prevents transition to adulthood for example by preventing young men, from marrying as they are unable to pay a bride price (see section 5.5).

The scale of the national youth unemployment challenge seemed to take some of the focus off young people, with unemployment not seen as necessarily their ‘fault’. Although I was not able to interrogate this point further, comments such as “*the government [is] just leaving them [young people] roaming around*” (women’s group, G1) suggested an assumption that the government should be taking a greater role in job creation, perhaps reflecting resentment towards government as a result of regional economic and political marginalisation (see section 1.3.1). In conclusion to this section, the liminal spaces outlines above all operate within a broader context of marginalisation, poverty and unemployment.
5.7. Concluding remarks

The above chapter has illustrated how young people occupy multiple liminal positions between good and bad, submission and resistance, childhood and adulthood and analogue and digital. As described by Honwana and de Boeck:

"Young people constantly shake and shape society but are also shaped and shaken by it ... [They are] ... pushed, pulled and coerced into various actions by encompassing structures and processes over which they have little control ... in the process they are frequently broken." (Honwana & de Boeck, 2005, p. 3)

Figure 11 below attempts to illustrate the multiple contradictory forces faced by young people. Importantly, the diagram does not intended to imply that forces in any direction are wholly ‘good’ or ‘bad’. The large blue arrows illustrate the different messages young people receive. The smaller arrows indicate external forces accentuating different messages. Crucially changing cultural norms operate in both directions, for example, encouraging later marriage while at the same time seeing young people as children until married.

*Figure 11: Liminal position of young people*
6. Discussion and conclusion

This final chapter opens with a discussion bringing together fieldwork findings with the theory set out in chapter two. I then return to the research questions, incorporating theory and empirical findings to provide comprehensive answers to each sub-question and finally the principal question itself. A final reflection on the methodological approach is then provided before concluding with recommendations for policy, practice and further research.

6.1. Discussion and theoretical reflection

In chapter two, academic theory on youth and the transition to adulthood, youth participation and social exclusion were outlined, providing a background to the research. This section brings together the theoretical framework with empirical findings outlined in chapters four and five to provide a deeper, broader reflection on each of the three theoretical areas in turn and identify how the research has contributed academically.

6.1.1. Youth and transition to adulthood

The empirical findings in chapter five outlined the multiple contradictory liminal positions occupied by young people in Litala as (i) both an investment-worthy asset and a danger requiring management, (ii) simultaneously advocating and breaking an abstinence-focused moral code, (iii) between ‘analogue’ and ‘digital’ ages, and (iv) no longer children but not yet adults. These findings strongly support theories of young people as in ‘waithood’ which “represents the contradictions of modernity, in which young people’s opportunities and expectations are simultaneously broadened and constrained” (Honwana, 2014, p. 20). This period is characterised by a “long process of negotiating personal identity and financial independence in circumstances of deep socio-economic crisis” (Honwana, 2014, p. 23). By offering data from a case study in east Africa, this research complements and deepens Honwana’s insights, which are based on research at sites in north, west, and southern Africa.

The contradictory forces experienced by young people in Litala reflect Honwana and de Boeck’s concept of young people “in various African contexts as both makers and breakers of society, while they are simultaneously being made and
broken by that society” (Honwana & de Boeck, 2005, p. 2, italics in original). In the research context, young people are shaped by hegemonic moral codes, yet are simultaneously disrupting the moral pillar of society by creating their own, alternative moral discourse embracing premarital sex in the context of faithful relationships and/or safe sex.

However, not all aspects of ‘waithood’ theory seem applicable, in particular proposals that despite economic challenges, young people “are not just sitting and waiting for their elders or the government to do something. Instead, they are using their creativity to find solutions for everyday-life challenges” (Honwana, 2014, p. 23). Without wanting to paint the young people I worked with as uncreative or without resistance, the lack of agency exacerbated by cultural norms placing them as children suggested that in the rural context I focused on, young people have not (yet) reached a point of challenge.

Furthermore, Honwana largely discusses waithood in political and economic terms. Employing a social exclusion lens, the social and cultural axes appear underserved. The data suggests an important socio-cultural dimension to waithood, arising from cultural norms treating young people as children until marriage. What Honwana leaves out is, to a certain extent, addressed by Kesby et al. (Kesby et al., 2006) who highlight the denial of young people’s sexuality as key factor in preventing transition to adulthood, keeping them in a position of ‘non-adulthood’. An application of youth participation theory in the next section provides some insight into contextual factors keeping young people in this position.

6.1.2. Understanding youth participation and empowerment

The proposal from Chawla (2001) that “participation means different things to different people” (p.1) rang very true in the research findings. As outlined in chapter four, local concepts of participation diverged from donor aspirations of MYP, focusing more on ‘taking part’ and ‘being part’ than on shared decision-making. The following subsection employs Wong et al.’s (2010) Typology of Youth Participation and Empowerment (TYPE) pyramid as a heuristic device to
articulate degrees of youth participation and understand differences between local and donor interpretations.

The five forms of participation identified in the TYPE pyramid include two adult-driven types: Vessel and Symbolic; two youth driven types: Independent and Autonomous and a Pluralistic type, where control is shared (see Figure 3 on page 26). Applying the TYPE pyramid, youth group participation in Litala seems to fit within adult-driven forms, varying between Vessel and Symbolic types. Vessel-type participation “describes a traditional youth-adult relationship that is adult-driven, demanding little or no input from young people” (Wong et al., 2010, p. 107). Reflecting Kenyan educational approaches focusing on external pressures over internal reasoning (Ahmed, 2011), Vessel-type participation can be seen to limit the potential for critical consciousness and empowerment process (Wong et al., 2010). Symbolic participation includes youth voice, giving young people opportunity to express their views about problems and potential solutions, and to be heard by decision-makers, for example through organisational boards or advocacy work.

In Litala youth group, leadership roles held by young people and opportunities for community engagement through barazas and community outreaches point towards Symbolic involvement. However, leadership roles are limited and, echoing findings from the ASK programme in Uganda, messages conveyed by young people during outreaches and at barazas seem to echo messages communicated monologically through SRHR education, rather than solutions they have come up with themselves (Evelo, 2016). This repetition of messages may serve to recreate hierarchical adult-child relationships in peer-to-peer contexts with members’ peers becoming the ‘vessels to be filled’ with existing moral and religious codes (Braeken & Cardinal, 2008). Litala youth group participation hence appears between Symbolic and Vessel types. Importantly, however, limited youth input does not imply a lack of positive outcomes. Reflecting Wong et al. (2010), youth group participation has enabled members to developing competence, self-efficacy and mastery, all of which support youth development and psychological empowerment (Singh et al., 2016).
Moving to an analysis of donor ideals of participation, MYP is a key element of the ASK programme. Donor-generated literature emphasises that “there is no one-size-fits-all approach to MYP” (Youth Empowerment Alliance, 2014, p. 2). However donors set clear expectations that “young people must have a certain level of empowerment, responsibility, and decision-making power to participate meaningfully” (Youth Empowerment Alliance, 2014, p. 2), emphasising a clear ideal. The key difference between the adult-driven and pluralistic form in the TYPE pyramid is shared planning and decision-making. In the pluralist form, the purpose of adult involvement is to maximise the conditions for youth empowerment without adults becoming overly- or under-dominant. Donor ideals emphasising decision-making power are closer to the pluralistic type, where youth have voice and an active participant role while youth and adults share control. The divergence between these international donor ideals of meaningful youth participation and local experiences are illustrated in the annotated TYPE pyramid in Figure 12 below.

Figure 12: Annotated TYPE pyramid

(Adapted from Wong et al., 2010, p. 105)

The misalignment between international donor ideals of participation and local experiences operates at two levels. Firstly, donors ideals specify a ‘more
meaningful' form of participation than is currently taking place locally. Secondly, the very conceptualisation of participation as being about decision making is misaligned with local conceptualisations which focus on ‘taking part’ and ‘being part’ rather than making decisions.

The divergence reflects a "fundamental paradigm of globalization ... a balancing act between universality and local particularities" (Ahmed, 2011, p. 152) and is problematic on a number of levels. Firstly, the incongruence suggests that the concept of MYP may be being applied without sufficient consideration of what ‘meaningful’ means in the local context. Echoing criticisms of universalist models of childhood undervaluing local lived childhoods (Aitken et al. 2008), Northern donors are at risk of applying a universal concept developed in the North, hence enforcing cultural imperialism by presenting experiences of the privileged – in this case the possibility of young people being equal decision-making partners – as universal (Chawla, 2001; Young 1990b). It is therefore vital that MYP is not implemented rhetorically, but with consideration of the broader social contexts, engagement with context-specific philosophical theories on rights and a plural perspective considering local power dynamics and social relationships. (Ahmed, 2011; Miedema et al., 2015).

6.1.3. Interrogating social exclusion

Finally, I return to theories of social exclusion, a relational processes operating across economic, political, social and cultural dimensions (Mathieson et al., 2008). A social exclusion framework has previously been used to inform both policy and practice as it offers a systematic approach to explain complex processes (Khan et al., 2015; Popay, 2010). Findings on social exclusion are summarised in section 6.2 below. The following discussion takes a broader view, exploring three ways in which a social exclusion lens has supported my analysis and questioning the relevance and applicability of the framework in the research context. Insights from social justice, a core principal underpinning social exclusion, are applied to expand the discussion.

Firstly, the multi-dimensional nature of social exclusion theory encouraged a holistic interrogation of young people’s experiences, encompassing the
economic, political, social and cultural. Clearly, justice claims in one sphere have implications for claims in other arenas (Fraser, 1998). For example, claims for political justice, such as creating opportunities for involvement in barazas and community outreach, have social implications: increasing young people’s recognition within the community. A multidimensional lens was also central in enabling interrogation of the ‘broad’ impacts of youth participation beyond SRHR-related outcomes (Campbell et al., 2009).

Secondly, social exclusion theory is actor-oriented. By focusing on who is doing what, in relation to whom, an actor-oriented approach can help identify and address issues of power (Khan et al., 2015). Young people are asserting themselves as social actors by taking on new roles in the community yet they are simultaneously constrained by cultural norms that limit their possibilities as both civil and sexual actors (Kesby et al., 2006). Community expectations of young people to reiterate existing values of abstinence casts activities for community participation as ‘technologies of power’ where the moral values of dominant older generations are reproduced (Braeken & Cardinal, 2008; Foucault, 1977 cited in Robinson & Davies, 2008, p. 5). The actors examined as part of this research were principally young people and older adults at the community level and programme donors at a global level. There is scope for further exploration of the role of parents and religious leaders at a community level as well as a broader examination of national and global level actors.

Thirdly, social exclusion describes the exclusion of individuals due to their membership of particular groups (Khan et al., 2015). This theoretical aspect supported emphasis on young people as a group facing particular marginalisation and disadvantage. The question of whether social injustices should be approached from a group or individualist perspective is a key tension in social justice theory. Young (1990, p.9) argues that oppression happens to social groups and argues for “a politics that recognizes rather than represses difference” between groups (Young, 1990, p.10). Fraser takes a more individualist approach, promoting a ‘status model’ recognising “not group-specific identity but the status of individual group members as full partners in social interaction” (Fraser, 2005, p. 113).
The findings above suggest a need for synthesis between Young and Fraser’s positions. Where young people occupy a position as ‘non-adults’ (Kesby et al., 2006) whose potential as social, civil and sexual actors is under-recognised, a group identity offers both a base for social justice claims and a space for self-identity formation. However, with intersectionality central to social exclusion and social justice (Fraser, 1995; Khan et al., 2015), a status model is also necessary to recognise and value heterogeneity within the group and the intersections between different identities.

Finally, this discussion section considers the relevance of social exclusion theory to the research context. Recognising social exclusion as a social construction which may depend on what constitutes ‘normal’ in any society (Silver, 1994), my research sought to understand local interpretations and meanings of ‘inclusion’. I was acutely aware of the dangers of imposing a model and hence contradicting my grounded approach. Although I was able to identify local meanings of social exclusion (see 6.2) I was left with an overarching impression that, locally, social justice does not mean ‘parity of participation’ in the way I perceived it when I embarked on the research. For example, as outlined in section 4.3.3, both young people and older adults proposed that being instructed does not mean one cannot make one’s own decisions, a view at odds with my own understanding of decision-making and empowerment and that of and Western scholarship. I should perhaps not have been surprised at this challenge, considering both Young and Fraser warn that caution should be applied when transferring principles of social justice to other contexts (Fraser, 1995, 1998; Young 1990).

Despite these concerns, and as indicated earlier, I believe the social exclusion framework does offer a useful hermeneutic device to understand the wider social impact of participatory approaches. Its relational multi-dimensionality served as a constant reminder to consider the wide range of power dynamics impacting on and impacted by youth group activities. This prompt was valuable even when taking a more grounded approach. Furthermore the accessible framework enabled me to explain a complex notion to all involved including respondents. Having set out reflections on the three theoretical aspects
informing the research, this chapter now moves onto summarise the main research findings.

6.2. Summary of main findings

The following now returns to the research questions. First, summative findings are presented for each sub-question, before turning to the principle research question: *How does participation in the Litala youth group enable young people to address structural barriers to social inclusion?*

1. **What do participation and social inclusion mean to members of the youth group?**

While donor ideals of meaningful youth participation focus primarily on shared decision-making, local interpretations see participation more passively, primarily focusing on ‘taking part’ in activities. For its members, youth group participation also means 'being part' of a group, a space for identity development and mutual support. Although young people feel they are involved in decision-making, their agency is limited by cultural norms positioning them as subservient to elders.

Seeking a grounded understanding of social inclusion, I was able to identify a number of key indicators of what ‘being included’ in the community meant. Behaving ‘morally’, meaning meeting socio-cultural expectations of respect to elders, discipline and abstinence from drugs, alcohol and premarital sex, emerged prominently as central to local understandings of inclusion. Having a role in the community, making a contribution and being usefully occupied rather than idle were also key factors of inclusion.

2. **What structural barriers to social inclusion do young people in Litala face?**

Drawing on a social exclusion framework, multi-level, interlinked structural barriers to inclusion were identified across the economic, political, social and cultural dimensions. At a community level, obstacles to inclusion arise from cultural norms positioning young people as children until marriage. As ‘non-adults’ occupying a liminal position between childhood and adulthood, young
people are not seen as active civil citizens and opportunities for participation in decision-making forums are limited. Expectations of ‘moral behaviour’ prohibit premarital sex and prevent young people from being seen as sexual citizens, limiting their cultural inclusion. Young people have developed their own, alternative moral code in which premarital sex is accepted as a reality. This subversive code alienates young people from older generations, providing a further barrier to cultural inclusion, defined as the acceptance of a group’s way of living.

Young people in Litala are citizens of a country in the global South facing high youth unemployment. They live in a rural region, which has historically suffered political and economic marginalisation. Their experience of social exclusion is therefore exacerbated by political and economic exclusion at a national and global level.

3. How have young people’s experiences of these barriers changed since participating in the youth group?

Firstly, older adults in the community concurred that being a member of the youth has improved ‘moral behaviour’ and given young people ‘something to do’. These changes have addressed negative perceptions of young people as idle and immoral, hence improving their social and cultural inclusion. However, inclusion is limited by older people’s continued view of young people as at risk of immoral behaviour and idleness; as a risk to be managed to protect young people themselves, the community and the nation.

Secondly, youth group participation has given young people platforms to participate in the community in ways they had not previously experienced – speaking at barazas and joining community outreaches. These opportunities have contributed towards political inclusion. However, young people’s ability to be active citizens is limited by expectations to pass on moral and religious discourses of older generations rather than promoting their own alternative moral code and values.
Finally, in providing exposure to computers, training and community participation, the youth group has made a small contribution towards economic inclusion by giving young people hard (e.g. computer literacy) and soft (e.g. confidence) skills contributing towards employability and economic inclusion. However, these empowering forces are limited in comparison to the stronger, structural forces of marginalisation arising from global poverty, national unemployment and regional political marginalisation.

Having answered the three sub-questions, a summative answer is now provided for the principle research question:

**How does participation in the Litala youth group enable young people to address structural barriers to social inclusion?**

Participation in the Litala youth group has had an important role in enabling young people to take steps towards overcoming barriers to economic, political, social and cultural inclusion. However, cultural norms and forces of globalisation act to counter the impacts of the youth group, limiting social inclusion and keeping young people in liminal positions between two worlds.

Figure 13 below (adapted from Popay, 2010) aims to summarise the response to the principal research question. The black lines indicate axes of social exclusion, with inclusion at the centre and exclusion on the outer edge. The coloured arrows indicate forces of inclusion (facing inwards towards the centre of the circles) and exclusion (facing outwards away from the centre of the circles). Words in black indicate impacts directly linked to the activities of the youth group: platforms for community participation, skills towards employability and space for identity development; all forces for inclusion. Words in white illustrate wider factors and impacts including cultural norms, poverty and unemployment. Contradictory forces operate at each axis. The black dots indicate position of young people on continuum of inclusion-exclusion before youth group involvement; orange dots indicate the position of young people after youth group involvement. The difference between the black and orange dots indicates the impact of the youth group, although positioning is solely illustrational. The biggest change of position is in the social arena, arising from an improvement in
views towards young people, which came out particularly strongly in community responses. There have been slight changes in the political and cultural axes and minimal change on the economic axis where global forces of poverty and unemployment have a particularly important impact.

Figure 13: Social exclusion of youth group members

An overall message from Figure 13 is that there are contradictory forces operating across all domains of the social exclusion framework. The youth group is having an important impact but outcomes are limited by exclusionary forces at community and national global levels. The contradictions across all domains exacerbate the already multiple liminal positions of young people. This chapter now concludes with a methodological reflection and recommendations for policy, practice and research, bringing the thesis to a close.
6.3. Methodological reflection

This penultimate section provides a brief reflection on the research design and methodology, particularly the epistemological position and participatory methodology. My research was informed by a post-positivist, critical realist epistemological stance. This position has highlighted challenges with universalist conceptualisations of participation and social exclusion and has been useful unearthing multiple truths in relation to meanings of self-control and ‘moral behaviour’.

The research provided an opportunity to explore the possibilities of participatory research within the research context. The possibilities of working with a group of young people as co-researchers was limited within a society which values obedience and respect to such an extent and where critical thinking is not part of mainstream education. Contradictions and tensions found in my data were often reflected in the operation of participatory methods. Customs of regulating behaviour through external pressures rather than internal reasoning (Ahmed, 2011) likely contributed to young people’s tendency to repeat taught messages. This practice seemed to limit the amount of critical reflection during sessions. Through the use of creative methods such as social network mapping, I was able to build trust and reveal more personal insights. However these methods were limited by time available to develop them and young people not being accustomed to creative activities such as drawing. This last point reflects findings from research using visual participatory methods with young people in Uganda (Young & Barrett, 2001). The following, final sections of the thesis draw on these reflections and the findings and conclusions above to provide recommendations for policy, practice and further research.

6.4. Policy and practice recommendations

With global efforts to improve youth SRHR increasingly emphasising participatory approaches, this research provides timely recommendations on youth participation in SRHR programmes. Programmes such as ASK already include efforts to create enabling environments for improved SRHR. However recognising the importance of social context demonstrated by this research,
SRHR programmes should therefore particular attention to the enabling environments for participation as well as improved SRHR.

At a community level, training should be provided for older adults including parents, CHVs and religious leaders on what MYP is and why it is being employed. The training should be based on a dialogue to develop shared understandings of the purpose of MYP, what ‘meaningful’ means locally and potential barriers and solutions to achieving MYP locally.

At an organisational level, the agencies involved in this research and wider youth SRHR providers should review how programme messages are diluted or changed in their delivery in local areas. Organisations should also recognise the specific challenges faced by young people in transition to adulthood, including a review of the multiple liminal spaces they occupy.

Organisations should also consider how they can capture the broader impacts of participatory programmes through operational research, monitoring and evaluation. A social exclusion framework may provide a valuable heuristic device in developing new approaches. Evidence of wider programme impacts can support future programming and fundraising efforts. Donors should consider these wider impacts when assessing funding applications.

**6.5. Recommendations for further research**

The rationale for this research noted a dearth of evidence on the broader impact of youth SRHR approaches (Villa-Torres & Svanemyr, 2015). This research has contributed to filling this gap, but there is scope for extensive further work. The use of a social exclusion lens as a hermeneutic device for understanding the wider impacts has proved valuable and could be applied more widely.

The gendered and generationally-differentiated definitions of self-control identified, but not widely substantiated, in this research merit further investigation. The implications of divergent understandings should also be investigated, including the impact of differentiated moral codes on SRHR outcomes including sexual behaviour and contraceptive use.
The research highlighted young people’s multiple liminal positionality. While the position of young people as ‘non-adults’ is recognised in SRHR literature (notably Kesby et al., 2006), the particular situation of young adults was less emphasised in the participation literature. There is hence scope for investigation of the extent to which young people are served by concepts of children’s and youth participation.

As outlined in the section on limitations (3.10) I was not able to explore issues relating to gender to the extent intended. Findings from the ASK programme in Uganda suggest important gendered differences in experiences of participation (Evelo, 2016). There is scope to build on this work to explore how gender mediates the impact of participation on social inclusion. This could also be expanded to incorporate other aspects of heterogeneity within the youth group population.

The ASK programme in Litala represented an early stage of youth participatory work for GLUK. A valuable study could explore how organisations’ experiences of and expertise in participation develop over time and the impact this has on programmes and beneficiaries. Possible themes to consider include: How are global ideals of participation adopted and adapted locally? What are the impacts of global ideals of participation on end beneficiaries? How do attitudes of staff and community members change as MYP expertise and experience develops?

Finally, this study aimed to employ participatory and visual methods. A general recommendation for research suggestions above, and for research on youth participation more generally is to employ participatory methods including innovative and/or visual methods wherever possible and appropriate in order to build methodological expertise and gain new insights. After all, to end with the quote I opened with:

"Just imagine what solutions might be found if young people are given the space and encouragement to participate and lead." (Kofi Annan, 2013)
Bibliography


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Appendices

1. Original operationalisation of major concepts

Table 2: Original operationalisation table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Governance | YP involvement in governance bodies | • YP officially enrolled as members of governance bodies e.g. steering groups, board of trustees  
• YP attending governance meetings YP speaking at meetings  
• YP-produced material presented at meetings |
| | Investment in youth participation | • Funds allocated for youth participation  
• Time allocated for youth participation  
• Attitudes of adult staff towards participation |
| Programmes design | Nature and degree of involvement in programme design | • How and to what degree YP involved in:  
  o Needs assessment  
  o Intervention design  
  o Setting rules, roles and responsibilities  
• Staff and participant selection |
| | Extent to which messages of programme are youth-driven | • Feedback from staff and YP on reflection of YP voice in programme content delivered |
| Programmes delivery | YP involvement in service provision | • Number of YP employed/volunteering  
• Type of role played  
• Experiences of YP involved, staff, service users |
| | Training offered to YP | • Type and level of training  
• Views on quality and value of training |
| Programmes improvement | Use of service user feedback in service review and development | • Use of suggestion box, feedback, exit interviews, focus groups etc.  
• Identification of barriers to participation |
<p>| | YP involvement in evaluation | • How YP involved in evaluation e.g. as peer-researchers |</p>
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<td>Relationships with community</td>
<td>Sense of belonging and status in community</td>
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## 2. List of group sessions with youth group members

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* Member of volunteer research team

** Isabel joined the youth group after being interviewed (I8) as a non-member and was then included in one youth group session, YG3.
### 3. List of interviews

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<td>YG member</td>
<td>Stephen</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I22</td>
<td>28-Feb</td>
<td>Litala</td>
<td>Non-member</td>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>I23</td>
<td>28-Feb</td>
<td>Litala</td>
<td>Non-member</td>
<td>Hilda</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I24</td>
<td>28-Feb</td>
<td>Litala</td>
<td>Non-member</td>
<td>Collins</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I25</td>
<td>08-Mar</td>
<td>Litala</td>
<td>YG member</td>
<td>Isaac</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I26</td>
<td>10-Mar</td>
<td>Kisumu</td>
<td>Older adult</td>
<td>Eve</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I27</td>
<td>10-Mar</td>
<td>Kisumu</td>
<td>YG member</td>
<td>Cynthia</td>
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<tr>
<td>I28</td>
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<td>Kisumu</td>
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<td>Frank</td>
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<td>I29</td>
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<td>Kisumu</td>
<td>YG member</td>
<td>Alvin</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I30</td>
<td>10-Mar</td>
<td>Kisumu</td>
<td>YG member</td>
<td>Nicholas</td>
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<td>I31</td>
<td>18-Mar</td>
<td>Litala</td>
<td>Older adult</td>
<td>David</td>
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</table>

*To preserve identities, respondents positions have not been matched with pseudonyms. Older adult respondents include: two head teachers, two local government officials, the youth group mentor, a religious leader, a health care professional and a ‘patron’ to the youth group who facilitates support from another NGO.

** David was interviewed twice in interviews I1 and I31 and was involved in group discussion G1 (see appendix 4 below).

*** Isabel joined the youth group after being interviewed (I8) as a non-member and was then included in one youth group session, YG3.
4. **List of group discussions**

**G1: Women’s Group**

Location: Litala. Date: 16 February 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>translator, also in interviews I1 and I31 and group G3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edwin</td>
<td>M</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claudine</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cecilia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maxine</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titus</td>
<td>M</td>
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* Although this group was described to me by its members as a ‘women’s group’ it in fact also included male members. I have retained the term used by its members to describe it.

**G2: Community Health Volunteers**

Location: Litala. Date: 26 February 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Sex</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>(Also in interviews I1 and I31 and group G1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>(Also in interview I15)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sandra</td>
<td>F</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marion</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samantha</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeanette</td>
<td>F</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**G3: Community Health Volunteers from Siaya County**

Location: Kisumu. Date: 10 March 2016

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nicole</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wycliffe</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
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